Flexible and Healthy: Martini Health Design: A Hospital with a Warm, Human Feel

By Jaap Wijnja and Kristin Wijnja-Koepcke

Last month Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands opened the new Martini Hospital in Groningen, a fine example of a very flexible building in which the healing environment plays an important role.

The Martini Hospital is located on the southwest edge of the city of Groningen, close to the border with Drenthe. It is a large general hospital that provides the highest level of clinical care and is well known for its burns unit.

The new hospital building has been in use since early last year. From the outside, the building is striking thanks to its elongated, winding façade, from which here and there you can see blocks projecting. On entering the building, you are immediately impressed by the selected color scheme.

Martini Health Design

Bob van Moorsel, internal building coordinator of the Martini Hospital, says that both the blocks and the colors reflect the “Martini Health Design”.

“The hospital world it generally considered that a building has a lifespan of forty years. In practice, after around 25 years, conventional buildings are so technologically outdated that they require major refurbishments in order to function properly. The Martini Hospital therefore felt obliged to devote a great deal of attention to making its new building as flexible as possible. Moreover, the hospital wanted to create an environment in which it was not just the doctors and nurses that had a healing effect on the patients, but also the building itself. This striving for flexibility and durability, combined with the desire to create a healing environment, has resulted in the Martini Health Design.”

Continuous development

Van Moorsel explains that in a hospital it is important that your building can continue to develop alongside the changes in healthcare. Nowadays it is practically impossible to draw up a five-year plan. On the one hand, the increasing use of digital applications, such as the digitization of archives, means that less space is required. On the other hand, there are also new requirements. For example, in an operating room it is useful to have film equipment that enables specialists in other hospitals to be consulted during an operation.

Flexibility: 3 levels

To be able to react flexibly to future changes, three levels of flexibility have been implemented in the Martini Hospital.

Firstly, the shell of the building has been made flexible: the relatively small width of 16 meters (normally it is 25 meters) means that substantially more daylight enters the building, so that the accommodation can be arranged more flexibly. Parts of the façade can be extended, creating a floor area of 2.4 by 7.2 meters, as if pulling drawers out of a cupboard.

This provides a potential 10% extra space and the ability to quickly make part of the building suitable for offices, day treatment, an outpatient department or a nursing ward.

Secondly, the interior has also been made flexible. Throughout the building, use has been made of demountable steel system walls placed on poured floors. The counter fits of the various departments have been connected ‘dry’, so that they can be easily relocated. The floor screed is also flexible, as the walls are positioned on it. If an outpatient department is to be converted into office space, the new facilities for the different functions can be installed much more easily, without all the inconvenience of a major renovation.

All the connections for equipment have been made flexible by combining the wiring in a vertical cable conduit which is fully integrated in the wall system. All the cables are ultimately connected to a ring circuit above the ceiling.

Sustainability

In addition to the flexibility of the building and the materials used, the way in which energy consumption has been taken into account within the building also contributes to the sustainability of the concept. Proven energy-saving techniques have been applied, such as underground heat and cold storage combined with heat pumps and heat recovery ventilation. Van Moorsel explains that the outer shell of the building consists of an 80 cm wide glass fiber façade, similar to the type used in greenhouses. By adjusting the ventilation in this façade, a motionless layer of air can provide extra insulation in the winter, while in the summer additional cool air is drawn up by the chimney effect.

A special feature is the roof of the garage, which acts as a sort of solar collector. The heat of the concrete floor is stored in the ground using pipes. The orientation of the building, the application of relatively long and narrow building sections and the use of large windows, all mean that there is 30% more daylight than in a conventional hospital.

Healing environment

The characteristic feature of a healing environment is the positive effect that is achieved by incorporating the various senses in the design. For example, as soon as you enter the building you are struck by a cheerful...
Facilities Management in the Hospitality Industry

By Gustavo Gomes

Facilities Management (FM) is steadily increasing its presence not only in corporations and offices, but also in hospitals, golf courses, banks, etc., not to mention hotels. Hotel Facilities Management covers the various aspects of the hospitality industry, including leisure, business, health, religious tourism, spas, important hotel complexes, etc.

The hotel sector is an important link in the expansion of the tourism and hospitality industry. As a business, hotels exhibit unique characteristics due to the nature of their activities, including properties and management. Since they are based on long-term assets, they require high levels of capital investment to be planned for the relevant period of time. The involvement of a facilities management professional (his/her knowledge, metrics, economic alternatives) contributes to other areas, making possible the integration and communication of information. This facilitates the planning process, adding value for the end users, owners and employees of hotels.

It is necessary to plan the life cycle of these facilities, their capacity, use, and pro-active maintenance policies, as well as the resources needed for dealing with constantly changing demands. That is why Soft Opening - the slow and gradual opening of a hotel - is not just for the benefit of the person in charge. Rather, it is an intelligent strategy for starting a business that demands not only caution when it is created, but also special attention throughout its entire existence so that its mission, vision and objectives can be fully realized.

Flexible and Healthy: Martini Health Design: A Hospital with a Warm, Human Feel

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The glass fiber façade also absorbs a large amount of the road noise, even when the windows are open. The development of the garden has not been in use for around a year. For Van Moorsel there is a new challenge: how do I ensure that staff make the best possible use of the new building? Although all parts of the organization were involved in drawing up the plans, a clear awareness program is required to explain the full benefits of the new building and its flexibility. For example, the flexible walls offer new opportunities, but they also require new attention. Walls and counters that are no longer required must be stored carefully, and there is a new procedure for disconnecting and reconnecting installations. When moving a counter, there is the temptation to use an extension lead. The fact that it is better to install a cable via the system conduit takes some getting used to. Changes in the layout are still being implemented on a project basis, but it is intended that the area becomes tangible. References to the hotel’s history can be found in a book at the hotel called “guest comments” where guests record their ratings, praise and complaints about their stay at the hotel.

The area of hotel facilities also interacts with the catering area not only because of its physical and systemic infrastructure (electric, hydraulic, gas, floors, tiles, etc.), but also due to the maintenance of equipment and tools specific to this area. We have emphasized the interaction between facilities management and the events area due to their high visibility and ability to generate resources for their own operation, as well as increase income for other areas, like hospitality and catering. It is important to remember

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that the speed and demand in the area of events require a certain amount of willingness and "business" understanding from the facilities management professional, without which the desired results would not be achieved.

Despite its proximity to the main business, the maintenance/facilities management department has been treated like a "multidisciplinary" department, which literally means that if a problem is not related to food, marketing, sales, housekeeping or accounting, the problem becomes their responsibility. This is a consequence of facilities management not being a responsibility. This is a consequence of facilities management being a professional, without understanding from the facilities management professional, that owners/hospitality business management professional is required to operate these modern systems.

Consequently, a "new" type of facilities management professional is required to operate these modern systems. This failure makes businesses vulnerable not only to issues regarding improper technical conditions of their facilities, equipment and its operation, but it also exposes their failure to comply with legal regulations.

It should also be noted that regardless of the size of the hotel business, it the facilities management professional faces the challenge of developing and adapting facilities management concepts and routines, addressing in a holistic way the management of people, procedures and property.

