Benchmarking helps determine our level of competitiveness and (hopefully) our degree of improvement with respect to the providing of services and, therefore, the performance of our jobs . . .

your organization, its leadership, its sensitivities and yourself. Benchmarking is not for the weak of heart."

Benchmarking is based on the continuous practice of measuring a number of key indicators of efficiency and effectiveness. The evaluation includes a study of the client's needs, the collection of specific data, and then the analysis of that data in comparison to others in similar industries. Some activities include:

- ***Reviewing current facilities data and client information***
- ***Touring key facilities, documenting observations, and identifying areas of focus***
- ***Reviewing benchmark data in general and specific to the client industry***
- ***Identifying other sources of information on facility management in like industries or among similar-sized companies***
- ***Comparing and contrasting the data, analyzing and testing reasons for differences***
- ***Developing and creating buy-in for a suitable baseline for evaluation and comparison with future performance***

Roth describes the process that his organization uses: "For us, benchmarking a service is a three-step process with the critical intent for the end result being a credible end product. This means that the benchmarked information must be easily understood and useful, which, in turn, means that the benchmarked information must clearly tie back to each group's budget and performance responsibilities."

Many organizations measure the use of their facilities by square footage analyses and comparisons. One of Roth's key activities is "the understanding of the square footage each [internal] customer directly occupies, as well as indirectly uses/benefits from. Given the complex nature of this exercise, the use of a computer-aided facilities information management system (CAFIMS) is required. We track everything in rentable square feet for external comparison purposes and use Aperture as our CAFIMS. The data is