Strategic Facility Planning Now, More Important than Ever

By Mark R. Sekula, CFM, LEED-AP

In this time of economic downturn, it is difficult to think about strategic planning. Most everyone’s focus is on surviving the storm. Organizations continue to cut costs—again. They’re looking for new business and creating innovative ways to package and deliver existing products and services. They’re offering new products and services. They’re rethinking everything.

unemployment rose to nearly 10 percent? What if my company’s revenues fell 25 percent or more in a matter of months? What would I do?"

You know what your boss would do. He’d tell you to cut costs, cut staff and cut space. But how would you do that? Where would you start?

Eventually, this downturn will end and we will recover. What will you do in six months or a year when your organization suddenly starts to gear up for an upturn and they can’t hire enough people fast enough?

Get a step ahead

Strategic facility planning is the platform upon which to create scenarios and develop potential solutions that will help sustain your organization or help it thrive. Nobody can predict the future. But a facility manager who prepares for it allows him or her to be one step ahead of the game. Now there’s a tool to help—IFMA’s Strategic Facility Planning: A White Paper (http://www.ifma.org/tools/files/SFP_WhitePaper.pdf). As excerpted from the white paper’s executive summary:

The strategic facility plan (SFP) is a two-to-five year plan encompassing the entirety portfolio of owned and/or leased space that sets strategic facility goals based on the organization’s strategic objectives. SFP helps facility managers do a better job and ensures that all employees are working toward the same goals and objectives. A flexible and implementable SFP based on the specific and unique considerations of your organization needs to be developed through a four-step process. The first step, understanding, requires thorough knowledge of your organization’s mission, vision, values and goals. Second, exploration of the range of possible futures and triggers is needed to analyze your organization’s facility needs using analytical techniques—such as systematic layout planning (SLP), SWOT [strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats] analysis, strategic creative analysis (SCAN), or scenario planning. Third, once analysis is completed, plans for potential responses and periodic updates to existing plans in response to changes in the market need to be developed to meet the long-range needs of your specific organization. Fourth, take actions as planned to successfully implement the SFP.

Think strategically

One of the most important things to understand about strategic facility planning is that it is not a static activity. Rather, it is a dynamic ongoing process. As we see on the news and experience in our everyday lives, the world is changing at a faster rate than it ever has—and it will continuously do so. That’s why strategic facility planning is so important. It makes us think farther out than today or tomorrow. Sure, the chiller will eventually break down, the fire alarm is going to go off and there will always be someone who is too hot or too cold. Those scenarios will never go away—we have to learn to deal with them. But facility managers must step back from the details of the daily grind and spend time giving serious thought to what might happen in the future that could impact their company (both negatively and positively) and what they would do to adjust and adapt to it.

Strategic thinking isn’t continues on page 2
Strategic Facility Planning: A White Paper as a guide to create your strategic facility plan. But don’t stop there. Remember, when the plan is done, the planning begins. Keep it on top of your desk as a constant reminder that things change and you must adapt. Mention it in your staff meetings. Measure everything you do as an facility management organization against the basic principals set forth in your strategic facility plan-and then be prepared to change.

adapt to the scenario

Developing and writing the strategic facility plan should only be the beginning of a continuous strategic planning process. It’s similar to owning a house. You don’t go and buy a house and simply live in it for 50 years without doing anything to it. You think about what it might need if you have kids, when those kids are older, and when they are gone. You put plans in place to accommodate for various scenarios. If the kids live at home longer than you expect or your mother-in-law moves in, you adapt those plans to the new scenario.

Strategic planning is not about knowing exactly what your facilities will need to be like in 10 years. It is about having a 10-year picture of what they might look like based on logical assumptions, good business forecasting and a good sense of history. One needs to be flexible enough to change direction at any given moment. Just as the home theater you added to your house when the kids moved out can be turned into a mother-in-law suite.

stay connected

One of the keys to planning for the future is to look for those things that will stay the same. These are the non-negotiable, intangible things that will exist no matter what happens. In the case of your organization, it’s understanding and acquiring a thorough knowledge of its mission, vision and values. These are things that typically stay constant and steer successful companies. However, the goals needed to achieve the mission and vision and carry out the values may change over time. As the facility manager, that’s what you have to try and plan to meet. In order to do that, you have to stay in touch with your organization’s business strategies. In IFMA’s Facility Management Forecast 2007, Exploring the Current Trends and Future Outlook for Facility Management Professionals, the number one trend in facility management identified by a panel of industry experts is to link facility management with business strategy. Facility managers need to understand what the organization’s business strategy is and what specific business initiatives it must accomplish to successfully carry out that strategy. Then they must find ways to leverage their facilities to support those business initiatives. They need to ask questions of senior management, stay connected and in touch. The C-suite doesn’t typically reach out to the facility manager until the strategy has already been developed or when the scenario has changed. So it is imperative that the facility manager be proactive and take the initiative to ask first instead of waiting to find out.

That’s what strategic facility planning is all about. Use IFMA’s Strategic Facility Planning: A White Paper as a guide to create your strategic facility plan. But don’t stop there. Remember, when the plan is done, the planning begins. Keep it on top of your desk as a constant reminder that things change and you must adapt. Mention it in your staff meetings. Measure everything you do as an facility management organization against the basic principals set forth in your strategic facility plan-and then be prepared to change.

Professor Kathy O. Roper, CFM, CFMJ, LEED AP, IFMA Fellow and associate professor of Integrated Facility Management at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Ga., and Ph.D. candidates Jun Ha Kim and Sang-Hoon Lee, of Georgia Tech, assembled Strategic Facility Planning: A White Paper for the International Facility Management Association. Former IFMA Chairs John McGee and Gary Broersma added their input and review, and IFMA President and CEO David J. Brady gave his support and allowed Georgia Tech to participate in this work. Mark Sekula, CFM, LEED AP, and William Rodgers were also part of the task force to review, amend, gain IFMA board of directors’ approval and finalize the document.

To help FM’s with their strategic facility planning process IFMA has scheduled an i-Session for Thursday July 23 at 12:00 pm CST entitled “Strategic Facility Planning-More Important Than Ever.” You can register for this i-Session at http://www.ifma.org/learning/sessions/index.cfm.

Mark Sekula is senior facility management consultant at Facility Engineering Associates, a national 60-person facility management, engineering and sustainability consulting firm. With more than 21 years of facility management experience, Sekula provides guidance, expertise and project management to clients to help them develop strategies for the future of their real estate assets, physical workplaces and facility management organizational development.

A Certified Facility Manager® since 1993, Sekula has served as president, vice president and secretary for the Southeast Wisconsin Chapter of IFMA and founded the Facility Management Consultants Council of IFMA. He is a former director of the IFMA international board of directors and currently co-chairs IFMA’s knowledge center task force.

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Digital / Mobile Workplace

Wants to Achieve

SIGMAXYZ was founded in May 2008 through the joint venture by Mitsubishi Corporation and RHJ International, as a business consulting service company that aids in client companies’ value creation.

By Akiko Ota, SIGMAXYZ Inc.

SIGMAXYZ wants to achieve a business model that does not merely provide service to clients but also creates value with them as a partner. We strive for a collaboration-style business in which we know the clients inside and out, share the same goals, continually share the risks involved in the process to achieve those goals, and share with them the value that is attained in the form of results. Rather than calling our customers clients, we want our relationship with them to be such that calling each other partners. We call that kind of relationship “Xpartner (Cross Partner) for Your Z - an integrated partner.” Our vision is to be a professional group that creates the ultimate in value and delights.

To be the real Xpartner, we believe the following five measures are necessary:

- Digital / Mobile Workplace
- Knowledge Management
- Project System
- Professional Personnel System
- CRM (Client Relationship Management)

Our Work Style and Workplace

The first thing we did after the company was founded was to look into how to build the environment where our professionals would work and what work style was required in order to become an Xpartner. With CEO Hideki Kurashige as the project owner, we engaged in a thoroughgoing collaboration in pursuit of those goals.

Four months after foundation, our new office, based on an “On-net Collaboration” work style concept, was completed in Tokyo’s Minato ward. As much like meeting in conference rooms, we collaborate through networks with anyone, anytime, anywhere.