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In the summer term 2009, students at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences will be starting on the "Frankfurt Office Guide" (FROG) project for the third time. This involves students analyzing workplaces in office and administrative buildings in Frankfurt. The analysis forms the practical completion of the course in "Building Science" as part of the "Facility Management and Project Management" module. This student research project is offered in the 4th term of the "Geoinformation and Public Works (GeKo)" degree program. The foundations for this are laid in the previous terms, in which students learn, among other things, the methods and terminology used in building design and utilization. The aim of the project is the application and reinforcement of these theoretical foundations by means of practical examples. The selection of the existing buildings to be studied, and the collection and analysis of information on the properties, are an integral part of the assignment. In the process, the students establish initial contacts with the real estate industry, interview building owners and users, visit properties, create photographic documentation and take dimensions. In the course of the summer term, the students describe and analyze the current usage requirements placed on buildings, rooms and equipment and thus get deeper insights into the world of office work and the scope of facility management. The project comprises four key areas:  
1. Development and current use  
2. Planning parameters  
3. Workplace analysis  
4. Internal and external development  

The first section deals with questions about the historical development and current use of the buildings: who planned the building, and for what purpose? When was it built? Has it been modernized? What is the building being used for now? In addition, typical design details are identified for the relevant year of construction and the current usage requirements are described. In the second section, typical planning parameters are studied and detailed descriptions are produced. This will include, for example, a study of materials and building methods. The primary focus of the office workplace analysis is the in-depth recording and analysis of data on the selected workplaces. This ultimately involves producing detailed specifications of dimensions and rooms, with information on the materials and equipment present in them. The students then assess the quality of the workplace and come up with suggestions for improvement. The fourth section covers the internal and external development of the buildings. This includes an examination of how the workplace is functionally connected to the rest of the building as well as its external environment, including its integration within the city and how easy it is to reach by public or private transport.  

The project contributes to the creation of a comprehensive and up-to-date collection of examples of workplaces in administrative and office buildings. Thanks to the numerous public and private sector organizations that have made their buildings available to the students, we can guarantee that the course will continue to have a high level of practical relevance. By the end of the summer term, over 100 workplaces will have been studied and documented in summary form. In addition, in the future we intend to expand the project by means of national and international cooperation.  

About the author: In 2006 Antje Junghans was appointed Professor of Facility Management at the Frankfurt am Main University of Applied Sciences. She represents the Department of Facility Management in the Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geomatics. In addition, as the faculty's international representative, she is responsible for international cooperation in teaching and research, and represents the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences in the Professors’ Group of the German Facility Management Association (GefMa) and in the Education Network Group of the European Facility Management Network (EuroFM).  

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About the Geoinformation and Public Works (GeKo) degree program: Geoinformation and Public Works is a cross-disciplinary degree program at the interface between pure geoinformation and applied municipal technology. The program focuses on the following subjects: Geoinformation, Surveying Engineering, Facility Management, Land Management and Technical Infrastructure. Students learn to understand and to analyze spatial geo-data. The studies enable them to find solutions for organizational and technical problems in the context of an urban environment. They will not only be taught in subject-related matters but they also improve their skills in methodology and their knowledge of business and legal contexts. More information: www.fb1.fh-frankfurt.de/geko
International business operations and international cooperation are key elements in the curriculum, both from a social and cultural perspective and from an economic point of view.

'The emphasis in this new MBA programme is on the cross-cultural perspective,' explains Thomas Madritsch, director of Facility and Real Estate Management Studies at Hochschule Kufstein. 'In today's globalised world internationally operating companies are increasingly focusing on efficiency and effectiveness, taking into consideration the various cultures, laws and norms. Consequently, there is a huge demand for facility and real estate managers with an international scope. Our aim is to teach students more about other cultures and norms. Knowledge about legislation is important, but practical matters are also dealt with. An example is in Europe, people have no problem with working in a room where the temperature is 24°C Celsius. In Hong Kong, however, the temperature must not rise above 18°C, simply because the dress code there is long-sleeved shirts and ties. When it is 22°C in a shopping centre, people will go to the competition, where it is 18°C. These are differences that matter and real estate managers have to be aware of them. This cross-cultural understanding is what makes the MBA programme unique.'

15 months worldwide

The MBA is scheduled to be launched in September 2009. It lasts fifteen months and consists of five phases. Students will successively study in the Netherlands, Asia, Austria and the USA. They will be taught by local professors, do site trips and conduct individual research. The final thesis can be written anywhere in the world, the student will receive support from either the Netherlands or Austria during these months.

René Hermans, director of the Academy of Facility Management at NHTV Breda: 'When you've just started on the programme, this final thesis may seem far away, but on the very first day we ask our students: what will your final thesis be about? We ask them this question on day 1, on day 31, on day 100, again and again and again. This process of awareness-raising is very important. Of course, the thesis has to be internationally-oriented; addressing a topic from the wide sphere of activities of real estate or facility management. What's more, the aspect of social responsibility has to be woven into the thesis, and the research results must present an added value to the company concerned.'

A unique combination

Thomas: 'What's also unique about this MBA programme is the combination of real estate and facility management. In my opinion, facility managers have to know more about real estate and, real estate managers have to know more about facility management. Real estate management is profit-oriented, it is about the hard facts, whereas the facility manager is a service provider whose aim it is to create the most optimal work environment. His focus is on getting the best out of people, it is more about the soft facts.'

Distinctive profiles

'This combination of hard and soft is also reflected in the distinctive profiles of NHTV and Hochschule Kufstein,' Thomas continues. 'Both education institutions have a strong international outlook, and additionally, they distinguish themselves by content themes. In the case of NHTV, these themes are imagining, cross-cultural understanding and social responsibility. Hochschule Kufstein plays a pivotal role in strengthening the link between the academic world and the business community. And, as a result, it is more hard-fact oriented with subjects such as technology, architecture and engineering. In my opinion, a perfect match!' Content

And these distinguishing themes have obviously been included in the development of the MBA programme. The programme is structured around four themes:

Theme 1, Internationalising RE&FM, will be offered by NHTV Breda and is about globalisation and cross-cultural understanding. Theme 2, sourcing RE&FM, is about business alignment and performance management, and will be delivered by Hochschule Kufstein. As will the third theme, organising RE&FM, which covers small and medium-sized enterprises, combined with growth and expansion. In the last theme, innovating RE&FM, offered by NHTV Breda, hospitality, imagining, and the work and life environment are dealt with.

Teaching methods

René: 'The programme also gives students the opportunity to experience a great variety of teaching methods. In Kufstein they will mainly take classes and study theory, while the emphasis in Breda will be on case studies and projects. NHTV has long ago adopted the didactic concept of action learning, combined with problem-based learning. The international classroom is the standard in all locations, allowing students to prepare for the cultural complexity that goes with an international career.'

Feedback from the industry

Important international organisations, such as the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) and the European Facility Management Network (EuroFM) and companies such as Philips and Shell are enthusiastic about this MBA programme.

René: 'We have received a lot of positive feedback with regard to the line of approach and the way in which we address the challenge that facility managers are facing. We go without saying that we have involved the industry in the development of the programme. NHTV’s associate professor in Facility Management, Bernard Drion, and I have talked with industry professionals about what type of graduates they need and, as a result, we came up with the four themes. The industry needs graduates with an intercultural mindset who not only consider the cost aspect, but are also aware of how important service and an agreeable work environment are. It’s not just about money; after all, you can only make money when you are innovative and service-oriented. In other words, it is all about attitude. In addition to supplying the industry with highly qualified graduates, this MBA programme offers companies a global network.'

For whom?

'We want to enthuse students from all over the world,' Thomas explains. 'Students must at least have a Bachelor’s degree in real estate, facility management, engineering or another related field (if the latter is the case, preferably combined with relevant work experience). It is a full-time study programme, which lasts 15 months. If you are already working, and a sabbatical would be an option, you can also participate. You can write your final thesis for your own employer and use your sabbatical for the rest of your studies. In all honesty, I have to admit that the study programme is quite demanding, but I am convinced that it offers the student the best ticket to the global real estate and facility management arena.'
Financial Crisis - Real Estate Becomes a Top-Level Priority

By Bernd Hafenstein

The financial crisis has taken real estate to the top position on the agendas of many CEOs. This also gives Facility Management much more visibility in the boardroom, as the real estate specialists at Droge & Comp. Financial Advisors have found in their latest projects.

