

Challenges facing facilities management departments construction essay



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Within the coming years Facilities Management Departments (FMD) are going to be faced with a number of challenges and they will be expected to do a lot more with so much less. These challenges are mainly due, to the ever expanding business sector; this expansion has seen the emergence of new buildings taking place at much faster rate, than the refurbishment or demolition of other predated structures. But this is just the tip of the ice burger, as there are other pertinent issues facing the FMD such as: 'The rapid pace of change, changing technology, building automation, security issues, sustainability, aging buildings, geographic barriers, cultural differences and Environmental factors such as changing regulatory environments, rapid population growth and continued limitation of energy resources' (IMFA 2007).

So the need for the FMD to incorporate new technology, that utilizes 'Renewable Energy Sources' to produce energy, and reduce the impact that aged buildings in particular are having on the environment is a high priority. The majority of these issues currently facing the FMD are not new, in fact they have been around for a long time, but have escalated over time, due to increased human activities.

'This is an exciting time to be a facility management professional. Although facility management professionals will face more challenges than ever before, they have greater opportunity to add value for their customers through efficient management and improved technology.'(IFMA 2007)

INTRODUCTION

'Time present and time past are both perhaps contained in time future and time future contained in time past' (T. S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*, *The Four Quartets*)

The aim of our FMD is to continue to provide a safe, comfortable and a well maintained working environment, for both staff and clients. By providing a full range of services which incorporates all of the latest technology currently available, these services are then executed by a an experience and well trained group of people who, are both loyal and committed to achieving all the goals set out by the financial institution.

' The practice of co-ordinating the physical workplace with people and work of the organization, integrating the principles of business administration, architecture and the behavioural and engineering science' (Becker 1990)

There are a number of new legislations and technological advancements that have emerged over the last decade, which has caused the role of the FMD to constantly evolve, thus requiring the development of both tactical and strategic methods, so that our goals can be achieved, so that we can have continued success in this technological developing world.

The FMD is presently performing a number of services throughout this multi-national financial institution, such as but not limited to, maintenance, energy conservation, repairs, maintenance, security, information technology (IT), renovations, capital renewal, training, cleaning, customer services, workplace comfort, occupancy planning, business continuity planning (BCP) etc. So to properly prepare this year's budget the FMD is suggesting that

careful consideration be given to the following critical service areas:
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New legislations

Energy conservation

Capital renewal

Workplace comfort

Training

Energy Conservation - Climate change legislations

There is a growing concern about global warming and the lasting impact it's having on humanity and the environment. Due to this crisis the Global community has implemented a number of legislations geared towards the reduction of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions, two (2) of which are the 'Kyoto Protocol' See Appendix 1 and 'Copenhagen Accord' See Appendix 2.

Older building especially consumes a lot more energy than those that were recently built; due to this they are having a significant impact on the environment. So the need to reduce our CO₂ emissions by reducing our dependency on 'Fossil Fuels' by using technology that uses 'Renewable Energy Sources' to produce clean energy. Add a little more

'Buildings have a significant impact on energy use and the environment. Commercial and residential buildings use almost 40% of the primary energy and approximately 70% of the electricity in the United States' (EIA 2005)

Capital Renewal - Replacement of outdated equipment, buildings etc.

This is an important process which the FMD have already begun to implement, mainly because the buildings that we presently occupy are in excess of ten (10) years old, making both the HVAC and lighting systems inefficient and obsolete. Because of this they are the two (2) of the largest consumers of energy, simply because they are both required building components and are essential mechanisms for occupants comfort.

These technological upgrades off all outdated equipment, coupled with the installation of Energy Management Control Systems (EMCS) and electrical meters, throughout our institutions, are all geared towards reducing our energy demands. This will enable us to reduce our CO2 emissions and conform to all Climate Change Legislations, with the eventual aim of reducing our overall electrical bills.