The counterparts of collaboration are not limited to our own professionals. We created an environment where active collaboration is possible anytime, anywhere, and with anyone, whether that be a business partner or a client. For SIGMAXYZ professionals, the workplace is not a physical office space but rather a laptop computer provided to each of them and a network with a safe, secure connection.

The IT Infrastructure that Makes "Anytime, Anywhere, with Anyone" a Reality

It can be only accomplished by human being to understand our clients’ ever-changing needs, dealing with an unpredictable social environment, and continually creating new values. And we believe it is important for enterprise management to create an environment that maximizes the potential and performance of those people.

When the knowledge, experience, and ideas of many different individuals are combined in creative works, the value of all those elements is amplified. In order to create value anytime, anywhere, and with anyone, it is necessary to have an environment that enables all possible types of collaboration with clients and professional teams, regardless of the place, the time, or the counterparts. However, from a risk management perspective - in particular, the issue of whether or not to allow professionals to take computers outside of the office - there is a tendency among Japanese companies to hesitate when it comes to introducing a work style that lacks a designated time or personally assigned place.

By utilizing a variety of technologies and ensuring securities thorough implementation of policies, SIGMAXYZ manages to achieve both a creative work style and information security. What is distinctive about our work style is leveraging the advantages of a social infrastructure. Normally, companies develop their own internal networks in order to preclude connections by outsiders, thereby ensuring security. But at SIGMAXYZ, we made use of the Internet, a form of social infrastructure, and achieved a safe environment “anytime, anywhere.”

We implemented robust security, operating on the premise that their professionals’ rap tops would be connecting to networks outside of the company’s and would be carried around. We ensure the security of the server area by three-fold verification system that determines the validity of the terminals when connected, and the correctness of their rap tops’ logical configuration. To facilitate a work style with a high degree of freedom, our IT environment imposes more aggressive security measures and operations and makes positive trade-offs to achieve a collaboration-style business model.

The implementation of a web conference system makes it possible for professionals in different locations, regardless of whether they are at the office or outside of it, not only to exchange audio and video but also to share deliverables as well as to create and edit data. We carefully distinguish between those cases that necessitate working together face to face and those that can be handled via a network, thereby enhancing the productivity and efficiency of both.

Office Facilities that Accelerate Any and All Collaboration

At a free address office, even administrative such as accounting, legal and other corporate staff members do not have assigned seats, as a general rule. The CEO and executives use free addresses inside the executive area, and the number of seats is smaller than the number of personnel.

In the center of the office, there is a communication area called the “Market,” where it is possible to project images from three projectors on a wide screen hung from the ceiling in front of a stair-like space. There, we carry out not only in-house events such as orientations and knowledge sharing sessions, but also events and parties with clients as well. It is also used as a relaxation area for professionals, who drop by for something to drink, to socialize or just to get away from it all.

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access the magazine rack or the stationery stock corner. With people, goods, and information crossing paths, the area serves as the epicenter for communication and stimulation of collaboration activity.

Also, in order to make "anytime, anywhere, with anyone" a reality, we believe it is essential to store information digitally. This is referred to as "paperless office," although it does not mean that the use of paper is prohibited. However, for the purpose of transcending time and physical distance to share and utilize information as a team, digital data is far more efficient than paper.

For example, each of meeting rooms is equipped with at least four digital video projection screens (projectors or wide-screen televisions). This makes it easy to project and switch between several members' screens, so that we can participate in meetings from a remote location as well.

Work Style Establishment and Diversity Management

In addition to an environment that supports the kind of digital, mobile work style described above, we developed and use a knowledge management system that accelerates information sharing. As for consulting methods, we adopted a project based system where work is carried out in terms of projects, not in terms of organizational units. Thanks to these measures, SIGMAXYZ’s work style is taking hold.

A new HR system for training and evaluating professionals is also important. A professional HR system is an arrangement that evaluates how well independent, autonomous professionals further develop their own strengths. Consultants choose and identify two areas of specialization, an industry and a service, in the department to which they belong. Based on that, they are assigned to various types of projects, and the evaluation of their performance on a project is conducted not by their immediate manager but by the project leader for each individual project.

For the skills evaluation, each consultant files a declaration of the skills he exercised during the projects based on a statement of skills standards, and an upper-level, in-house, third-party consultant called an assessor evaluates them once a year. To ensure an objective evaluation by a third party, the statement of standards is written based on market values. Using this statement of standards ensures the objectivity of the evaluation results and also allows the consultant himself to clearly understand such points as his or her areas of weakness and the strengths he or she should work on reinforcing.

This arrangement may appear at first glance to be complicated and inefficient, but it is important in the sense that it transforms conventional values. We place a greater emphasis on professionals than on generalists, and we believe that if we can manage that diversity, the organizational capacity will improve. Through diversity management, we thus strive for a synergistic effect and improved creativity.

Conclusion

The 21st century is the era of the people. The world is already shifting from the traditional manufacturing society to a service society. Consequently, we believe it is necessary to make drastic changes in people's sense of values with regard to management. The question now facing management is not how best to mass-produce "things" but rather how to make good use of people who can generate new "services or situations" one after another.

A shift in values is not easy. But establishing diversity management and a work style that directly relates to each individual employee will surely make it possible to achieve.

In several companies that CEO Kurashige was involved in managing in the past, he boldly took on the development and management of a new environment, referring to it as an "experiment." He says that the experimental stage, which has lasted around 15 years, is now entering the next stage, in the form of an attempt at a new business model that builds on the experience and results that have been gained thus far. By creating an environment in which each and every employee can fully exercise their skills, and ensuring that a synergistic effect is created from that, we are now working as Xpartner to achieve the ultimate creation of value.
A Fortune 100 company, Johnson Controls is a highly successful, global company that blends financial stability with an entrepreneurial spirit. Our Global Workplace Solutions business is trusted to manage over one billion square feet of facilities globally for some of the world’s largest companies, and can offer you a career that provides unlimited opportunities for professional development and personal growth.

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**Sourcing Manager** - 043566 & 043567
**Technical / Engineering Director** - 043570 & 043571

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Top of the Class in Sustainability
by Paul-Wunderlich-Haus

On 12 January 2009, the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB) awarded the first "German Certificates for Sustainable Buildings". Top of the class in the pilot round of DGNB certifications was the Paul-Wunderlich-Haus in Eberswalde.

The Paul-Wunderlich-Haus is the seat of the District Council and Administration of the District of Barnim. The Administration and its approximately 500 employees are housed in 19,000 m² of gross floor area spread over four buildings; a further 2,500 m² of floor space is used for restaurants, service providers and businesses.

With an overall rating of 1.2, in the various categories of the DGNB certification that equates to: Gold. The Paul-Wunderlich-Haus in Eberswalde has officially been able to boast this distinction since 12 January; moreover, out of the total of 16 properties that were certified for the first time in the category "Newly built office and administration buildings" at the BAU 2009 trade fair, the Paul-Wunderlich-Haus received the highest marks. The new Administrative Centre of the District of Barnim excelled particularly in the area of economic quality: "With a score of 100%, the cost performance was especially good. According to the 2007 cost estimate, the gross construction costs for cost groups 300 and 400 (as per DIN 276) amounted to €1,157/m² GFA (gross; as of 2007).

Certification period: July - December 2008

In fact, according to the plans, the group of buildings had been partially funded by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology as part of its Energy-Optimized Building (EnOB) programme. Total funding approximately €1.9 million.

Paul Wunderlich Haus
Address: Am Markt 1, 16225 Eberswalde
Client/owners: Barnim District Authority
Architects: GAP Gesellschaft für Architektur & Projektmanagement
Project management: GAP, sol’id’ar planungswerkstatt
FM consultants: MVV Energiedienstleistungen GmbH
Climate control, energy concept: teamgmi
Team of auditors: Dr Günter Löhner, sol’id’ar
                   Holger König, LEGEP GmbH
                   Prof. Dr Lützkendorf, Univ. of Karlsruhe

Gross floor area: 22,218 m² (incl. atria)
Main effective area: 14,022 m²
Start of planning: 2004
Start of construction: 2005
Dedication: July 2007
Certification period: July - December 2008

Investment volume: €31 million
Construction costs (cost groups 300 + 400): €1,157/m² GFA (gross; as of 2007)

Partially funded by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology as part of its Energy-Optimized Building (EnOB) programme. Total funding approximately €1.9 million.

