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## What Is Your Building's Infrastructure Report Card?

I recently heard an interesting and very thought provoking comment from a client's facility manager.... ***"Infrastructure failures don't usually make appointments; they show up without invitation and under the most unfavorable circumstances."***

**Crisis:** *(an unplanned event or occurrence that has an undesirable consequence).*

The mere mention of this word can evoke visions of unspeakable affliction and gut wrenching anxiety. How many times have we turned on the radio, television or picked up the newspaper without reading or hearing about a crisis somewhere? Most facility managers will say that there is no test more challenging than a crisis situation. All agree that the ensuing objective has to be immediate and with positive results. One of the greatest challenges today, while so many are faithfully enduring the resurrection of a slumping economy, is how to manage infrastructure without disruption or compromise to other vital parts of the organization, specifically operations and revenue.

Two key elements of infrastructure management are prevention and response. In the category of infrastructure neglect and prevention, the simple answer in most cases, is through the routine of periodic assessments. After the interpretation of findings and implications are communicated to owners, they must become motivated to establish a planned schedule of funding for deficiencies, and implement a system of information exchange for not only the facility affected, but others as well that may share similar issues. Even in a perfect world, and with the best preventative maintenance program in place, parts of any infrastructure will eventually fail, and as stated earlier, at times with very little notice.

This leads to the other significant element in the report card, response. The measured success of response is defined, partly by the level of preparation, but equally important by the company's network of reliable response firms. GHP is fortunate and grateful to be included in the "go to" network of many national firms when it comes to not only facility assessments, but crises response. With GHP's national coverage, the firm has established



a successful history of performance/customer satisfaction due to its diverse group of in-house professionals as well as its database of specialized consultants.

| REPORT CARD                |                        |                               |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| U.S. Medical Facility 2010 |                        |                               |
| Item                       | Prevention Maintenance | Response (If Occur. Reported) |
| HVAC                       | A                      | N/A                           |
| Plumbing                   | B                      | C                             |
| Electrical                 | A                      | B                             |
| Fire Protect               | A                      | B                             |
| Elevator                   | A                      | B                             |
| Roof                       | B                      | C                             |
| Bldg. Exter.               | B                      | N/A                           |
| Structural                 | B                      | N/A                           |

In summary, let's consider the repercussions of a failing report card. No one is being sent to the principal's office or being expelled for three days, however, the results of a failing report card can have a harsh effect on a company's ability and task to meet yearly budgets. Do we all remember the Fram Oil Filter advertising campaign that aired on television back in the early 70's, and the famous tag line?...."Pay me now or pay me later". This commercial informed us that if we spend a little money on maintenance now, by purchasing an oil filter, we won't have to replace a costly engine later. This analogy is very appropriate to the times we are living in today, for many view the

management of infrastructure as a balancing act. In their attempt to meet the challenges of infrastructure issues, they must be cognizant of the financial burdens created and its relation to other fixed expenses within the organization.

A yearly report card, as shown above, would include critical infrastructure items, and how they are managed, would become a valuable tool in helping eliminate that next call in the middle of the night.

**About the Author:**

Warren Johnson has over 26 years experience in the Construction Industry in roles ranging from superintendent, estimator, and project manager to owner. His involvement on project types includes, conventional hard bid, negotiated, design-build and construction management, in areas of institutional, healthcare and general commercial. Mr. Johnson can be reached at (615) 782-7267 or [wjohnson@ghp1.com](mailto:wjohnson@ghp1.com).



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