

The following speech was given by 2008-2009 International President Barb Horton CAP at the closing banquet of the 2008 IAAP International Convention & Education Forum in New Orleans, LA.

The one thing I know for sure is that every single one of us is allotted the same amount of time in any given day: 24 hours. No more and no less.

And it doesn't matter what day it is— it is always the same amount of time. Whether it was **yesterday**, is **today** or will be **tomorrow**. Even if it's just **some day**, or perhaps **any day**, it doesn't ever change

On one of those days I thought about what it would be like to be in Minneapolis in 2009 and what I would say about the preceding year.



What goals, objectives and accomplishments would there be to talk about?

What success would we be celebrating together?

What days would I remember?

The first day I thought about was **Yesterday**. Yesterday is where our history is; it holds the story of who we are.

Our association has a rich history, filled with many stories of growth, accomplishment and success. It's the evolution of who we've become: an association serving the needs of the career-minded administrative professional since 1942 with almost 30,000 members in North America alone. A private, not-for-profit business managed by a volunteer board of directors with paid staff and governed by bylaws and standing rules.

We would not be who we are without the efforts of those who have gone before us - to create the possibilities we have today. And I thank each leader— at every level— who has gone before. Their efforts have made the difference.

This last year in particular has been a special year: full of emotions, full of challenges and full of change. But it has also been a year of tremendous progress. The culmination of the last few years' strategic plans and discussion coming to fruition

Which brings us to the second day: **today**. Today is the present and the present is a gift: the gift of opportunity and time.

It is also a time of transition as we continually adjust to changes in the workplace, changes in technology, changes in information and other influences. Which all impacts our Association and creates the need for cultural change as we learn to adapt and embrace new situations.

The change itself is sometimes the easiest part. What can be difficult is coming to terms with the individual internal impacts.

The board of directors invested hours in understanding the history and purpose of IAAP and the needs of the career-minded administrative professional.

And examining: Why do we exist? Who do we serve? What is it that we want to be the best in the world at? Where are we going? How do we ensure we are on the right path?

Using the *7 Measures of Success* as a guide, we first evaluated our current mission and value statements.

Seeking input from members at division annual meetings and online surveys: the results will be announced shortly after convention. We are excited about having a mission statement that clearly defines who we are, whether you are members or not.

We realized very quickly that with our available limited resources of budget, people, technology and time that priorities needed to be set. A number of initiatives need to run concurrently. Managing the resources to make them a reality required expertise and planning.

To that end a project plan was created to manage the changes required to turn IAAP into a remarkable association by 2010. Shortly after convention, the plan will also be available on the website

The first phase of initiatives includes:

- Redefining the mission and value statements
- Evaluating existing and future programs
- Aligning our association resources to develop and carry out the right programs and services
- Developing a customer service culture at Headquarters
- Training members, chapters and divisions in creating a customer service culture of their own
- Creating a baseline membership survey
- Developing & maintaining data-driven strategies: and
- Further defining the roles and relationships of the board, executive director and staff

And while we're busy doing that, we also plan to a few other things like:

- Redesigning the website
- Monitoring and assessing Pathways to Excellence
- Reviewing our membership resources
- Developing a marketing plan
- And more

The pursuit of excellence is not for the faint-hearted. It takes leaders at every level who have persistence, passion and perspective.

For the past five years on the International Board I have been surrounded by leaders with these qualities, both on the Board and at Headquarters. And this year is no exception

The primary responsibilities of associations are changing. There is a move away from providing information and education to an increased focus on challenging members, leaders and staff to elevate the profession.

The Pathways to Excellence is a good example of this change in focus. By creating a consistent level of measurement across each level of the organization, members make the effort to attain excellence in ten specific and aligned areas.

The result will be members who are better equipped to take on challenges and opportunities in their workplace, their personal lives as well as within IAAP.

Employers take notice when employees take responsibility for their own lifelong learning. And IAAP can be a critical piece of that growth.

Following convention, the Member of Excellence level will be available. Check the website for the detail on how you can plan your own personal and professional growth this next year.

Transparency and accountability are key leadership components. By publicizing the Board's plan for the next year, **you** will be able to determine if the Board has fulfilled its mandate.

You will also have the opportunity for input through surveys and feedback. We want to hear from you as we further refine the path to excellence. Stay tuned as we make it easy for you to tell us what you think.

And don't forget to check out the updated policies too.

I want to touch a moment on branding.

At the Incoming Division President Conference in March we encouraged the leaders to use one consistent theme throughout the association. It is documented that people need to see a brand ten times before they associate recognition.

Rather than have differing themes at each level, one theme makes it easy for any member to know where we are headed in any given year: Excellence in Action – for members, chapters, divisions and the International Board. One theme, one purpose, one goal.

Tomorrow is the last day I want to mention. **Tomorrow** is the place where our dreams and hopes lie. It's the future; the still unknown.

I have given you a lot of information, and now I want to tell you about something I consider fun. I love reading. And I love to share books. And when I was thinking about how I could connect with each of you individually, I realized that I could share my love of books with you

Over the next year I will give you the titles of 12 books that will help you develop as a leader. If you love reading then read all 12. If you don't, then aim for at least one.

The middle of each month a book discussion will be open on the forum for one book. Each quarter I'll announce the next three books. Shortly after convention, a link to book site will be sent to you so you can get started.

The first book is John C. Maxwell's *Becoming a Person of Influence*. Your division presidents have been reading this book since March, and some have already shared the book with others. After August 15th, I look forward to reading your comments about the first book

This has been an exceptional year, and I am both honored and humbled to be here today.

I'm grateful for the leaders who have supported and encouraged me all along this journey. To be here is a privilege that I do not take lightly.

A special thank you to my sons Matt, Tyler and David, who have always supported and understood my passion for IAAP. And to my two special daughters-in-love, Amy and Janine, who think all this is way cool. Your support means everything.

Thank you to my employer Terasen Gas, and specifically manager Danielle Wensink, who has been a source of perspective, confidence and encouragement.

And a specific thank you to the members that I've worked with at every level of the association and the many friends and co-workers who made it all possible.

This is not a journey you take alone. Too often we believe we're only going to be happy when we arrive somewhere else. I want you to know that for me, the joy has been in the journey. And I am a stronger and a better person for having known you and worked with you.

And now I have one last special thing to share with you. Most of you are aware that Judy McCoy has a twin sister. And while it's a bit late in the game for me to get a twin, I was able to clone myself... more than once!

So be sure you attend the reception following the banquet, because you will need to sign my guest book, meet my clones... and one other treat, which you'll have to wait and see for yourself.

I look forward to seeing you **in person** in Minneapolis. And I **am** looking forward to THAT day.

Welcome to the 2008-2009 year of ***Excellence in Action***.