Façade: Schindler
Cladding: Sto, Eternit
Solar shading: Warema
Building control system: Siemens Building Technologies
Air conditioning/ventilation: Gea Happel
Heat pumps: Climaveneta
Sanitary fittings: Villeroy & Boch
Lights: Zumtobel, Berghoff
Switches/controllers: GIRA
CAFM system: BFM (KeyLogic)

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Top of the Class in Sustainability

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<tr>
<th>Thermal insulation certificate (EnEV)</th>
<th>Ecological quality</th>
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<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>U value in W/(m²K)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exterior walls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
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<td>Windows</td>
<td>1.0 and 1.4</td>
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<td>Floor against soil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean U-value (HT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean U-value permitted (HT, max)</td>
<td>0.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undershoot of HT, max</td>
<td>46%</td>
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the type and operation of the solar shading
- Integration of climate buffer zones (atria)
- Temperature control (underfloor heating/cooling) and ventilation integrated in components
- Use of geothermal energy
- Development of an energy-efficient floor lamp for office workstations
- User training/coaching
- Building automation and optimization of building operations through monitoring of energy use

The aim was to implement the leanest possible building climate control system. For instance, the favourable ratio of volume to external surface area reduces heat loss through the building envelope. The façade itself provides a high degree of thermal insulation. The exterior walls consist of a prefabricated timber construction with cellulose insulation and double-sided cladding with wooden panels. On the outside there is a rear-ventilated façade with further cladding - which, depending on the building, consists of coloured fibre cement panels or plaster baseboards. Vacuum insulation panels (VIP) are inserted in the area between the exterior solar shading and the lintel to prevent thermal bridges. The windows consist of triple thermal insulation glazing.

Air from the ceiling
Storey ceilings, floor slabs and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of the energy piles and heat pump (Building D)</th>
<th>Pilot certification of the Paul-Wunderlich-Haus: Evaluation results in accordance with the GOLD 1.2 certificate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy piles:</td>
<td>Electricity kW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy piles:</td>
<td>144</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heat pumps (Heating):</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heat pumps (Cooling):</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific performance in W/m² NFA:</td>
<td>14.15</td>
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<td>roofs, as well as the load-transferring pillars and parts of the interior walls, are made of reinforced concrete. The ceilings on the first and up to the third floor have been designed as ventilation ceilings with integrated, non-insulated ventilation pipes, and the undersides of the ceilings are largely unlined. In selected areas of use, ceiling elements with integrated phase-change material (PCM) were used to improve the indoor climate in summer. Throughout the year, the ventilation ducts introduce air into the offices, with the inlets being a metre away from the exterior façade.</td>
<td>continues on page 8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The exhaust air leaves the office by flowing directly into the combined area, where it is extracted. Before the exhaust air leaves the building, it provides heat to the supply air by means of a rotary heat exchanger.

Heating and cooling

Thanks to their good thermal properties, the buildings require very little heat in winter. The ventilation units feed the indoor waste heat - IT equipment heat loads do not make a significant difference here, according to the planners - back into the rooms with a heat recovery efficiency of up to 80%. The additional base heat load required is supplied by near-surface geothermal energy: of the approximately 800 foundation piles (around nine metres in length) required for the structure, 593 were equipped with absorber units and connected to heat pumps. In winter, the earth heats the water in the tube coils to 10°C; the heat pumps generate the necessary low temperature. The base load of the heating energy is distributed into the offices by means of the ventilation system, with the supply air temperature being max. 10°C above the indoor air temperature. The supply of heat through the ventilation system is controlled by the outside temperature. Peak loads are covered by thermostat-controlled radiators. In the corridors and the combined area the heat is distributed by underfloor heating.

At outside temperatures of up to 5°C, the heat is primarily generated via the heat pump, using the pile-absorber system, with the supply air temperature 5°C, the heat is primarily generated via the heat pump, using the pile-absorber units and connected to the heat pumps. In winter, the earth heats the water in the tube coils to 10°C; the heat pumps generate the necessary low temperature. The base load of the heating energy is distributed into the offices by means of the ventilation system, with the supply air temperature being max. 10°C above the indoor air temperature. The supply of heat through the ventilation system is controlled by the outside temperature. Peak loads are covered by thermostat-controlled radiators. In the corridors and the combined area the heat is distributed by underfloor heating.

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The louvres can be controlled without window lintels,” explains planungswerkstatt.de. For more information on the Paul-Wunderlich-Haus and the DGNB certification: Dr Günter Löhner, e-mail: lloehnert@solidar-planungswerkstatt.de.

* The daylight factor DF is the ratio of the internal and external illumination. It is expressed as a percentage.

** The Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development developed the DGNB Certificate jointly with the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB).

The climate control concept of the Paul-Wunderlich-Haus shown schematically in cross-section.

For achieving the calculated energy values in practice is currently being assessed in a monitoring phase, which will run until September. “Such ambitious buildings never achieve the planned performance from a standing start - as can be seen from the experiences with the 25 demonstration building projects in the EnOB funding programme,” points out Löhnet. For this reason, the two-year monitoring phase was established as part of the funding programme to analyze the building’s energy performance and create the conditions for a permanent optimization of its operations. “The Paul-Wunderlich-Haus also experienced some teething problems, for instance with the heat pumps and lighting, which we had to adjust during operation, but we are on the right track to achieve the planned values, or at least get very close to them.”

Sandra Hoffmann

Facilities Management

As early as the preliminary design stage, the planning team worked with the client on FM-related issues. The FM consultant Stefan Scherz from MVV Energiedienstleistungen GmbH was also on board at an early stage. A life cycle cost analysis and an environmental assessment were carried out using the LEGEP software. The integrated planning team also prepared the client during the planning and construction phase for his subsequent role as operator of the building. In addition, the client was given support in relation to the FM job description and the invitation to tender for the CAFM system. Finally, the KeyLogic system from BFM was also used. To date, employees have been using the system in the area of infrastructural FM, for example in connection with the tendering of cleaning services, but the technical module is also already being used by the in-house staff for day-to-day operational management. The commercial FM module has not been used yet.

The facilities management concept was developed jointly by the architects and the FM consultant together with all the stakeholders. The instructions for optimized operational management were prepared for the operating personnel as early as the construction phase on the basis of process descriptions and work instructions. SLAs were not agreed, because initially the services were not outsourced, with the exception of infrastructural services, but were to be provided by in-house staff. Committing in-house staff to SLAs would not have been compatible with the German Public Sector Collective Agreement.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Energy ratings as per the German Energy Saving Directive EnEV (in kWh/m²a)</th>
<th>Heating demand (according to TRNSYS, based on ancillary effective area): 25.60</th>
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<td>Total primary energy (according to PHPP, based on ancillary effective area): 88.00</td>
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<td>Measured energy values (in kWh/m²a): 85.60</td>
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<td>Cooling (Primary energy rating - PE): 8.00</td>
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<td>HVAC driving energy (PE): 12.00</td>
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<td>Cooling of server room, Special IT equipment (PE): 8.00</td>
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For more information on the Paul-Wunderlich-Haus and the DGNB certification: Dr Günter Löhner, e-mail: lloehnert@solidar-planungswerkstatt.de.

* The daylight factor DF is the ratio of the internal and external illumination. It is expressed as a percentage.

** The Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development developed the DGNB Certificate jointly with the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB).

The climate control concept of the Paul-Wunderlich-Haus shown schematically in cross-section.
Employee Satisfaction - an Arbitrary Management Tool

by Herman Kok

Suppliers of facility services often use surveys of customer satisfaction to indicate how well they are doing. This applies to both in-house and external facility management service providers.

