

(((ASK RUSS)))

What do facility managers need to know about passion?

by Russ Simons | Published: June 1, 2014

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What do facility managers need to know about passion?

I am guessing that many of you will be surprised by the title of this article. You may immediately ask yourself, “what is the value of this subject and am I really going to waste my time in reading it?” I understand and truthfully not too many years ago I would have been right with you.

My purpose in writing this monthly column is to address subjects that many in our industry act like they know but perhaps do not completely understand and break them down into their basic, fundamental principles. I believe that if we are all operating under the same set of information and use the same vernacular, we can facilitate communication and understanding, which in turn will inspire collaboration industrywide.

There is no better example of the value of that process than where I am writing this from, the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAVM) Venue Management School at Oglebay (VMS) in Wheeling, W.Va.

I have had the honor and privilege of being associated with this school for many years, including my time as a student and having recently served as a past chairman of the school’s Board of Regents.

Each year on my return to Wheeling two things continue to astound me. The first is the commitment of the Board of Regents and instructors to provide the highest possible quality of education and training to the students attending the school. These are true servants to our industry of the highest order. They represent an extraordinary amount of experience from all facility types and allied services. Their only goal is to provide an extraordinary experience for those attending the two-year VMS and the one-year Graduate Institute programs.

The courses that are taught are complemented by structured round table discussions in both facility types and current issues, professional speakers of national prominence, and perspective and networking opportunities that in my personal case have lasted an entire career.

I cannot think of a higher calling than to devote oneself to improving others and in the case of the Venue Management School, having a profound positive effect on our entire industry.

The second thing that continues to astound me is the pure passion of the students who attend this program. Their preparation and participation in the process of learning and self-improvement is an inspiration to all of us who teach.

We live in a world where we are inundated with examples on the news about devalued priorities, particularly of young people. Each year I meet and spend a week with persons in our industry who are completely dedicated to improving themselves, their facility, their community, and our industry.

Their passion is infectious and inspiring to everyone they come in contact with. Their search for knowledge and commitment to excel forces me personally to push any complacency aside and work to stay ahead of them. In an environment that is this rich in energy and enthusiasm if you are not careful and committed you can easily be left behind. The result is that this process makes all of us and, therefore, our industry as a whole better.

I remarked to my colleague Adina Erwin from the “Fabulous” Fox Theater in Atlanta, that our students demonstrate an attitude of expectation. They present a sense of steeled purpose. They demand the information that will assist them to be a success in our industry.

This year’s VMS class is one of the largest in recent history with 143 first-year students and the Graduate Institute class is the largest since the program’s first class more than nine years ago.

If you have made the commitment to attend or send staff to the VMS School at Oglebay, I thank you, we all thank you. All you need to know about passion will be in the faces of your staff when they return to work!

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