As a result of the financial crisis, companies in every industry are currently implementing massive cost-reduction programs and restructuring projects. Real estate often represents the second or third largest cost item, after personnel or IT. This means that the company's own property holdings are currently gaining in importance at senior management level, as companies are looking for potential savings, not just in their core businesses, but also in secondary processes and in real estate. In the short term, these efforts are clearly focused on developing effective measures. It is interesting to see that measures that until now had been thought of as “sacred cows”, such as the outsourcing of services performed in-house, optimization of floor space or reduction of service levels, are usually postponed. We often hear: “We are taking advantage of the situation not just to cut costs, but to implement unpopular measures that could not be taken in the past for political reasons.” The project experience of Droge & Comp. Financial Advisors suggests that there are still significant potential savings hidden in facility management that could be exploited in the short term with relatively little effort.

On account of the difficult situation in the property market and the tricky financing environment, decisions to sell non-essential real estate, or to sell and lease back real estate that is essential to the operation of the business in order to improve the equity ratio and to release liquidity, are often considered. We often hear: “We are taking advantage of the situation not just to cut costs, but to implement unpopular measures that could not be taken in the past for political reasons.” The project experience of Droge & Comp. Financial Advisors suggests that there are still significant potential savings hidden in facility management that could be exploited in the short term with relatively little effort.

Areas of action for reducing costs

In essence, companies' efforts can be grouped into three areas of action:

Action area 1: Reducing costs by reorganizing Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) and optimizing CREM processes.

Depending on the requirements of the core business, there are centralized and decentralized CREM organizations. Overall, the increasing importance of real estate and facility management means that we can discern a trend towards combining and professionalizing the property-related functions within an organization, according to Dr Rolf Reincke, Principal at Droge.

For example, an international technology group is currently combining its global real estate and facility management, and in future will centrally control all the processes, from the leasing of buildings to the purchasing of facility management services. This concentration of resources should significantly increase efficiency and will be a first step towards creating full transparency concerning real estate costs. The second step will be to optimize the utilization of floor space, reduce vacant floor space, specify centralized standards and rules, and buy in services in a professional manner.

Action area 2: Reducing costs through innovative management of floor space.

Especially industrial companies with large office and administrative areas, as well as banks and insurance companies can see considerable cost reduction potentials in the optimum utilization of space. In times of short-time work and significantly reduced profits, these savings can be enhanced, on account of the increased willingness of employees to move out of their usual comfort zones.

For Facility Management service providers, this means on the one hand a slight decline in volume owing to rising pressure on prices, but on the other hand a focus on a small number of strong service partners on the part of industrial companies. This development represents a potential advantage for large and specialized FM service providers. The losers in the financial crisis, however, will include small and medium-sized service providers without a sector-specific focus or functional specialization.

Action area 3: Reducing costs by optimizing the real net output ratio.

In the context of complex cost-cutting programs or restructuring projects, it is not uncommon for all the above action areas to be addressed in parallel. In order to identify and quantify existing potentials, benchmarking or best-in-class comparisons are generally used.

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Through these and other measures, the group expects to make savings in the hundreds of millions.

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Modern floor space utilization concepts offer many advantages, such as potential cost savings in net rents and follow-up costs, e.g. operating costs, moving expenses or the costs of structural alterations. Moreover, the initiators of these measures can expect improvements in quality as a result of enhanced communication, increased ability of colleagues to reach each other and easier access to decision makers.

The example of an international financial services company shows that there are numerous levers for optimization in this action area. As part of a global project, this company is implementing mobile working environment concepts and the functional harmonization of office space, by means of desk-sharing and open space structures. As a result, it expects to make an annual saving of 20% of floor space and operating costs. In addition, moving expenses will be reduced by reassigning working spaces without any need for structural alterations and by the use of new technologies.

For FM service providers, this once again means a decline in order volumes and an increasing requirement to be flexible. It is important for the FM industry to think about new partnership and cooperation models, says Christian Bauerschmidt, Principal at Droge.

Action area 3: Reducing costs by

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Emergency Management? It's My Job

By Mariantonietta Lisena
From: Gestire, November 2008

Apart from accident prevention, facility management also involves dealing with sudden alarms and unexpected hazards. Two professional facility managers explain the procedures used in their respective companies to handle critical situations, and describe the idea of training a volunteer response team to intervene in case of need.

Facility Management is based on several core concepts. One of the most important can be expressed in a single word: prevention. Theoretically, the perfect facility manager would be one who never experiences a system malfunction or disruption to the supply of services. But perfection is a purely theoretical concept. The interaction between staff, a company's operations and the buildings that house them is far too complex to be predicted and regulated at all times, which means that, sooner or later, something is bound to go wrong. In reality, the perfect facility manager is one who has successfully prepared his company to handle any emergency and minimize the risk of damage even in the most critical situations.

To understand how a company can react successfully to extreme danger, we interviewed Flaminia Pellegrini, Cisco Systems' Senior Workplace Manager for Italy, Iberia, France & Nordics Region, and Kevin Fisher, Security Supervisor Italy, Greece & Cyprus for the same company.

Who is responsible for emergency management at your company?

Both security and service managers are entrusted to a dedicated department headed by a European manager who coordinates operations from London. All the programs are adopted across the continent, in full collaboration with our US-based parent company. Of course, the general plans are adapted to meet the needs of each site. My job is to supervise safety and security operations for Italy, Greece and Cyprus.

FP: All emergency and safety management operations also affect my sphere of activity, in many respects. For example, the safety and security department organizes training courses on emergency management, but these courses are run in conjunction with an external provider, which is where my role comes into play. The facility manager is an essential point of contact in every safety-related activity.

How is emergency management organized from a practical viewpoint?

FP: We have a series of documents to regulate this activity. The two most important are the Site Management Plan and the Emergency Action Plan. The first explains the general procedures related to a particular site, such as how to form a team of emergency response volunteers, decide what equipment they need and define individual emergencies, and so on.

KF: Each site also has its own specific Emergency Action Plan, which goes into more practical detail. It contains extremely detailed information about how to proceed in the event of a fire, toxic cloud or any other kind of hazard that might occur. For example, it contains a list of questions that switchboard operators have to ask people calling to report a bomb, so they can gather information to decide whether the threat is well-founded or not.

You mentioned a team of emergency management volunteers. Can you tell us more?

KF: We have set up Emergency Response Teams (ERT), staffed entirely by volunteer employees. Anyone deciding to join an ERT receives an emergency kit and undergoes periodic training, during which he learns how to handle various critical situations. Basically, we prepare the volunteers to act as a point of contact for other employees in the event of a medical or other emergency. They are the ones who make sure that everyone is evacuated from the buildings in an orderly fashion.

FP: A list of all the ERT members in a particular building and the adjacent one is clearly displayed on each floor, together with essential details such as the location of their desks and a telephone number. The names of the ERT members on each floor are highlighted and instantly recognizable. They also have a notice placed above their workstations, so they can be identified more easily.

What about the departments in which people mainly work away from the office and have no desks of their own? Have you got any ideas on how to solve this problem?

FP: The ERT members have a private workstation which they use whenever they are in the office. This means that the other personnel know, at all times, that whoever is sitting at that desk is part of an ERT.

KF: I should also mention that every telephone in the company has a button that, if pressed, instantly links up to the emergency coordination centre in London. In a dangerous situation, if you are unsure of what to do, or even if you have the tiniest suspicion that there might be a threat, all you have to do is press the button, tell the operator your location and describe the problem. The operator will give you a series of details including the location of the nearest ERT member. Depending on the type of emergency, the operations centre will also contact a list of people including managers, the ERT, and the proprietor of the site, if it is not company-owned.

Have you struggled to find volunteers for the emergency response teams?

KF: Far from it. At the moment we have more candidates than we need. I must stress that being a member of an ERT brings no economic or other benefits.

How do you explain this success?

FP: The desire to help others is certainly a factor. Learning how to behave in dangerous situations also gives you a sense of security - a valuable asset at times like these, when fear is ever present. The members of these teams are drawn from all levels of the company, and are a valuable opportunity to consolidate team spirit, a way to see colleagues and bosses in a new light. Last year, a colleague of mine assisted a person having a heart attack at Fiumicino airport, thanks to the first aid course he had attended. Do you carry out simulations?