A high score on a customer satisfaction survey means, according to suppliers, a good match between supply and demand, a high level of performance and a positive contribution to the organisation’s profit, with the end result being the achievement of customer loyalty. The opinion of the end user, who supplies this score in a non-expert capacity, is highly valued. But what does this score really tell us? Are we justified in implicitly making a link between customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and profitability? This article examines these issues.

Measuring customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the assessment of quality based on the experience of a product or service (and the supplier) in relation to the expectations thereof (Zeithaml et al., 1988). Users assess this quality according to various aspects relating to the production, the situation and personal factors. What one person considers important in a product may be of no interest to someone else. Depending on the type of product or service, specific aspects become more or less relevant in specific circumstances. The SERVQUAL studies1 highlighted five dimensions according to which the quality of various types of services was evaluated: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness. In the final assessment, the perceived service quality was then offset against the customer’s situational and personal factors. An improvement on demand from these studies is that quality is a multidimensional subjective assessment. When measuring quality, it is not enough to know the customer’s degree of satisfaction with respect to a particular service. The various quality attributes and the relevance or importance that the customer attaches to them must also be measured. This allows us to understand how the quality rating was obtained. Relevance means that these are the aspects which the customer uses to assess quality and that this is where the supplier’s perceived added value may be found. Fault tolerance is also different from one quality attribute to another. When it comes to important attributes, customers accept less deviation from the norm or from their expectations than is the case with the less important attributes. A good score on an important quality attribute compensates for a poor score on a less important attribute, but the opposite is not true. A complete survey of customer satisfaction should therefore be based on a combination of rating and importance scores in relation to the various quality attributes of individual facility services. If the results of the survey have not been arrived at in this way, only limited conclusions may be drawn from it.

Satisfaction in relation to profit

A connection is often made between customer satisfaction and a supposed impact on profitability and customer loyalty. A relationship between customer satisfaction and costs is also sometimes mentioned. A recent article literally stated that “better products result in satisfied customers, and satisfied customers result in lower costs”. This might be described as an example of arguing towards a predefined conclusion. A good customer satisfaction score says nothing about how facility management performance contributes to the bottom line completely, and how much the contribution of facility services to profit, we must use comparable variables. Customer satisfaction is measured at end user level. In fact, it is a question of employee satisfaction. The manager who gives his/her opinion of facility services is doing so as an end user. Employee satisfaction is a subjective measure of the performance of operational facility management. In popular terms, users may be very satisfied with (aspects of) the catering and cleaning services, but that does not mean that the productivity, costs, turnover, profitability or competitiveness of the company or institution will improve as a result. The impact of employee satisfaction on the outcome of primary processes has not yet been scientifically and objectively analysed. There is some information available on the effect of facility services and workplace innovations on the perceived contribution to the productivity of end users2. A relationship with profit has not yet been demonstrated.

Profit, in terms of revenue minus costs, is a measure of performance at the level of the organisational unit. The cost component is influenced by a large number of factors, including the purchase price, the efficiency with which the end product is produced, the quality or composition of the end product, its usage and the quantities in which it is sold. With regard to facility management costs, the effectiveness of the expenditure also plays a significant role. To what extent is money being spent on facility services that are directly derived from and critical to the primary process, or are the facility services nice to have but not of any strategic (core close) or operational (core distinct) importance to the primary process? The end user, who is not paying for these services, does not make this distinction and generally gives the “nice to have” a high rating. These tend to be satisfiers that the user empathetically expects and a striking failures whose contribution to revenue is difficult to demonstrate. However, the happy worker is not necessarily the employee who adds the biggest profit. The possibility of a free consumption and where the choice is limited to the range defined by the customer, the middle management in consultation with the FM organisation. The customer does not really concern himself/herself with the choice of supplier. That is the primary responsibility of FM. Environments where such a free market does exist are of a commercial and public nature, such as train stations, airports, hospitals, theatres, amusement parks, hotels, conference centres and business centres. In these cases, the customers, the external end users, use these facilities and services on a more or less voluntary basis and also pay for them, either directly or indirectly. This means that their satisfaction with these facilities and services does indeed play a role in the selection process. You might say that there is a relationship between how critical facility services are to the success of the primary organisation and the importance of satisfaction with these services in determining future purchasing decisions. This must, however, be seen in the context of the availability of alternatives, the user’s dependency on the primary process and its budgetary accessibility.

Usefulness of employee satisfaction

Although employee satisfaction lacks a strategic context, it can still be used as a basis for improvement at the product level. In this case, changes can be made to the product or service itself, the procedures, the interface with the articulation of the demand, and also to communication in the sense of the management of expectations. There are possible gaps that the supplier must bridge in order to make the customer happy. The information on the quality attributes and the importance that the end user attaches to them are particularly relevant. This can provide guidance to product development. Employee satisfaction also says something about the impression that suppliers leave on end users. This provides information about the existing and desired attitude and behaviour of
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continued from Page 9

service providers. An employee satisfaction survey thus becomes a tool for supplier management. It is better therefore to deal with this issue specifically in the survey.

Conclusion
Employee satisfaction has only limited value as a performance indicator. When it comes to achieving improvements, making innovations and positioning facility management, it is a good idea to look for performance indicators that are relevant at a tactical level. This presupposes the question of what the customer wishes to achieve with facility management. A performance indicator is only relevant if it supplies information on the degree to which a desired goal has been achieved. This goal relates to the demand side, the primary process and the supply side, that of the suppliers or of the internal organisation. Furthermore, it must be possible to influence this performance indicator and to measure the performance in the first place.

B. Kok, Facility Management Consultant, Twynstra Gudde.

Footnotes
Last Becomes First …

From being an ancillary activity, facilities management has now become the investor’s primary business, and it can depend on many things how long this condition will remain.

The company, its predecessor that is, which was forced to react to changes in the economy by shifting its emphasis, had initially been set up for investment purposes. “Real estate development, which was originally our main activity, is now replaced by facilities management” - said Péter Lovas, CEO of Municipal Rt. According to him, this step backwards is only temporary, “we are planning to participate in further development projects, although I am unable to give you a more specific answer due to external circumstances”.

Compelling reasons against commencing new constructions of office buildings stem from two trends. On the one hand, there is a surplus of offices - which the company had previously built - available for rent on the market, and on the other, financing can not be described as free of problems, either. “Everything is currently in a state of deep freeze; the market as a whole is at a standstill; no new developments have been started. All that is underway is the completion of previous projects.” It appears that the only place where it might be worth considering new developments is Bel-Buda (the inner Buda district).

The non-existent winning answer

Up until two years ago, at the beginning of 2008, “things were progressing absolutely fine.” A few months before the onset of the international crisis, however, in the spring of 2008, it became apparent that everyone was trying to make more prudent decisions, and by the summer everyone was trying to make more wait-and-see approach. They are laying down much tougher conditions on the investors than even a year ago; as a result, the equity capital ratio has increased too much. So, those times when one could obtain almost unlimited development funds are long gone.

Many centers have been built to be re-sold (to institutional investors) and this has caused a drop in rental fees on the market. In Budapest, rents have dropped by at least 15 to 20 percent since the onset of the crisis. Speaking of the city as a whole, Budapest is not large enough to prevent certain parts with less favorable indicators from “dragging down” the rest. The decrease in the number of tenants, however, is not as typical as the re-negotiation of contracts following the actual state of the economy and the companies.

What was previously common, a five-year leasing period is now considered to be exceptionally good. The tendency over the past years has been for the terms of contracts to keep shrinking, and this trend is to remain a while longer since the tenants’ position has gained considerable strength. “It would be nice if I had the answer as to when we will be over the hump, because I could make a lot of money with it.” Péter Lovas believes that there is no mortal who could possibly answer this question before the end of the year. We could say that the company has not given up; they are actually looking for a suitable site to buy land; additionally, they have an 800-square meter property on Király Street, near Dédk Square, awaiting commercial exploitation.

In two installments

The rentable area of the five office buildings in operation is approximately 40 thousand square meters. These developments were partly own - properties sold to BHG - and partly completed developments on someone else’s behalf to later maintain the right to carry out the management of its facilities.

