

*The Presidents Message*

## **Success is Fleeting**

**By Dwight Comer CPIM CIRM CSCP**

There are a host of books you can read that claim to have unlocked the secrets to what it takes to get to the top of the business world and stay there. Some of my personal favorites are books such as *In Search of Excellence*, *A Passion for Excellence*, *The Art of Japanese Management*, *Built to Last*, *What Really Works* and of course don't forget *Good to Great*. They all sound so convincing but unfortunately it's just not that simple. If you could read one book and be on the top of the business world then we would all be highly successful.

We sure can't argue about the principles that are espoused. For instance *In Search of Excellence* we learned about such principles as: staying close to the customer, productivity through people (which is one of my personal favorites), hands-on and value driven, stick to the knitting (which means do what you do), and keep your staff lean. One of the antidotal lessons we can now glean from those principles is that although they were supposedly identified in the "extensive" data research, Tom Peters admitted years later that he and Robert Waterman had written those points down before they ever started collecting data. So the data search was done simply to support the preliminary findings. Well that's not very helpful!

In fact if we look at the results of the business world in general we find that staying on top is a bit of a slippery slope. One study conducted by Richard Foster and Sarah Kaplan looked at the S&P listing over a 40 year period of time. What they observed was that of the 500 companies that was on the list in 1957 only 72 were still there in 1997, which means the other 426 had dropped off. Of those 72 that remained only 12 outperformed the S&P over that period. To develop this point further, according to the book *The Halo Effect* by Phil Rosenzweig of all the companies pointed out in some of the books mentioned earlier, few remained as top performers after the period at which those specific books were published.

So what lesson does that provide to you and I. Succeeding at business is a continuing struggle. We can't rely upon how we were successful a few years ago or even last year. The ground continues to shift around us. We have to make a significant effort to keep up with the latest in business ideas and techniques.

That's why APICS is passionate about the effort to provide you with new insights and products to help you succeed. The effort to keep our local chapter going is performed by board members who also care about providing you with these kinds of advantages to further yourself, your career and your individual companies.

Take advantage of what APICS has to offer and enjoy the full benefit of what it means to be an APICS professional.