KF: Each year we carry out a planned simulation exercise. Along with the ERT volunteers, we devise a scenario such as a fire involving two casualties, and then act it out. People know that it's a simulation. There are also other "surprise" drills when nobody, not even the ERT, knows that it's a false alarm. We also brief an external observer who can take note of everything that happens and give us feedback. All the information about these simulations are recorded and analyzed, so we can see where there is room for improvement.

In your opinion, does Italy have an adequate "culture" of emergency management?

FP: No. I'll give you an example. We planned a surprise large-scale simulation in Madrid. We wanted it to be as realistic as possible, to see how employees would react. The police and fire brigade were enthusiastic and helped us in every way they could. The municipal police even volunteered to block off the street to traffic, to make things easier. In Italy, the same operation encountered huge problems and was welcomed with a spirit of surprise and indifference. It was a shame, because our job is not to resolve emergencies, but to put professional "emergency managers" in the best conditions to respond.

Financial Crisis - Property to be Top Priority

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optimizing the real net output ratio

The real net output ratio in real estate and facility management is the third major action area that is currently being examined by companies in all industries. The objectives are to focus on the core business, to reduce costs and to increase flexibility. In times of crisis, the third of these objectives, increasing flexibility, has a particularly high priority.

In the case of internal service providers, extensive restructuring measures have often already been implemented, but only in a few cases will these prove sufficient to ensure that they are competitive with external service providers in the long term.

For example, an international automotive industry supplier compared its internal providers of facility management services with the external competition. The benchmarking showed that the company's own service providers were charging approximately 20% above the market price, on account of tariffs, allocated costs, contract structures and systems. It was subsequently decided to spin off the internal service provider. For this step, only a purchaser with a long-term perspective could be considered, because, firstly, the same high quality had to be guaranteed and, secondly, it was important to offer a long-term future to the employees taken on by the external partner.
Facility Management Plays a Key Role in Times of Crisis

John McGee: "In hard times, budgets get reduced, projects get deferred and maintaining a positive flow becomes more difficult. Facility management professionals are critical to the business in these times including leading the prioritization of maintenance projects, staying in control of day-to-day building costs, reducing energy consumption and advising on where to defer and where to invest in building improvements."

What does IFMA expect for the FM industry within the next one or two years?
John McGee: "We can expect challenging times for the next several years. New construction will continue to be low, major emphasis will be placed on project elimination and deferrals and increased efforts will be made to reduce costs. Due to both the economic downturn and the positive impact of the stimulus package, major emphasis will be placed on improvement projects to improve energy consumption and costs."

What are the current challenges of global FM?
John McGee: "It is critical that national and international associations continue to network and work on common initiatives. A great example of this is the partnering between EuroFM and IFMA. Such partnering allows the transfer of best practice, benchmarking, research and education across countries for the advancement of the FM profession globally."

Facility Management Plays a Key Role in Times of Crisis

EuroFM and the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) are hosting the “European Facility Management Conference” (EFMC) on 16th and 17th June 2009 in Amsterdam. EFMC organizer IBC Euroforum (Informa Group) talked to John McGee, Chair of IFMA Board of Directors, and asked him three crucial questions.

Why is FM so important in hard times?
John McGee: "Facility management professionals are critical to the business in these times including leading the prioritization of maintenance projects, staying in control of day-to-day building costs, reducing energy consumption and advising on where to defer and where to invest in building improvements."

What does IFMA expect for the FM industry within the next one or two years?
John McGee: "We expect challenging times for the next several years. New construction will continue to be low, major emphasis will be placed on project elimination and deferrals and increased efforts will be made to reduce costs. Due to both the economic downturn and the positive impact of the stimulus package, major emphasis will be placed on improvement projects to improve energy consumption and costs."

What are the current challenges of global FM?
John McGee: "It is critical that national and international associations continue to network and work on common initiatives. A great example of this is the partnering between EuroFM and IFMA. Such partnering allows the transfer of best practice, benchmarking, research and education across countries for the advancement of the FM profession globally."

In order to underline the collaboration of economy and science, the Business Conference and the parallel Research Symposium will be networked at EFMC 2009. More than 50 top speakers from Europe and abroad will allude to strategies, profitability and sustainability of FM. Keynote speeches will be delivered by Slovenian Cultural Ambassador Miha Pogačnik, concert violinist and entrepreneur, and by Rob Creemers, Dutch information industry trend watcher. Creemers will go into the development of FM, considering global and European challenges. Magnus Kuchler, Partner at Ernst & Young in Sweden, will host the "FM debate of the year" addressing the issue of outsourcing. Leading FM service providers such as Echelon, Planon and the International Facility Alliance will be exhibitors at EFMC 2009. Information on the event programme is available on the internet at: http://www.efmc2009.com.
Take a Deep Breath

By Kenneth Freeman

The international fiscal nightmare, which adds untold stress to our lives, is an ideal time to take ownership of our interior environment to ensure a sensory experience that evokes harmony and tranquility. Who can fail to be charmed by the graceful arch of palm leaves or the exotic beauty of orchids? However, research has shown that the value of plants goes far beyond the purely aesthetic. Plants are actually good for the building and its occupants in a number of subtle ways and are an important element in providing a pleasant, tranquil environment where people can work or relax. As the financial markets go through a roller coaster ride filled with bumps and scares, it is more important than ever to ensure that the elements you can control provide sensory satisfaction.

As humans, we are consciously and sub-consciously affected by everything that touches our five senses. Our moods and behaviors are altered by the aromas that surround us—the artwork we gaze at and the plants that populate our interior spaces. Our environments are multi-layered and there is no better time than now to ensure that each layer of our interior world speaks to our soul and enhances our well-being. Improving one’s environment is not frivolous as it has bottom-line results for both personal health and work performance. Research studies provide concrete data to support an enhanced environment.

Plants improve the environment

Tests carried out by Rentokil Initial’s research and development department suggest that interior plants can absorb, diffract or reflect background noise in buildings—thereby making the environment more comfortable for the occupants. The effect appears to be dependent on plant type, planting density, location and sound frequency.

To investigate the potential acoustic benefits of interior plants in more detail, further research was carried out by post-graduate student Peter Costa at South Bank University, London. To quantify the acoustic effect, the sound absorption coefficients of a number of plant species were measured and compared with other building materials. The higher the absorption coefficient, the better the material is at absorbing sound—a coefficient of 0.25 means that a quarter of the sound is absorbed; 0.50 refers to half the sound and so on. The study indicates that plants are generally more efficient at absorbing high sound frequencies than low ones.

Good examples of plants that are efficient at absorbing high sounds are Spathiphyllum wallisii (Peace Lily), Philodendron scandens (Sweetheart Plant), Dracaena marginata (Madagascan Dragon Tree) and Ficus benjamina (Weeping Fig). High frequencies cause the most irritation to building occupants, so the benefit of having plants becomes clear.

Green buildings beat sick buildings

There is general agreement within the scientific community that plants improve the indoor environment and may be useful weapons in the fight against the modern phenomenon known as sick building syndrome. No specific cause of sick building syndrome has been identified, but poor air quality, excessive background noise and inadequate temperature and light control are thought to be important factors. Because plants have a large surface area and exchange water and gases with their surroundings, they have a unique ability to tackle many environmental problems.

In particular, plants can reduce levels of carbon dioxide, which can accumulate in buildings from the breathing of its occupants and the by-products of heating systems and electrical equipment. Plants increase

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Plant species</th>
<th>Sound Frequency (Hz)</th>
<th>125</th>
<th>250</th>
<th>500</th>
<th>1000</th>
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Comparisons

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thick pile carpet</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasterboard</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh snow, 100 mm</td>
<td>0.45</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

continues on page 6
relative humidity (RH), which should be between 40 percent and 60 percent RH for maximum human comfort. Plants reduce levels of certain pollutant gases, such as formaldehyde, benzene and nitrogen dioxide. They also reduce airborne dust levels, air temperatures and background noise levels. In short, every plant is a miniature air-conditioning and purification system.