Among the office rentals, the two better known names are the Prielle Corner and the BHG office buildings (wings K 1-2 and B). As far as their age is concerned, the BHG part is older (renovated between 2000 and 2003), but most of them became available to tenants just a few years ago. The occupancy rate of the approximately 25 thousand square meter, B plus category BHG space is over ninety percent. The occupancy rate of the Prielle space is one hundred percent; several foreign and domestic firms have their headquarters there. All we were able to find out about the rental fees is that they are comparable with the average market figures; the tenant pays the actual rental fee together with the operating costs. There is a “minimal return on facilities management; we are gathering and keeping the processes together in one hand because we, too, outsource the main activities.”

So, all of the main activities have been outsourced, including leasing, maintenance, cleaning and security. There are contractors who work in multiple buildings but some are involved in only one. They were selected by a call for tenders (there are those with Hungarian majority as well as with foreign majority); fluctuation is practically zero; relationships with most of them go back seven or eight years. The terms of the individual contracts vary considerably; what they have in common is the annual price revision. In any case, “we are constantly monitoring the market changes, but what matters to us the most is price and reliability.”

The aforementioned also applies to maintenance, except most of those contracted have also worked in construction. What the five buildings have in common is that the gardens, if there are any, have relatively small areas.

The company is also operating industrial properties; these are located within Budapest and its suburban areas; their total size is approximately forty hectares. These are industrial development areas and, similarly to the offices, were partially own developments and partially commenced by someone else but completed by the company. So, facilities management has "slid" to number one position because of the crisis; they do not object to taking on further third-party assignments either.

The “corner” is full

The Prielle Corner in district 11 achieved one hundred percent occupancy as early as two months before its opening in December of 2005, despite being surrounded by competitors in Lágymányos (a quarter of Budapest district 11), for there were several new centers being built in the neighborhood then and still are now. The services of the A category building are 116 parking spaces in the three-storey underground garage, exclusive offices on the sixth floor with a view of an office garden, opening windows and shading system, closed-circuit entry surveillance camera network, antistatic carpeted floors. The center was raised within a year; the amount invested was set at two billion forint. One of its characteristics is the L-shaped angle; the facade had to be “pulled back” due to a provision under the regulatory plan. The Prielle’s common area ratio is four percent; its office area is six thousand square meters.

The Prielle’s common area is carpeted floors. The center was raised within a year; the amount invested was set at two billion forint. One of its characteristics is the L-shaped angle; the facade had to be “pulled back” due to a provision under the regulatory plan. The Prielle’s common area ratio is four percent; its office area is six thousand square meters.
Kufstein Facilities Management Students Come up with Innovative Concepts for Germany's Largest Shopping Centre, MyZeil in Frankfurt
By Prof. Thomas Madritsch

Kufstein FM students have demonstrated that the deployment of a facilities manager well in advance of the scheduled opening date of a property is essential and can result not only in an optimization of costs and processes, but also an increased level of quality for customers and employees, according to Prof. Thomas Madritsch of the Kufstein University of Applied Sciences in Tyrol.

Germany’s most ambitious construction project, the "Palais Quartier", is taking shape right in the centre of Frankfurt, alongside one of the country’s busiest shopping streets - the Zeil. It is here, on a 1.7 hectare site and with over 222,000 m2 of rentable space, that a shopping and leisure experience has been created, consisting of a shopping mall, a five-star hotel, an office block and the reconstruction of a historic palace. The technical equipment and the building envelope are quite unique. The project includes four buildings: a hotel with approximately 800 rooms, an office complex which will in future house 2,400 employees, the Palais Thurn und Taxis which will contain a variety of restaurants, and the shopping and leisure centre MyZeil.

MyZeil, which was opened on 26 February 2009, was designed by the Italian architect Massimiliano Fuksas and is one of the most modern and spectacular shopping centres in Europe. The company responsible for running this downtown shopping centre is STRABAG Property und Facility Management GmbH (PFS). The impressive architecture of MyZeil clearly demonstrates that this is no ordinary shopping mall, but rather a centre which will carve out a niche for itself in the luxury sector.

The complexity of this large-scale project means that all the parties involved are faced with new challenges on a daily basis. It is obvious that there will be special logistical challenges and problems in the running of the Palais Quartier, particularly with regard to the delivery of goods and the disposal of waste. The collaboration between the project’s facility managers STRABAG Property und Facility Management GmbH and students in “facilities management and real estate” from the Kufstein University of Applied Sciences in Austria aimed to meet this challenge and to develop a strategy for the supply and disposal logistics of the loading area of the Palais Quartier at peak times.

The project’s owners anticipate that there will be a very complex structure of tenants and users. This means that significant demands will be placed not only on the engineers, safety coordinators and cleaning specialists, but also on the logistics for the flow of goods and waste. In the large loading/unloading stations for the supply of goods to and disposal of waste from the whole area, there is room for just four 12-tonne lorries side by side. In addition, deliveries can only be made to certain areas between 8.00 and 10.30 am, as otherwise the disruption to the flow of visitors would be too great. It is obvious that the logistics planners are faced with a huge challenge and cannot necessarily adopt their usual approaches. In relation to the overall size of the "Palais Quartier", the loading area is rather small. In addition, this area also has to be used for all mail and parcel services and other deliveries and collections, given that access via the busy Zeil shopping street is impossible.

To solve this problem, a team of students in "facilities management and real estate" from the Kufstein University of Applied Sciences in Austria, together with the project’s facility managers, STRABAG Property und Facility Services GmbH, devised a questionnaire for tenants. This allows managers to record and collect data on future quantities and types of goods and waste. In many cases, architects and planners are not totally aware of the specific needs of the various tenants. The tenants can easily download the questionnaire from the Internet. This makes it possible for STRABAG to carry out a quick evaluation and adapt the logistics plan accordingly. For example, process flows can be designed more efficiently and resources can be scheduled more accurately.

As the subsequent operator of the facility, STRABAG will be able to quickly adapt the logistical processes when tenants change, as each new tenant will have to complete the questionnaire.

"The Kufstein students' proposals for an optimized logistics concept will support the planned adaptation of the supply and disposal processes by STRABAG PFS, the centre management and the logistics company on site," explains Prof. Thomas Madritsch.

In early 2010 it is anticipated that the hotel, the office complex and the Palais Thurn und Taxis will also go into operation. This will be the first real test of the new logistics strategy, according to Prof. Madritsch.

This example shows that the deployment of a facilities manager well in advance of the scheduled opening date of a property is essential. These specialists in the operation and running of such complex facilities are the only people with the necessary overview and relevant expertise. Contrary to the widespread prejudice, facility managers are, as this case shows, far more than just glorified caretakers and in fact play a major role in the success of a building project.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this project: small things, such as the tenant questionnaire, can often have a big impact. Another objective of the students' work was to show the operator of MyZeil all the standard models for managing washing and toilet facilities, and by means of a benchmarking exercise to draw up a comparison between various shopping centres, illustrating the benefits and cost savings of the management models in relation to the current model MyZeil: a star Hotel, an office block and the Palais Quartier, is taking shape right in the centre of Frankfurt, alongside one of the country’s busiest shopping streets – the Zeil.

In summary, the students were able to establish that it is common practice, especially for shopping centres, to outsource the cleaning of washing and toilet facilities to external contractors. Compared to the in-house management of these facilities, using an external service provider proves to have significant advantages. In particular, one factor worth mentioning is the potential for optimization which external service providers bring through the implementation of their expertise.

In addition, the students found that the costs for the management of MyZeil’s washing and toilet facilities are too high, which may partly be explained by the desire of the centre's operators to position the shopping mall at the luxury end of the market. According to Prof. Thomas Madritsch, the centre's operators were delighted that the students’ suggestions could lead not only to a reduction in costs but, even more importantly, to an optimization of quality. Particularly in the case of premium shopping centres, the washing and toilet facilities represent a major contribution to the overall impression that the centre creates on the customer.