Workplace Comfort - Customer Services

No employers would like to be on the wrong side of the law, and because of this they are obligated to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of their all employees are adhered to under 'Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974' (HSW which states that employers should:

Providing safe equipment and working practices

Ensuring safe handling, storage and transportation of goods and substances

Providing information, training and supervision

Providing a safe place of work with safe access and egress

Providing a safe working environment and facilities

So ensuring that all our staffs' needs are met and taken care in a timely manner is of utmost importance. Due to the fact that our staff can be considered like a person's heart in that, they are a vital part of the institution and without them we will cease to exist. Add a little more

Training

This is an integral part of any institution given that technology changes on a daily basis, so every effort should be to insure that each member of staff is kept update with all of the latest technology. As is customary with all recessionary periods it does not last forever, so by keeping abreast of all advance technology, we will not only be gaining an advantage over all of our competitors, but also the advance knowledge needed for our continued sustenance when this period of economic down turn comes to an end. Add a little more

Future Challenges

So what does the future hold for us as a FMD will apart from being constantly referred to as the 'Jack of All Trades?' what and where we are most liking heading in the future is best summed up by in the following:

'The future workplace will bring with it a number of distinct priorities. More attempts to make flexible working a reality are likely, requiring improved IT and communications infrastructures. The expansion of a 24/7 work culture will necessitate non-stop support facilities, with consequent outsourcing,

contract and health and safety considerations needing to be taken into

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account. Public Private Partnership (PPP) and private Finance Initiative (PFI) deals and economic pressures will push facilities professionals towards more benchmarking, more cost-benefit analysis and more performance measurement.

The tightening of building regulations and particularly the introduction of Part L [the manifestation of the European Union's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)] is having enormous ramifications for energy efficiency and the built environment. Buildings account for an estimated 40 per cent of all world resource consumption and over 40 per cent of all waste, including greenhouse gas emissions. EPBD is designed to increase the energy efficiency of all buildings by more than 20 per cent. A key point is whether anyone will want to rent or own an 'F'-rated building instead of an 'A' or 'B' one. All these developments should give facilities managers a fresh impetus to making their voices heard by senior management in the times ahead.

Facilities for businesses in the future will have to be more flexible and more streamlined than ever before. Managers will need to exploit growing communication opportunities and facilitate an ever-widening range of support services. Facilities managers need to become more professional and business oriented. They must develop a performance profile that is committed to the needs of their organization. Facilities managers need a variety of skills, as all organizations are different, but all should aim to gain the attention of the board and not just be visible when something goes wrong. It is one of the most challenging professions to conquer.

The key point to be made, touching on an earlier comment, is that facilities managers are indeed the stewards of the built environment.' (Frank Booty)

Recommendations

The present economic climate dictates that once this recession period is over, the FMD would more than likely take a lot longer to recover, already having to survive throughout this time by implementing both tactical and strategic methods and now having to deal with budget cuts all in the same time is quite a lot for any FMD.

So before any FMD budget reductions should take place, there are a number of options open for us to consider before any final decision is made on the budget, some of which are:

Why don't we look at saving instead of cutting, for instance upon completion of all the capital renewal projects which are presently on stream, a major reduction would be seen throughout all off the institutions electrical bills, but for this to happen all ongoing projects needs to be completed in as timely a manner a feasible possible.

Given that most of our noncore service labour is outsourced, we should consider coming up with some sort of partnership agreement, with if not all most of our service provides so as to generate new and innovative ways of reducing our over head expenditure.

So taking into consideration all of the pertinent point discussed trimming of the FMD at this time would be unwise, given that heavy fines would be

imposed upon any organization / institution not conforming to the new legislations for CO2 emission reduction.

Given the current economic climate we are presently facing, and having to deal with all the challenges that comes accompany an economic slowdown, and at the same time, maintaining our vision as being the premier financial choice to both our employees and prospected clients should be of concern. For this reason the following should be noted:

Addressing the trends presented here-through consideration, education and preparation-will arm facility management professionals with the necessary tools required to face the challenges ahead.

In stable conditions managers can plan with greater certainty and are able to identify significant and longer term issues for which they can easily prepare. However, in a prevailing climate of uncertainty and change, and with the need to respond quickly to unforeseen circumstances, managers need to develop approaches that enable them to foresee future challenges, envisage the impact on the organisations and communities in which they work and develop the strategies and competencies needed to retain an advantage.

This is an opportunity for the FMD to utilize whatever little resources they currently have at their disposal, to provide their staff and customers with as wide a service range as possible so as to fulfill all their present needs.