**Plants as stress relievers**

The relationship between a person's psychological well-being and the presence of plants has always been somewhat speculative. Many people instinctively feel that plants have positive effects, although there has been very little proof—until recently. Scientific reports from researchers at universities in the United States, the Netherlands and the U.K. shed new light on the effect plants can have on the stress levels and productivity of office workers.

Virginia Lohr and her colleagues at the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, Washington State University looked at the benefits of adding plants to a windowless workplace—in this instance, a college computer laboratory. Participants' blood pressure and emotions were monitored while completing a simple, timed computer task in the presence or absence of plants.

"When plants were added to this interior space, the participants were more productive (12 percent quicker reaction time on the computer task) and less stressed (systolic blood pressure readings lowered by one to four units)," reported Lohr. "Immediately after completing the task, participants in the room with plants present reported feeling more attentive (an increase of 0.5 on a self-reported scale from one to five) than people in the room with no plants."

Further evidence for productivity improvement with plants is highlighted in a review of "the effect of healthy workplaces on the well-being and productivity of office workers" by John Bergs in the Netherlands. Bergs cites both Tove Fjeld and a study carried out in the Netherlands, at the Winterswijk Tax Office, where the influence of plants on productivity was closely monitored. The study was carried out using a control group (without plants) and a test group (with plants) in comparable areas of the building. The most significant findings of the study included improvements in air quality (both measured and perceived by the employees) and improvements in productivity. Berg found that productivity improved and concentration was enhanced with the strongest link found for those working at computer terminals.

Additional evidence that plants help to reduce stress is provided by Helen Russell, in her dissertation, "The effect of interior planting on stress." Russell's study, carried out at The University of Surrey [Guildford, Surrey, England], tested whether the presence of plants in a room affected the stress levels of people undertaking a complex task. Participants were invited to an office that had no plants, or was heavily planted. Sensors were attached to the skin of the participants to record skin conductivity, heart rate and blood pressure. The participant was allowed to get used to the surroundings for 10 minutes, during which time a base line recording of their stress level was recorded. After this 10-minute period, the participant was asked to add up a list of 78 numbers without using their fingers or counting aloud. Distractions such as the sound of a ringing telephone or traffic noise were played to them at random intervals. After the test, a further 10-minute period of rest was allowed.

Of the three types of measurements made, skin conductivity showed the greatest differences between planted and unplanted surroundings. In the planted office, not only were stress levels lower, but people recovered from their stress more quickly than those in the unplanted office during the 10 minute post-test rest period.

**Power of scent**

Do you feel more relaxed as you enter a hotel spa lobby when greeted by subtle notes of lavender? The power of subliminal smells with its ability to alter moods and buying decisions is growing across the globe. Even the famed Davos Global Economic Forum isn't turning up their nose at the power of olfactory-manipulation having hired a scientist to present a range of odors geared at helping delegates tackle the financial meltdown at this year's event.

Researchers have found a strong correlation between smell and memory. Some businesses are using manufactured scents to elicit positive memories and induce a sense of well-being for shoppers. When in a good mood, a customer may stay in the store for a longer time which leads to greater buyer opportunities for the retailer. Retailers use scent branding to keep customers contentedly shopping. Home fragrance, whether distributed by spray cans, atomizers or candles, establishes the mood and feeling of a residence. Aromatherapists have long used essential oils for healing, emotion and mood. For example, scents such as lavender, vanilla and bergamot have a calming effect while cinnamon and spearmint energize.

**Avert bare walls syndrome**

Many of us now spend most of our waking lives at work in an office. It is simply no longer a case of wanting it to be a more pleasant place. We need to make our offices happy, inspiring and attractive places to be. While gazing at an original Monet or Matisse in our home or office is unattainable for most of us, we can still gain the psychic and emotional benefits from art with minor investments in fine art posters, prints, photography and limited edition art which work overtime to enliven our workplaces and inspire creativity and communication.

The outside world may be chaotic and unstable but we can control the elements of our interior worlds. By surrounding yourself in an environment that nourishes your senses, you will become fortified. Your tools of survival will be productivity, tranquility and creativity. Take a few moments to explore the possibilities.

Kenneth Freeman is international technical director for Ambius, the premier creator of ambience for businesses, which enriches the work experience and enables people to thrive. An expert in interior landscaping, he has been directly involved in all aspects of research into the benefits of interior plants as well as the development of horticultural best practices.

Freeman has developed a wide range of education and training programs and is the author of continuing education programs for architects as part of the Royal Institute of British Architects Continuing Professional Development Core Curriculum, and in the U.S. as part of the American Institute of Architects Continuing Education System. He is based in London, England and can be reached at kenneth.freeman@ambius.com.
Is Flexible Working Killing Teamwork?

By Martin G Bell & Marie Puybaraud

The modern trend for breaking out of the traditional environment is spreading across the world of work and the perceived benefits are many. But will there be side effects eroding trust and productivity in the group? Here, FM advisor Martin G Bell and workplace innovations expert Marie Puybaraud address the question...

The complexity of interaction of humans within a physical space has been well researched from a social science perspective (e.g., prisons, schools and classrooms). Little research has focused on the workplace. Without understanding the mechanisms of the workplace, it is difficult to understand how human beings interact within it. Interaction occurs at a personal level in the privacy of our social network, but also within our working community. These boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred. The shifting working patterns of knowledge workers demonstrate the time spent “at the office” has dramatically reduced and working from home or multiple locations has increased. Employees want to useflexible working to be in control of their lives and to create a work life balance.

Yet, one negative consequence of flexible working is that it can lead to isolation and loss of attachment to a community. Flexible workers can suffer from a sense of “mild abandonment” from the organisation. As the workplace becomes a place of increased intensity of collaboration and interaction it can have a positive impact and enhance emotional engagement. According to a flexible working survey carried out by Johnson Controls in 2007, organisational mobility appears to have grown from 45 per cent in 2002 to 82 per cent, showing a significant change in our way of working. As our time in the office has decreased from 55 per cent in 2002 to 18 per cent, flexible working has had a dramatic impact on teamwork.

Work is social, how has flexible working changed our interaction?

Major improvements in the way we design our workplaces has increased teamwork behaviours within the workplace. Through monitoring employee’s movement and interaction it can be observed that the more open plan the workplace, the more intense the level of collaboration. Flexible working therefore delivers two fundamental dynamics to collaboration:

- Spatial dynamics: by breaking physical barriers and forcing employees to make visual contact with each other, forcing communication.
- Collaborative working environment: providing collaborative work spaces where individuals have opportunities to meet.

Loss of regular office attendance can lead to a feeling of dislocation from the physical workplace as opportunities for face-to-face engagement with the rest of the workforce are reduced. The modern day open plan office workplaces could represent a radio where employees learn from “tuning in” to formal and informal conversations. Research published in 2007 by performance management consultancy Towers Perrin indicates a quarter of the workforce are highly disengaged, with 62 per cent moderately engaged at best. The workplace remains the most important place to interact. The workplace acts as a magnet to attract individuals and informal interaction can generate an intensive communication buzz. Rumours play an essential part in employees learning about changes within the workplace.

The problem with rumour-based assumptions is that messages can be misunderstood, leading to doubt and confusion. In turn, this can lead to individual concerns as employees are aware that they will frequently learn informally first about any changes that could impact them.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) advocates that flexible working strategies are good people management practices and can improve retention and reduce recruitment costs. Workplace design is likely to become a strategic weapon in the battle to attract and retain scarce young talent in today’s increasingly competitive global economy. This competition can place a higher value on generic skill-sets (e.g., powers of influence, project management) rather than functional expertise. The workplaces are environments where information is shared in the pursuit of multiple objectives. As much of this information or knowledge exists in people’s minds or on their laptops this exchange is open to manipulation. Individuals can simply withhold, distort or exaggerate information. The workplace has become a political minefield. This view is supported by management institute Roffey Park which has identified that organisational politics are now the primary cause of workplace stress and conflict.