The student group also recommends that the centre should participate in benchmarking circles, to further optimize the processes and learn from the experiences of others. On behalf of the students, course leader Prof. Thomas Madritsch thanked project manager Andreas Preis for giving the students the opportunity of actively collaborating on concrete facilities management issues.
Australia’s population is rapidly aging, and over the next four decades, the number of people aged over 85 will quadruple to around 1.6 million people. As a consequence, the challenge of meeting the needs of this growing number of elderly people must become one of the nation’s greatest priorities. Whilst many Australians prefer to remain in their own homes as long as possible, supported by community care programs, there are others who are seeking alternative accommodation to these support options. When considering alternative accommodation to their own homes, elderly people look for a place where they can have privacy, maintain their dignity and receive comprehensive care. It is this level of care which is one of the major influences driving the delivery of aged care accommodation being provided in the industry today.

Trish Ferrier, Property Manager for Royal Freemasons Homes of Victoria Ltd, outlines the regulatory compliance requirements in residential aged care, and discusses the challenges of undergoing maintenance and renovations while remaining sensitive to residents’ needs. She also spoke to WinterComms’ journalist Melanie Drummond about the challenges of bringing aged care FM processes into line with the rest of the industry.

Regulatory compliance in residential aged care

To receive government funding, residential aged care homes must be accredited. Accreditation is the arrangement established by the Australian government to verify that a residential care home provides quality care and services for residents. The body appointed by the government to ensure this happens is the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Industry. Accreditation is granted for a period of three years. Towards the end of each three year period the care facility must apply to renew its accreditation. There are four standards, and under these four standards, there are 44 outcomes.

Under each of these outcomes residential aged care homes must provide evidence of compliance. The four standards are:
1. Management Systems, staffing and organisational development
2. Health and personal care
3. Resident Lifestyle
4. Physical environment and safe systems

It is within the fourth standard that most of the responsibilities of the Property Manager lie. Assessors are particularly vigilant and seek evidence that all the preventative maintenance works associated with essential service measures and building certification are undertaken when required and are kept up to date. They are particularly concerned about compliance with fire and emergency procedures.

Evidence of security measures is also high on the agenda and residential aged care homes have to demonstrate how they maintain their systems to ensure that their residents are not compromised in this regard.

Royal Freemasons Homes of Victoria Ltd (RFHV)

As well as the physical infrastructure, it is mandatory for all contractors to have current police checks, and at the Royal Freemasons Homes of Victoria Ltd (RFHV), all contractors are signed to formal agreements. These agreements include a Code of Conduct for external providers and the monitoring of compliance against those agreements. Before commencement of work, contractors must present evidence of insurance cover, company registration and a comprehensive OH&S policy.

Added to this is what the agency describes as support visits. These take place at least once a year, over the life of the accreditation period. These visits can be announced, in that we are notified of the visit, or they can be unannounced, where agency assessors come to or on site without notice. During these visits, assessors can ask for evidence of compliance against any of the outcomes under the four standards.

This creates the need for the Property Manager to be vigilant about the maintenance of essential services reports and to be constantly monitoring workflow to make sure that all tasks associated with achieving compliance are being undertaken when they should be. Sometimes the visits are the result of a question, or complaint made to the agency by a resident’s family. One recent visit involved a query regarding the temperature of the water in the shower, necessitating great lengths to prove that the contractor maintaining the temperature via the thermostatic mixing valve knew what temperature of the water had to be. The outcome was that the agency recommended that a copy of the Australian Standard be sent as part of the contract documentation given to and signed by the contractor involved. Incidentally, the water in question was the right temperature at 43°C, the standard being between 41°C and 45°C.

At the Royal Freemasons we are very proud to say that we have recently had all four of our residential sites go through the process of re-accreditation and we met compliance in all 44 outcomes associated with the 4 standards. The process however is one of the most intense types of audit that I have ever been involved in and the visits from the agency always caused a ripple through the sites when they occur!

Refurbishment and redevelopment of existing properties

Routine maintenance tasks, either in our independent units or in our residential care facilities are not difficult to manage, but complex maintenance or major refurbishment where the residents’ daily routine is disturbed is a force that drives all we do. At the same time, however, we have to conform to some of the stringent regulatory compliance that I have ever had to work with. The theme that continually comes to the fore for me is the need to grow and continue to provide the services required to maintain properties that are attractive, safe, and secure and ones that our residents are proud to call home. At the same time you must balance this with business planning and formal compliance. It is a unique experience being part of a business that impacts so much on the personal lives of others, others who rely on you and trust you to do your part.

WinterComms: Tell us about your background in FM?

TF: I started my career in the Public Works department doing contract administration in 1978, some 31 years ago. I’ve always been involved in construction from an administrative point of view, and over the past 30 years I’ve have continued to develop my career, working with the Office of Housing for a number of years doing upgrades in their stock and then for the State Library as their Building Manager. From there it was back to Human Services and then my first pure facilities management role was at Victoria Legal Aid when I took that position in 1996. I left there 18 months ago for my present role as Property Manager with the Royal Freemasons.

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WinterComms: What was the biggest challenge you faced when you first moved into your role with the Freemasons?
TF: There is a lot of regulatory compliance required which is fundamental to the running of the business. The biggest challenge I faced was putting something in place around that and making sure we were recording and reporting our compliance in terms of building codes and accreditation. We can receive unannounced Agency visits anytime and we often have to investigate questions or concerns raised by families either directly or through the Agency. So you have to be on top of things at all times to make sure that everything you do is compliant. We’re 100 per cent compliant now and it’s really important we keep it that way.

WinterComms: How big is your portfolio?
TF: I oversee four nursing home sites, and independent living units in Mildura, Swan Hill, Ballarat, Brunswick (Melbourne), Coburg, Murraumbeena, Shepparton and Wangaratta, and I believe there are 1000 clients on our books at anytime there. There are also three community outreach offices that I look after.

WinterComms: Why do you believe FM in aged care is still behind the rest of the FM industry in terms of the processes in place to support the delivery of services?
TF: I think aged care has traditionally been provided by not-for-profit organisations and this is still the case for 60% of the industry. In these sorts of environments the focus of staff and volunteers is firmly on caring for their clients so often keeping up with what is happening outside this is of secondary importance, particularly the world that is facilities management.

In the past 5 years, aged care providers like the Royal Freemasons are accepting that they need to be managing in the 21st century, so they’re bringing their processes and procedures into line with what is happening in the rest of the industry. This is not to say that prior to that, the Royal Freemasons were not carrying out the work involved with being compliant - it was more that it wasn’t being recorded and registered as being completed. The audit process was missing.

WinterComms: How do priorities differ for aged care facilities/property manager to one managing corporate tenancies?
TF: When managing corporate office environments, there were similar regulatory compliance to those that I work with now, so in those respects things are fundamentally the same. Processes and procedures for procurement and contracting do not differ much either. What has become significant is the development and maintenance of relationships with my clients. In my previous position I would deal with key stakeholders and they in turn would manage the needs of the staff they were responsible for. I therefore had to nurture a smaller number of relationships. In my current position, whilst I have two key clients within my organisation much of my time is spent in communication with residents, learning to understand them, and developing ways of delivering a service that is mutually acceptable to all involved. It is critical to align the business needs involved in the management of our assets with the needs of our residents.

WinterComms: How has the tightening up of procedures and processes affected staff and contractors?
TF: When I came to the Royal Freemasons there were service level agreements in place but they just hadn’t been passed on to the right people. It was really about drawing that forward. Many of the contracts had to move to the party but we did have smaller companies who weren’t complaint in terms of things like insurance and OH&S. Those that met the criteria I had in terms of insurance, work cover and safety stayed on board, and those that weren’t prepared to move towards those compliance standards had to move on. There was no choice. In terms of staff there were changes in the way we did things, life is much easier for our operations managers now because they know where everything is and they’ve got essential services folders sitting nearby. The contractors have all been inducted properly, and it’s a process which can be very streamlined.

The other change I made was in the independent living units - in the past we had previously had residents calling contractors themselves which became unwieldy for everyone. I’ve now recruited a handyman who has a fully equipped van and he goes around looking after all of our Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat independent living units and it’s working really well. He takes all the calls from the residents. These independent living units are now well looked after and the residents have continuity with someone they know and trust. At the more remote sites we are lucky to have the local Masonic Lodge providing assistance and I work very closely with representatives in these areas to provide the same service.

