

CRFP Spotlight

Shawn Black, Gordon Bruner, Joshua Hawks, Chris Rohling

Get to know some of our recent CRFP designees! We are excited that more of our members are joining this distinguished group. We credit their knowledge and experience, as well as their initiative for taking advantage of our online learning modules.

Congratulations to Our CRFPs

What do you enjoy most about your job? Black: I enjoy the constant challenges and the opportunity to connect with people, as well as solving problems and helping our clients achieve their goals. It's a lot of fun. Bruner: Job? Honestly, I don't think I have a "job," but I am most fulfilled when I am winning! Winning for my customers, my employees and myself. I built my company to ease the pain of my customers and hopefully make a difference. Hawks: Like Liam Neeson, I have a very particular set of skills. Skills that I have acquired over a long career. Now, I can't land a round-house kick or take out four bad guys with a spatula (or can I?), but being able to draw from my life/work experience to provide a customer with a solution is particularly rewarding. It's important to make yourself an asset to the people you work with and for. Rohling: The valuable relationships built within our expansive customer base.

What other companies have you worked for prior to your current position? Black: I have had the honor of working with some amazing businesses. I have worked in telecommunications, electrical contracting, data and security, as well as fire and life safety corporations. Everything from Fortune 500 to startups. It has been exceptionally rewarding to work with those businesses and help them realize exceptional growth. Bringing that kind of energy to an organization is incredibly exciting. Bruner: A long, long time ago I started bagging groceries at Winn Dixie and worked my way up to the manager position. Then I owned and built Little Caesar's franchises. In the end, I decided I liked building pizza stores more than making pizzas, so I sold them and that led to the start of my company, VMC Facilities and Construction. Hawks: Facility Source, Trane, Interline Brands (Barnett Supply, a wholesale plumbing/ HVAC supplier) and Hawks Heating & A / C (a family-owned HVAC company). My first job was being my dad's helper at age 14 for his new A /C business. I moved out the day I turned 18, vowing to never work in the trade again. That resolve didn't last; I ended up back in a family business a few years later. A serious car accident forced me out of the field and behind the counter selling parts. Those experiences have served me well at Legacy Air. Rohling: I've spent the vast majority of my career in the beverage industry as owner/ operator of Florida Beverage Sales.

When you were new to the industry, what was the most surprising thing you learned about the restaurant world? Black: Coming into this industry was really exciting because the people were very inviting and open. I never met any kind of negative resistance when trying to connect and learn more about their concept. Bruner: I am in multiple industries, such as retail and hospitality, but nothing compares to the complexity of taking care of a restaurant. Restaurants take a ton of abuse; there are so many moving parts and you have to be adaptable. I learned how to become a vampire, because a lot of time the work requires night work and everything is an emergency! Hawks: I learned how much is involved with managing the facilities of a restaurant. Exterior, interior, safety, disaster preparedness, asset management. The list is endless. Rohling: That no one was cleaning their ice machines!

What is your all-time favorite movie? Black: Hands down, "Braveheart." I have seen that movie so many times and never get tired of it. It has it all: struggle, triumph, love and hate, conflict and resolution. It's a great story. Bruner: All John Wayne movies because I really love them all! Hawks: This is an impossible question to answer, but some favorites include "Star Wars" (the original 1976 version), "Jaws," "Pulp Fiction," "Die Hard" (the best Christmas movie ever!) and "Inception." Rohling: My favorites are the 80s classics: "The Goonies," "Back to the Future," "Indiana Jones" and "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."

What is the most challenging situation you've ever faced in a facility or on the job? How did you handle it? Black: It's hard to pinpoint one exactly, but I certainly have had my share of requests that have been challenging.

Extremely short deadlines tend to be the most difficult. The only way to make them happen is with all hands on deck and every head in the game. Our clients demand the best, and it takes a strong, committed team to rise to the occasion. I am fortunate to be a part of this amazing company; CGP are leaders in our industry. We have an amazing team, and I certainly couldn't do anything without their support. Bruner: Challenges are a daily thing in the restaurant industry, but I would say my first Chili's fire in Memphis, Tenn. Thank God for Dan Gibbons! I wasn't in business that long, and I was on my way to Atlanta when Dan called and told me to get my butt to Memphis. I turned around and ended up staying for two and a half months. It was a very eye-opening experience. We dealt in all aspects of the restaurant: from the roof to kitchen equipment, dealing with landlords to insurance companies—the whole nine yards. Dan taught me more on that job than anyone else. Rohling: We face many challenges every day, and I am unable to pinpoint one, but I enjoy the journey toward helping in all situations.