How effectively are we managing flexible working?

In their 2003 work study The relationship between trust and performance, psychologists Erdem, Ozen and Atsan showed that trust is an essential ingredient in successful team performance. The workplace is critical in supporting effective trusting relationships.

Trust between team members will not always improve team performance, however, when it does not exist it stifles creativity, restricts quality management and individuals refrain from helping each other. Current levels of work force trust are at alarmingly low levels. Research from the CIPD shows that:

- People are generally unhappy with the way they are managed and many employees have a low opinion of senior managers and perceive them as untrustworthy
- Almost half of employees are dissatisfied with the relationship with their manager
- Two in five people do not feel they are kept well informed about their workplace organisation

Research indicated that senior management was the least trusted group in the workplace, with nearly half of staff believing that a lack of trust is a problem. Also interpersonal trust is only one part of organisational trust. The various organisational scandals and failures have led to organisational distrust, particularly regarding long-term employee job stability and the ability to meet pension contributions. Large organisations can encourage an approach of ‘individual over team’ through offering quicker career progression due to a perception of competency. Increasingly, this is not done through formal job analysis; leaders are short cutting HR processes to craft their teams using their perception of the best knowledge workers. It could be argued that the best knowledge workers are simply the employees that understand the art of self promotion to master the workplace politics of success.

While organisations might make some small token teamwork gestures awarded across an entire organisation, in the main, organisations tend to reward the individual through bonuses and enhanced career progression rather than the whole team. Organisations can unwittingly continue to encourage a philosophy of ‘individual over team’.

So, is flexible working currently killing teamwork?

It is fair to argue that flexible working is changing teamwork, and this has both constructive and destructive forces. Teamwork is about having shared goals and collaboration, not co-location. The impact on the internal environment will be dependent on individual organisational cultures. A more relevant question would be, are our working practices killing teamwork? We can contemplate this question as we start to see the impact of the current economic climate. Employees’ perception of their job security will have reduced as a result of redundancies, recruitment freezes, insolvencies and the constant media attention on the recession. The financial environment will lead to changes in managerial styles where hierarchical approaches of tighter control are favoured. This could lead to a paradoxical outcome for flexible working practices. Some managers will prefer to have their employees in the office; others will prefer to drive costs down by encouraging them to work flexibly and operate from home. As jobs become more scarce employees will think less about the team, and focus on self preservation in order to respond to the new challenges placed by the autocratic hierarchies.

Martin G Bell is a workplace and facilities management specialist at PricewaterhouseCoopers Real Estate Advisory; Marie Puybaraud is an innovation director at Johnson Controls Global Workplace Solutions
DELIVERING FACILITIES MANAGEMENT services across European boundaries is challenging, but nonetheless more and more large multinationals are turning to the FM community to deliver the benefits across their European, and increasingly, global portfolios. Now in their third year the European FM Awards provide an opportunity for FM service providers and their partners to demonstrate how the benefits of consistent delivery, cost saving and customer satisfaction can be delivered in different countries, cultures, languages and expectations.

Our review covers the finalists in the Partners Across Borders category. For details of the finalists in the European FM Researcher and European FM Student of the Year visit PFM’s website www.pfmmagazine.co.uk and in the Features Archive search ‘European FM Awards’.

Eurest Services with Shell International
Following a global tendering process in 2007, Eurest Services was awarded a multi £5m 5-year contract to deliver integrated FM services to Shell’s UK, offshore and European Sites – a total of 70 sites. These included global HQ offices, R&D laboratories, refineries, remote gas plants and offshore platforms across the UK, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Poland and the North Sea.

Since the contract began Eurest Services has gained more regions including Nordic Offshore, DACH and the Mediterranean Cluster.

The contract priorities are health, safety and the environment and these are continually monitored and measured against KPIs. Consistency of management and operation of processes across the Shell estate has been achieved through introducing standardised IT platforms and operational best practice.

Some 85 percent of services are self-performed by Eurest Services staff, and cost effective maintenance programmes introduced by performing asset and site condition surveys. A ‘One Team’ brand promotes teamwork and innovation and breaks down corporate barriers between all onsite service providers. To date innovative ideas generated by Eurest employees have realised £2.5m of savings, in addition to targeted cost savings of 10 percent in the first year.
Johnson Controls with Cisco
Global brand, Cisco through its partnership with Johnson Controls is creating a consistent message in every one of its offices across the world. They have developed a ‘One Team’ approach that is client centric rather than geographically centric and brings consistency across 33 locations in 18 countries with a 150 strong team of trained staff.
Cisco needed a partner to support its business and proactively contribute to its success through its in depth appreciation of the challenges of operating across international borders, 12 languages and 10 cultures while also increasing customer satisfaction and reducing costs.
The contract started with UK, Ireland, Iberia, the Netherlands from 2000, and Italy from 2002 with the bulk of the other countries. Key achievements have been standardisation of SLAs, KPIs, finance templates, etc; increased operational efficiency across the Cisco estate by 10 percent, environment improvements including green energy procurement for European sites; reducing waste; increased mobile working and sharing best practice across the organisations.

Sodexo with Merck Sharp & Dohme
Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) created a global FM organization in 2007 with the goal to transition non-core services to strategic partners to drive savings, efficiencies and innovations to support the business strategy. The multi-country outsourced FM contract awarded to Sodexo covers the MSD Regional HQ in Germany, and country head offices in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Spain.
MSD wanted the transition not to impact on its business operations and achieve significant savings on current spend over the contract term. Applying its tried and tested methodology adapted to the contract, Sodexo ensured maximum efficiency and consistency during the roll out. It reviewed subcontractor contracts and transitioned many services to a self perform basis on each site so that the multiple number of existing suppliers were replaced with a single provider. Germany, Belgium, Italy and Spain have transitioned to Sodexo and France is ongoing. The original scope of services was reassessed and where appropriate expanded following an Innovation and Scope Workshop formed by MSD and Sodexo.
There have been high levels of interaction across countries with the central team and country site managers frequently meeting and sharing best practice, and developing a higher degree of cooperation and better service delivery alignment.

16-17th June, Okura Hotel, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Business conference in 2 parallel streams with 22 sessions and 4 plenary sessions
Research symposium, in two parallel streams 10 sessions and 4 Plenary sessions
Speakers from 15 countries sharing experience and best practice
Supported by 33 national FM organisations and 41 FM research and educational institutions.
Discounts for IFMA and EuroFM members, students and academics www.efmc2009.com
RONALD BALVERS, 24, is a student at INHolland University in Amsterdam Diemen. His graduation project is based in the construction company BAM in its utilities specialist company, BAM utiliteitsbouw. He is exploring the development of facility management opportunities for the company after construction projects are finished into the management and maintenance of the facilities.

HANNA KOSKISTO, 24, is a student at Helsinki University of Technology, joining in 2002 and changing to studying facility management in 2005. In the Department of Surveying in the Institute of Real Estate Studies, Hanna is working on an international master programme with Hanken School of Economics. Her thesis is in the real estate service sector and aims to assess the needs of a media toolkit for the sector in Scandinavia and the Baltic States.

FATIMA STITOU, 22, studied facility management at the university INHolland in Amsterdam Diemen and worked part time in the facility department at the Dutch Central Bank in Amsterdam. Using this experience she based her thesis on change management and change strategies for a successful move from a traditional FM organisation to one that co-operates on a strategic level. She developed a competence plan to motivate FM employees to improve their performance levels.

NILS GERSBERG is a PhD student at the University of Salford and a researcher at Helsinki University of Technology - TKK. He is currently involved in a research project into ‘workplace resource management for knowledge work’ in collaboration with Stamford University’s Centre of Integrated Facilities Management, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim and TKK.