WinterComms: How long did it take to get things working to a point where you were happy with them?
TF: I think in the first six months, I didn’t know what had hit me, but towards the end of last year things were running well and I felt in control. I think the essential services reporting and my responsibilities in terms of Accreditation are just ticking over and initial problems seemed to have been ironed out. The praise that we’ve had from the Standards Agency regarding the systems and processes that we have in place at Royal Freemasons suggest that we are producing high calibre compliance, and evidence of compliance.

WinterComms: How do you manage the relationship with your clients in terms of undertaking maintenance and renovations?
TF: You have to think really carefully about how you are going to manage it. When you let residents know that you are undertaking works, you have to know exactly what you are going to do and how before you approach them. You also have to have plans in place for those that require alternative accommodation, meal provisions and other essential needs.

You need to be aware of things the residents might be concerned about, and you need to be sure that their level of care they are used to is not affected. You can’t just say ‘we can do the project and get the upgrade done’; you also have to manage the needs of those residents involved really carefully.

When they employed me here they said it was really important to find someone who not only had the facilities management skills required but also the ability to be sympathetic to the needs of residents as well - it has to be a balance between the two. I’ve really had to reflect on that, not to forge ahead with the project, but to take two steps back and look at the needs of the client before I do anything. You’d think to upgrade 24 very small bathrooms wouldn’t take very long, but it’s actually going to take us three or four months because we’re manoeuvring around the needs of the residents. That’s the difference. I probably had a sense that there was a need to be very in tune with the needs of the residents, but I probably didn’t realise how important that was going to be.

WinterComms: How do you make sure contractors deal with your residents sensitively?
TF: It is about managing the contractor and putting him under some stringent contractual obligations. We expect contractors to be on site and remain on site until any upgrades are completed. It’s really important for us to find contractors who have a level of compassion and care, as it’s not an ordinary sort of process. Lots of our residents are elderly women living on their own, so there are lots of issues you need to consider in terms of making sure they feel safe in their environment when contractors are brought in. We try to maintain continuity of contractors and their staff so the residents get used to seeing familiar faces and are less concerned about who is going to come when they are in need. Having a full time maintenance supervisor has assisted with this.

WinterComms: What has been your most significant achievement?
TF: Getting four nursing homes through accreditation; being able to achieve full compliance from the property management point of view.

WinterComms: What do you think keys to success when working in FM for aged care?
TF: The client relationship is just as important as getting the work done and it’s the typical stuff of communication and making sure people know exactly what’s going on. It means accepting sometimes that residents can get distressed and will continually ask the same questions. You must have patience.

WinterComms: How do you think FM in the aged care industry could be improved in terms of professional development and education?
TF: I’d like to see more aged care facility managers in FMA Australia; I’d like to see that interaction happening between our industry and rest of the industry. I am part of a property manager’s forum run by Aged and Community Care Victoria (ACCV). It’s a very strong group of people with a wealth of knowledge of the aged care industry. It is also pleasing to see that some of these members hold high positions in their organisations, which suggests that facilities management business unit in the aged care industry is gaining importance.

WinterComms: What advice would you offer FMs moving into Aged Care?
TF: It’s full on. It’s a very demanding role. In the nursing homes you have to get on to things straight away. With our elderly residents in the independent living units, something that may seem trivial to you or I can be something which is quite catastrophic to them. For you and I, waiting for a return phone call or for a contractor to turn up to change a light bulb or fix a dripping tap is not a major problem, but for our residents it can be. You need to be available and ready to assist when the need arises.

It is very important to have a team of external and internal providers working together with you to provide this service. These people need to be committed to following up each request so residents don’t feel forgotten and that their needs are important. With us if the plumber says he is going to be there at ten, then he needs to be there at ten! Constant communication with our residents is vital.

References:
1 Australian Government Productivity Commission
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All of our databases are linked to our website, www.epfl.ch, which allows us to locate a place, identify a person, obtain its coordinates or an access map,” stated Jean-François. In the eyes of the Real Estate and Infrastructures Director at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), the features available to web users clearly show the innovative business approach adopted since 2002. Back then, Facilities Management at the EPFL was divided into four categories: property management, construction/renovation, polytechnic operations, and administration. An initial survey, sponsored by the Institute’s Regulatory Board in 1999, indicated a lack of communication between these services. In 2003, another survey confirmed these findings. “There was neither an optimization of projects, nor a coordination of personnel”, explained Jean-François Person, who coordinates the workforce of 140 people that make up the integrated, global FM organization. There are three guiding principles to this project: optimizing customer service while holding the personnel responsible for costs, maintaining the actual value of the real estate holdings and taking into account the added value of additional services provided.

For every service, the Real Estate and Infrastructure department (DII) examines three possibilities: integrated project execution, outsourcing, and the use of contractors. “To make this decision, we measure the added value for the users,” he explained. This is how reception services, which had been outsourced, became reintegrated back into the EPFL. On the other hand, postal, cleaning and food services, as well as the management of furniture resources, have been outsourced. These changes go hand in hand with an adaptation policy for personnel. Those whose posts have been outsourced are trained for a different role, concierge services, for example. In addition, quality managers regulate this process and, as a result, they re-analyze the behaviors that motivate employees. Although difficult to put into place, EPFL employees are now satisfied with this policy.

A Benchmarking Tool
In 2006, Jean-François Person put into place a benchmarking tool in the hopes of optimizing the management of real estate holdings and the provision of operating services. The results of the EPFL were compared to

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those of other public and private Swiss institutions. This objective analysis improved EPFL’s services and ensured that they would be able to compete with the best market practices and guarantee lasting work on their site. Thanks to these tools, the quality of the school’s management was able to take a great step forward. On average, over the last 5 years, 15% was saved each year from the DII budget, or 50 million Swiss Francs (almost 34 million Euros). These positive results contributed to a better appreciation of the personnel within the University. Almost as soon as this optimization had been achieved, the DII was presented with a new challenge. The division’s department had to assist with the Campus 2010 project, which was meant to supply new facilities and housing on-site, most notably the futuristic Rolex Learning Center. “We were going to have to integrate all these new and diverse services and collaborate with the private companies who were managing some of these buildings,” predicted Jean-François Person. The issue was preserving this integrated FM system without going backwards. The EPFL relied on their method of analyzing the processes and comparing the costs to preserve their competitive edge.

Jean-Philippe Arrouet

Comparing ourselves for Self Assessment and Improvement

As head of the Real Estate and Infrastructure department (DII) of the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), Jean-François Person is an observer of the best practices of Facilities Management in and outside of Switzerland.

Arség Info: You have double nationality, French and Swiss, and you have worked in both countries. In what ways do the professional approaches of each country differ?

Jean-François Person: The language issue constitutes a big difference. The FM sector was first developed in German Switzerland. Many FM companies come from Germany. Even though there are two large French areas, Lausanne and Geneva, companies who want to establish themselves in Switzerland must be bilingual. In addition, we are closer to Anglo-Saxon and German culture. We work with the Swiss standards, the SIA, or the German standards, the DIN, rather than the French standards. Lastly, an FM company wouldn’t be able to sell its services as they are, because in Switzerland there is a culture of integration. To establish yourself in this market, you must create local facilities, close to the client.

A.I.: Do these idiosyncrasies make the benchmarking process more complex?

J.-F.P.: The EPFL began this process in 2003, with Michel Bourquin, the Assistant Vice President in charge of planning and logistics, after discussions we had with Swiss and German auditors. Then, we were brought together with our colleagues in Switzerland and Germany. We also participated in workshops with Arseg. In 2005, after validating our FM system, we created a French version of the FM Monitor, which was established in Zurich in 2000. Since 2008, we have participated in Arseg's Buzzy Ratios. However, in this particular case, the process was relatively complex due to the differing standards.

A.I.: What trends are you observing in Switzerland?