What is your favorite work-related app? Black: Expensify, which keeps track of all those darn receipts. Bruner: I'm always on the go, so all my travel-related apps. The Delta and Hilton apps are my best friends. Rohling: Game Changer. It lets me keep up with the ballgame while at work!

What is the best advice you ever received? Black: I have had my share of mistakes, and I am grateful for the opportunities they have afforded me to learn. I would say, "It's not how far the ball drops; it's how high it bounces back," which was Victor Bennett of Sprint Corporate. Because of that quote, many years ago I learned to look at failures not as disappointments but as opportunities to grow and really make a difference. Bruner: Danny Koontz gave me the best advice. He said, "Always remember that you work for me and not the stores. Just do what I tell you to do and don't listen to the store manager because they will get you fired."

Hawks: Make the hard call first. Human nature is to avoid or put off uncomfortable situations. The issue will not resolve itself, and avoiding it will only compound it. It's pretty sage advice. Either that or "raise the seat." Rohling: Efforts can never be confused with actual results. One of my favorite quotes is, "Do not wait; the time will never be 'just right'. Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along."

Who is the most impressive person you have ever met? Black: Jim Robinson, of course. Jim is our CEO, and I have to say he is one of the smartest, most impressive people I know. He constantly pushes me to grow. Thanks, Jim! Bruner: I have met a lot of people through the years who have impressed me, but the one who stands out is Michael Gerber, the author of "E-Myth." I was sitting in a bar chatting with the guy next to me, which led me to an opportunity to become a member of the Patriot Mission, of which Michael Gerber is a member. I ended up being a speaker at a conference right before him, and we hung out while I was in Glendale. Michael is such a knowledgeable guy, and I used his teachings as the foundation for building my company. Now I have the privilege of calling him my mentor! Hawks: Micah Dyer, a fellow CRFP and world record holder. He's completely self-made, and I wish I had 10 percent of the drive he has. It's a cliché, but he never takes "no" for an answer. Working with Micah has made me better at what I do. Also, he's one of the funniest guys I know. Rohling: My grandfather, who passed away when I was 8 years old. I have never met a better person since.

To what would you attribute your success in achieving your CRFP? Black: A strong kick in the rear from Jim Robinson. All kidding aside, education is one of the most important values that run throughout our company. The CRFP was a perfect opportunity to learn more about our clients' needs and expand my knowledge of restaurant facility maintenance. Bruner: I love to learn. Eighteen years of knowledge working in the restaurant facility maintenance/construction industry, as well as the rollout of the RFMA study modules, definitely attributed to my success in achieving my CRFP! Hawks: Having field experience in multiple trades. Rohling: Dedication. It is easy to get wrapped up and busy in our industry. This certification was very important for me, both personally and professionally.

Would you recommend attaining a CRFP to other colleagues? Why? Black: For sure! It was a great experience and helped me a lot with terminology. Whether you have been in the field for 30 years or three years, this is a good way to grow. Bruner: Of course! Everyone should strive for this goal. It not only helps you become more knowledgeable in this industry but shows everyone else that you know your stuff! I'd say it's just another notch on your belt. Hawks: Absolutely. Being able to understand in detail what goes into managing the facilities of a restaurant and see things from the perspective of a facilities manager is invaluable. As service providers, we can get tunnel vision and narrow our focus to only our trade. If we can see how our services or technicians affect other trades or aspects of that facility and act accordingly, we move past being just a service provider and become a partner. As I said before, it's a tough job. If we can take off some pressure and be an asset, all the better. Rohling: Absolutely; the knowledge obtained is very valuable for this industry.

What do you do for fun in your spare time? Black: I love to create- usually around the house on a project or building websites and helping friends grow their companies. Bruner: I travel a lot already, which is one of the reasons why I love owning my own company. But when I get a little break, I am either hanging out with or cooking for my family and friends. Also, golfing, fly fishing and strumming my guitar. Hawks: I like to get out and see live music whenever I get the chance. I love the outdoors, and my family loves to camp. Twice a year my friends and I go on a 60-mile, four-day canoe trip. No cell phones, no emails. It provides a much-needed opportunity to unplug from the everyday grind and re-charge. My oldest son has been on the trip for the last few years, and I look forward to taking my younger boy in the next few years. Rohling: Be a dad!