RUUD DE HAAS studied at Wageningen University in the Management, Economics and Consumer Studies department. Working with the office furniture manufacturer Samas, his research into ‘Which organisational and context factors are suitable to recognise if office furniture customers, who are considering a refurbishing of their office, match with a traditional or innovative office layout concept’ identified critical factors that ensure the successful implementation of innovative office concepts.

JESSICA ORN is a PhD student at Helsinki University of Technology - TKK. Her PhD research is part of a study, ‘Office occupiers preferences and needs in a changing business environment.’ This aims to understand occupier preferences and needs combined with a property classification of offices which will have application across different European countries.
Blessed Side Effect?
By Zoltán Scharek

The crisis may have a positive effect on a "background industry", such as the sector of property operation, because the lack of new projects puts the emphasis on better utilization of real property already owned.

"We manage 452 thousand square meters of built-up space, not counting the indoor areas and parks" says Zoltán Scharek, Leader of Cushman & Wakefield (C&W)'s Property Management branch, listing the main parameters, whose business handles three hundred lessees in 34 properties. Property management has been part of the company's portfolio - whose main profile is consulting - since 1995, taking on the management of the first building 15 years ago. The majority of the real estate handled by them are commercial units, 22 to be precise, in addition to the management of eight office buildings, three logistics centers and one hotel. Several well-known properties are included in their portfolio: the East-West Business Centre, the MOM Park office towers, and the Átrium Park A-category office building, but they also have other high-profile projects such as the management of the Campona shopping centre, and ten Praktikers based in Hungary, as well as the management of the also domestically based Park Centers. In terms of logistics, the parcel delivery firm DHL stands out, and, finally, the Artotel of Budapest adds a dash of color to the portfolio. The management of apartment buildings has not even been considered yet, due to lack of capacity.

This year's objective for the business includes "preservation and, if possible, the further growth of the portfolio, utilizing the growing demands for professional operations managers". So far they have won their Service Contracts through tenders and they place a great emphasis on these in the future as well.

They offer comprehensive property management solutions, but their lines of activity include the valuation, leasing and sale/purchase of commercial real estate. Through these services and synergies, the cross-marketing of property management services comes into the picture. Naturally, many new projects arrive at the property management office in Budapest through the extensive clientele of the global group of companies. One of these is Praktiker, for example, whose sale and purchase were supported by the company's headquarters in London as well as by domestic sales.

Background Industry in the Foreground
In the domestic property management industry, the home owner has always been the one to establish the parameters and expiration date of the property operation contract. The contracts are prepared by the clients, which are then signed by the operators when small modifications are made. Since there are a relatively large number of property management companies, they are doing their work more and more professionally, and the client has more choice as a consequence of competition.

The international economic crisis has impacted on the property management industry as well. For years, the emphasis was on development and leasing within the real property profession; the activities related to these were considered secondary. Now that the credit sources have dwindled, the banks' interest margin has increased, confidence has decreased in even the most reliable investors in the market, and the number of capital investors (and, at the same time, the number of capital investments) has significantly dropped. At the same time, the significance of property management has been upgraded, and the financial performance of real estate held has become almost the only source of revenue for many investors. It is no accident that they are trying to find any opportunity to "squeeze out" as much as possible from their real properties, not at the expense of their tenants and other partners, of course. The other consequence of the economic crisis is the worsening of the solvency of companies. There is a growing fear on behalf of the owners regarding the growing expenses and the loss of tenants.

Only Short Term Solutions
The most important objective therefore is to prevent the loss of tenants. The role of the property manager has thus gained in value, his tasks including having to maintain the good relationship developed with the tenants, guarantee the fulfillment of the services undertaken, the absolute assurance of the contractual revenues and rights, the search for new revenue opportunities, especially in the case of the commercial portfolios. "Because neither the tenant, nor the owner of the leased property want to pay for services that are not in fact requisitioned, the third-party service agreements must be reviewed, paying special attention to those that are unnecessary". Services like cleaning, security, gardening, etc., were outsourced, and they have entered into a contract with professional facility management companies, such as Hochtief, First Facility, Future FM, DeTeImmobilien and Cosserviz.

The largest expense item in the operation of a real property is energy consumption. The energy audit has already passed at Campona (the purchase contract and usage were included in this) and second inspections can be expected elsewhere as well. The buildings in their portfolio are relatively new, the oldest one being barely over 10 years old. However, in a few cases, at the time the investment into the property was made, the main consideration was to reduce the expenses, and only with time it crystallized that there were problems with energy efficiency. Making the buildings more energy efficient is made difficult by the fact that - in the current utopian situation, Zoltán Scharek - huge amounts of capital are required to make a building completely "green". Although that would be the real solution, this can at best be considered in the long run. The more rational strategy in the short run would be the implementation of solutions requiring smaller investments, continues on page 12
for example, providing hot water from renewable energy sources, or improving insulation. This general principle is not contradicted by the fact that the East-West Business Centre just recently went through a complete renovation that cost 2.5 billion HUF.

**Profitability is a Must**

In the case of the properties managed by the company, the service charge is on average around 4 euros per square meter per month for office buildings (where individual electric meters are installed). Depending on the size of the building (for a smaller building the fee items are larger) and, in the case of commercial properties, services are cheaper outside the capital and, taking this into consideration, the range is greater in the case of commercial properties: the service fees are between 6-11 euros.

The revenue brought in by property management is not restricted to a specific area, however: “at our company, all branches must be profitable”. It is public knowledge that they prefer the operation of commercial properties because that is where the most added value can be created. Their position is more favorable, the playing field is larger because, while in an office building the focus lies on the tenant receiving all the services specified in the contract, in the case of a shopping centre the main job is to “have customers” and to entice customers to come in.

Zoltán Scharek is an economist, a certified real estate expert, member of the RICS International organization. He worked at the Europa Investment Fund Management Company until 2008 (at the same time serving as member of the Board of Directors). He is married and has two daughters. He speaks English and German. “I will tell you with all honesty that, contrary to many others, I have free time”, he said. There is time for family, swimming, classical music and theatre. His colleagues added that “he makes excellent pastries, even for Christmas”.

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**Blessed Side Effect?**

continued from page 11
What is a building’s usability?

By Nora Johanne Klungseth & Geir K. Hansen

How can a building contribute to a business’ value creation? What user qualities contribute to advancing the business’ goals and what factors contribute to preventing a business from working efficiently? And not least, how should we evaluate a building’s usability, or lack of usability?

Building’s usability or performance level will often be related to technical, functional or operational circumstances. There has been an increasing focus in recent years on factors such as usability, adaptability and accessibility, to name some of the central elements.

A building’s suitability in use, i.e. a building’s usability, concerns how buildings can help organisations achieve their goals and ensure the satisfaction of their users. In other words, how can buildings contribute to efficient operations for the core business and for the support services (FM).

A building that hampers or prevents users from conducting their business in a good and effective manner can inflict greater costs than necessary on the user organisation for personnel and operations. Buildings that are not functional can restrict a business’ professional goals, i.e. the company’s commercial and professional goals, i.e. the company’s value creation in a broader sense.

Usability is defined by NS-EN ISO 9241/1998 as: “the extent, to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use…” In simple terms, usability concerns how you and I can perform our work better by having a building that supports the work we do. A building that supports the work, rather than obstructing it.

The ability to evaluate the usability is therefore of major importance for both the owners and the contractors. It can lead to better quality for the delivered product and better administration of the buildings.

Why evaluate usability?

Traditionally, the building sector and construction research have focused on the planning and construction phases, but regarded from the perspective of the building’s life, it is the usage phase that dominates, both in its duration and in the significance for the building’s life cycle value and usability. How the building actually functions when it is used is therefore critical for whether or not the building is regarded as a success and whether it constitutes an asset for its owners and users. For an FM organisation, the concept of usability is relevant in relation to how one support a business. In this connection, the primary goal is to focus on the effect of what is delivered rather than what or how it is delivered.

