

BY ALANA F. DUNOFF

# Who's Next? The State of Succession Planning



For over a decade, facility managers have been listening to speakers and authors sound the alarm for pending generational shifts in our workforce. They say we are going to experience a talent gap, and filling facility management jobs will become a significant challenge.

Even the major facility service providers have talked about how important it is for the industry to create programs to attract Millennials. For years they have talked about making FM a career of choice and working

with academia to develop educational programs to train our youth. Losing a large percentage of the industry's workforce — and the applied knowledge that represents — is a major modern risk in our industry.

To prepare for this generational shift, FMs have transformed our workplaces and spaces into cool, funky-designed, unassigned, work-anywhere-in-the-building environments. Facility managers became change management agents as we helped our organizations work differently using benching, hives, phone booths and coves so that they can collaborate, scrum and innovate in a diverse and inclusive office. Many of the drivers behind these physical workplace changes were a calculated management effort to attract young professional to come work for our companies.

It is now 2019. The Baby Boomers are retiring at record speed, the Millennials are almost all in the workforce, and Generation Z will start entering the job market very soon. So, have we solved the actual problem?

#### What's the problem?

According to IFMA Foundation's Global Workforce Initiative (GWI), more than 50 percent of seasoned FMs are retiring within the next 5-15 years, taking their vast institutional knowledge with them. The GWI estimates there will be more than 500,000 FM job openings globally over the next five years. These staggering statistics would suggest the gap in our FM work-

force is not getting any smaller — and perhaps the schism is getting wider.

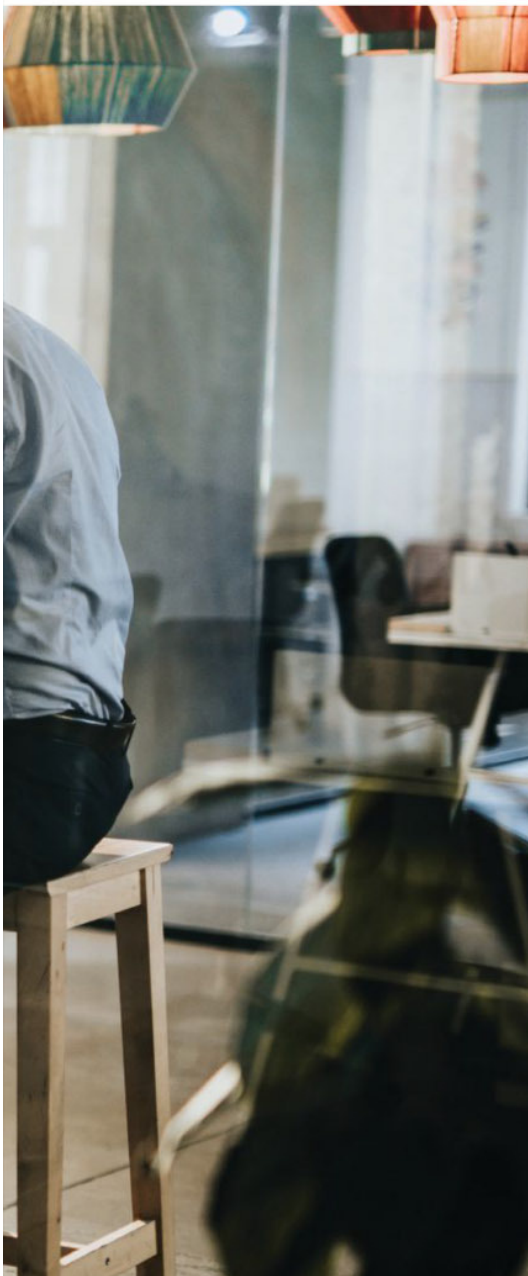
FM educators at accredited FM degree programs help emerging FM students gain the skills and confidence they need to be successful in our industry. However, all the accredited programs combined only graduate about 800 students a year, not even close to the 500,000 job openings.

The burning questions from the GWI and for all of us in FM should be: How do we fill this big talent hole? Why hasn't it been filled yet? And is it even possible?

In searching for some answers, seasoned IFMA Fellows (many of whom are now happily retired) and recent FM graduates (just starting out in their careers) were surveyed to find out their take on the state of the industry. Both groups were asked how they perceive professional growth, career advancement and success planning.

#### Career advancement

When it comes to opportunities for career advancement, IFMA Fellows and emerging FM leaders all found new job opportunities both internally and externally. While the Fellows spoke of career longevity within their companies (20 or 30 years or more), the emerging leaders discussed a very different reality. They expressed concerns over minimal opportunities for internal growth, lack of loyalty and companies only valuing their contributions



#### MAKING FM A CAREER OF CHOICE

This year, IFMA is providing free registration to 20 FM students to attend Facility Fusion and an additional 50 FM students to attend World Workplace – on top of the 25 to 40 scholarship winners normally in attendance. Approximately 90 to 100 students will attend World Workplace in Phoenix and are seeking opportunities to learn and network with industry professionals.

The IFMA Foundation created a World Workplace student experience committee dedicated to engaging future FM professionals into our organization. The committee will ensure they get the most out of the conference and can network with their peers and FM professionals. The committee is comprised of previous student scholarship winners, IFMA Fellows, IFMA chapter and council leaders, IFMA Young Professionals, IFMA Foundation Global Workforce Initiative Advisors (Sodexo and ABM) along with Foundation Trustees and staff. Their focus is to ensure that students attending World Workplace are introduced to all that IFMA has to offer to further their education and careers.

At Facility Fusion in Atlanta, World Workplace Europe in Amsterdam, and World Workplace in Phoenix, students have an opportunity to learn about the organization, interview for jobs with GWI advisors and participate in the IFMA Foundation's Ignite FM! Student Challenge. Students have three hours to solve an FM problem and then present their solutions to an audience of IFMA members. Consider supporting students and the program by contacting the IFMA Foundation for more information.