Buildings’ usability is central in relation to how users’ needs are fulfilled. The degree to which the users’ needs and requirements are successfully formulated during the planning phase will influence the outcome. It is also important that this is performed and translated to physical and technological structures. The connection between requirement specifications and the result (the completed building) says something about the degree to which the goal is achieved in a building project seen from the perspective of the designers and the contractors. However, the builder and the users will primarily be concerned with the utility of the building constructed, i.e. the effect the building has in relation to the business’ goals. In this connection, the building will be one of several instruments or input factors along with the personnel, organisation or technology. From this perspective, it is important to gain knowledge of the concepts, systems and solutions that are selected for a building and which produce the desired effects.

Another important reason for evaluation of usability is the major and rapid changes with regard to business and market development, the use of technology, competency and organisation that result in the constant creation of new and other requirements to the physical surroundings. Other important reasons for the evaluation of buildings are:

- Better understanding for the connection between organisation, the use of technology and physical surroundings
- A continuous adaptation and development of the building based on the business’ needs and requirements
- Development of relevant support services for the business
- Experience gives feed forward when planning and constructing new buildings

A systematic evaluation of buildings in use will be an effective way to produce this knowledge, both in relation to the planning of the new building and not least for the development and change of existing buildings.

What is usability?

There are already many concepts, definitions and methods that are relevant to a building’s quality, standard and condition. Most of these are associated primarily with the building as a physical object and not with its usability.

In this respect, the concept of usability is based on the ISO standard 9241-11. Here the concept of Usability is usually associated with product design and the suitability of the product from a user’s perspective. In accordance with the ISO standard, a building’s or a product’s usability is defined on the basis of the following three factors:

- Effectiveness describes whether the user can achieve what they require with the product. Effect concerns value creation and doing the right things and must be related to a strategic level in the organisation.
- Efficiency is an expression of how long it takes to achieve the results required by the user. Efficiency is about doing things correctly, being productive, and having sufficient space, equipment and support systems.
- Satisfaction is about the user’s experiences, feelings and attitude towards the product or the building.

The concept of usability relates to all aspects of the users’ or company’s experiences using a building and focuses on the building’s suitability in relation to a given use or purpose. This means that the usability concept relates to a building’s ability to support a company’s commercial and professional goals, i.e. the company’s value creation in a broader sense.

Both quantitative (time and money) and qualitative (quality experienced) measurements are used when companies wish to measure efficiency and effectiveness. The concept of usability is not unambiguous. It is important to point out that a building’s usability will depend on one’s perspective. In other words, usability will depend on quality “for whom” and “for what” and must be regarded in relation to the company’s requirements. Furthermore, needs and requirements often change over time, and usability will therefore depend on the context. What is good for one user or company in a given situation may not necessarily be good for a different user or company in a different situation.

References
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Nora Johanne Klungseth, MSc Facility Management. PHD student NTNU
Geir K. Hansen, associate professor and head of department at the Department of Architectural Design and Management, Faculty of Architecture and Fine Art Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). Head of programme for the master programme in building development and administration, NTNU.
EFMC 2009: Chairman and Vice Chairman’s Message

You may feel that another “conference” is something that you can not justify in the current climate? However, the European Facilities Management Conference is an opportunity for a quick return on your investment for those who are forward thinking enough to attend. The conference will facilitate “thought leadership thinking” in facilities management across Europe and focus on core issues such as adding value to your core business, innovation in FM, sustainability, and sharing best practice which, in turn, drives productivity, efficiency and cost savings.

In addition, we have sessions that will enable you to meet future potential employees, such as the “Student poster competition”, where you can see the “best of the best” new talent. Finally, we will present at the gala dinner the winners of our European awards for Partnership across borders, Researcher of the year and Student of the year. So we would encourage you to attend and we are confident that you will not be disappointed.

Hope to see you there and warm regards

Albert Pilger, Chairman EuroFM
Wayne Tantrum, Vice Chairman
Euro FM

Practice Network Group Report by Helena Ohlsson, Chair

The EuroFM Practice Network Group (PNG) is proud to present a very strong program at the EFMC 2009 thanks to the great work of the Program Advisory Group, selected from members of the EuroFM Practice Network and led by Lennart Harpe. We are currently in the process of selecting the team for EFMC 2010 and the first meeting will take place in Amsterdam, just before the conference starts. The EFMC program is a great example of how you as a member of an FM association in EuroFM can have direct impact on the conference and the network activities that take place in EuroFM.

At our last meeting in London, we had a lot of debate regarding our future and our meetings, and we are continuing the process of making the network group meetings an opportunity to attract more participants as well as being more interactive with the hosting association.

Another topic that is key to the success of the PNG is the development of the EuroFM web, and the PNG has taken a lead in EuroFM to gather data and make a needs analysis in order to propose to the EuroFM board and to the members a suggestion for further development.

In Amsterdam, there are no network meetings, but the Leaders’ meeting with all the leaders of the National Associations of EuroFM and the leading members of the PNG. This is an important forum where ideas and results will be presented to the participants.

This year, in addition to the topics above, the focus is on the FMP, Facility Management Professional Certification, which is a collaboration with the International Facility Management Association, IFMA. We will also talk about the collaboration with the European Standards body, CEN, and the new standards for FM.

For the fourth consecutive year, we have a joint project with the University of Rotterdam, where two graduate students have been investigating European best practice in energy savings initiatives.

This year, the PNG has made its first steps into the Education Guide. We hope to be able to play a stronger role in the guide in order to help members across Europe to develop and grow in the FM profession throughout their careers.

Education Network Group Report by Rene Hermans, Chair ENG

Student Poster Competition 2009

The Education Network Group of EuroFM has received a record of 40 entries for the Student Poster Competition 2009. Bachelor students from Euro FM member universities were admitted to this competition. GSK and Metainy are the sponsors who cover the costs for the students' program in Amsterdam comprising a welcome party, the entrance tickets, a study field trip to the Dutch largest conference venue RAI and accommodation including breakfast.

The jury had the difficult task of selecting the 20 finalists for Amsterdam. The selection criteria were as follows: innovative approach, internationality, added value for FM and originality. Jury members included Ms. Pat Turnbull, president of IFMA Foundation, Ms. Suvi Neenen, professor at Helsinki University, Mr. José Cuartero, past chairman of EuroFM and Mr. Gordon Macmillan from GSK.

Finally, 35 students from 13 different universities are selected and will present 20 posters on Tuesday, 16 June 2009 in the afternoon at the Hotel Okura, Amsterdam. The jury will then select the finalists who will present their posters to all delegates during the closing plenary session of the conference.

Best European FM Student

There are three candidates for the title Best European FM Student 2009. Ms. Fatima Sitou and Mr. Ronald Balvers, both from InHolland University, and Ms. Hanna Koskito from Helsinki University. They all had an interview on 29 April with the jury who selected the winner. The members of the jury are Ms. Antje Junghans, Professor Fachhochschule Frankfurt and Mr. Hans Topée, director of New Directions, the company that sponsors this event.

The winner will be announced at the EFMC Amsterdam Gala on 16 June.

IFMA Foundation

GSK, Metainy and New Directions, the education Network Group would also like to thank IFMA Foundation for sponsorship of the ENG activities. Therefore, it is possible that the winners of both the Student Poster Competition and the winner of the Best FM student can participate at the IFMA World Workplace Conference, which is held 7-9 October, 2009 in Orlando.

Education Guide

ENG hopes to present the second edition of the European FM Education Guide 2009 during the EFMC Amsterdam 2009. The Education Guide is the handbook with all relevant information about higher FM Education in Europe. We thank all EuroFM members, European universities and professional institutions which have participated in this laborious project. Finally, a word of thanks to our project patrons, Faciletic, NHTV and ISS, for their invaluable support of FM education in Europe.

On behalf of ENG, best regards and we look forward to seeing you in Amsterdam.
## Editorial Board

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