J.-F.P.: The interest in Facility Management is growing because this sector, even in our own company, affects the budgets. Project Managers and large corporations are becoming more and more receptive. Certain more traditional corporations have established themselves in this market, as well as polytechnic corporations, such as companies that specialize in cleaning services. In Switzerland, 57% of services are outsourced. In the EPFL, subcontracting and outsourcing only make up 50% of services, but this choice is the result of an analysis of each service and of our wish to be in control of services for users.

A.I.: What are your interests in sustainable development?

J.-F.P.: There is a strong motivation on the part of the general population and the EPFL in particular. We have been sorting our rubbish and recycling for twenty years; we are certainly not just following a current trend. In addition, the Swiss Confederation has imposed a regulation to reduce CO2 emissions. Lastly, the students seem to be very motivated by this problem. However, the fact remains that with the economic crisis, the struggle against recession will be a priority from now on. In these circumstances, it is hard to know if corporations are going to pay as much attention to reducing CO2 emissions. Will they be asking for reduced costs, even to the detriment of green FM? It’s up to us to show that we can reduce costs, all while maintaining this concern about sustainable development.

A.I.: How exactly will you accommodate these demands?

J.-F.P.: Three quarters of landlords and users surveyed by the FM Monitor don’t know about the CO2 guidelines, for example. Therefore, we must advance our knowledge of these guidelines to be able to compare results and also to assess the offers coming from outside FM companies. It’s an opportunity to show that FM is a sector with multidisciplinary expertise. Our work is also becoming more professional with the arrival of young graduates who have acquired the skills for good working practices and know-how. We now need to progress even further in order to better merge services and estimate the value added to each of them. To compare ourselves, without fear of discovering our own level of performance, gives us an opportunity for self-assessment and improvement.

Interview by Jean-Philippe Arrouet
Search and Enjoy
by Cathy Hayward: Editor, FM World
first published: FM World 4 June 2009

Google’s founders started the company with the notion that the perfect search engine would understand exactly what a user wants and deliver exactly that. Judging by the firm’s London office, those same standards of service and innovation are applied to the workplace itself.

If visitors get their first impression about a company from the initial few minutes inside its building, then technology giant Google gets top marks straight away. Sitting in the Google reception, a stone’s throw from Buckingham Palace, FM World is greeted by Eddie, the facilities dog, who runs up and launches himself enthusiastically into an excited welcome. And it sets the tone for the rest of the building: its employees (the Googlers) and the FM team.

The 112,000 sq ft office spread across three floors of a multi-tenanted building supports up to 1,100 Googlers and successfully mixes playground, gamesroom and teenager’s bedroom with a dash of home office - surpassing most people’s expectations of a workplace. “It’s the sort of environment where you have to say ‘why not?’ when a Googler requests something,” says Jane Preston, Google’s UK facilities manager. “You end up doing the strangest things, such as turning a meeting room into an indoor park. But the engineers are happy and productive and that’s the main point.”

Preston has worked for Google for six years, joining when the firm was based in a serviced office in Soho Square. With a background working for entrepreneurial MBA students at London Business School, she was used to a budget-oriented but demanding environment and so “frugal Google” wasn’t too much of a culture shock.

Co-founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, while they were students at Stanford University, Google started in a garage. The partners made up the working environment as they went along. Famously they took doors off their hinges and put them on trestles to use as desks. The firm has been identified multiple times as Fortune Magazine’s #1 Best Place to Work as well as receiving accolades in the UK, much of which is down to the working environment.

The “Google stone” is a reference to a well-known phenomenon among new staff who, tempted by the free food on offer (the firm provides breakfast, lunch, supper and snacks) might gain a few pounds initially. But with a games room offering table tennis, table football and a drum kit, plus a studio with yoga, Pilates and boxercise classes, there’s a real focus on fitness. What’s more, everyone at Google gets a free bike and is encouraged to cycle to work. Preston converted the car-parking spaces that came with the lease to bike rack spaces. And soon Googlers will have a permanent masssese on site. Every Friday is a “Thank Google It’s Friday” day where the catering team lay on pizza, chicken wings and free beer and wine.

The Google global headquarters, the Googleplex, is located in Mountain View, California and the scale and environment is incredible, says Preston, who is tasked with replicating that environment in the UK. “But the scale of things is different here - they have a wonderful sprawling campus whereas here we have considerable constraints and there isn’t space for volleyball courts or to rollerblade in the car park.” For a start Google is a tenant in a multi-tenanted building where the loading bay barely provides enough capacity for the firm’s full catering model.

“But Googlers expect creature comforts and it’s just not good enough to say that we’re in central London and can’t provide the same facilities as Silicon Valley. But overall these are nice-to-have challenges.” At the same time Preston is determined to create Googleplex with a local flavour.

“Googlers should know that they’re in a Googleplex but in London.” Hence the manifestations and huge artworks of the London skyline, a Tube map explaining the layout of meeting rooms and departments plus the famous London telephone boxes which are furnished with small chair and leaning table for private phone calls.

Google uses an outsourced FM model across its sites. Each office, depending on its size, has a facilities manager directly employed by Google (the Googler FM - Preston) while all other FM staff and services are provided by an FM services provider.

The site FM reports to the European facilities manager who reports to the Real Estate and Workplace Services (Rews) team in California. In Europe Google has outsourced FM to Vector FM since 2003. The contract has grown from reception services in the Dublin office to providing full FM services in 13 countries serving 18 offices with an annual contract value of €8 million (£7.2 million). Working alongside Preston is Vector’s Naomi Newton-Fisher, UK services manager at Google.

The London Googleplex has been in a constant state of fit-out over the past few years - the final major project was completed late last year when Google took on part of the building which had been previously occupied by Rentokil and BAA. But with a company mission statement of “never settle for the best”, Preston and Newton-Fisher are keeping busy constantly improving standards and responding to IT requests for comms room upgrades in addition to incorporating new staff following the acquisitions last year of Postini and DoubleClick.

And on top of the regular churn - the FM team moved 200, 37 and 60 people over each of the past three months - Googlers will come up with requests such as wanting to turn all their desks around so they are facing one another. The FM team also deals with a huge number of visitors - about 2,800 a month plus high-profile visits from the likes of Cherie Blair, Sir David Attenborough and David Hasselhoff doing a series of talks to Googlers. And last year the Queen accepted an invitation to tour the office. On average the FM team supports 20 events a month. “We are always looking for ways to say yes to people. You have to consider health and safety but ask yourself why not?” says Preston.

Requests come through the global Google helpdesk system and it is redirected to the right team in the right country. Each department manages their own ticket queue. Customer satisfaction surveys are automatically sent out to a random selection of people once a ticket they have raised is resolved. The team is then scored on the results of the surveys and Rews aim is to get a minimum of four out of a maximum five (they are currently running at an average of 4.7 out of 5 on...
Search and Enjoy
continued from page 19

responses in the UK). These ticket stats are reviewed by board level management which exemplifies how important the FM function is considered to be within Google,” explains Newton-Fisher.

Google co-founder Larry Page has been quoted as saying that the perfect search engine would understand exactly what you mean and give back exactly what you want. The same could be said of the perfect workplace and London’s Google office comes pretty close.

COMPANY ESSENTIALS

Google’s world HQ is based in Mountain View, California, a stone's throw from the Shoreline Regional Park wetlands and in the heart of Silicon Valley. While not all Google offices around the globe are equally well-located, there are some of the essential elements that define a Google workspace:

- Lobby décor - a piano, lava lamps and live projection of current search queries from around the world
- Hallway décor - bicycles and large rubber exercise balls on the floors, press clippings from around the world posted on bulletin boards everywhere. Many Googlers standing around discussing arcane IP addressing issues and how to build a better spam filter
- Googler offices - Googlers work in high density clusters - a remarkable reflection of the Google server setup - with three or four staff members sharing spaces with sofas and dogs. This improves information flow and saves on heating bills
- Equipment - most Googlers have high powered Linux OS workstations on their desktops. In Google's earliest days, desks were wooden doors mounted on two sawhorses. Some of these are still in use within the engineering group
- Recreation facilities - gym with weights and rowing machines, locker rooms, washers and dryers, massage room, assorted video games, table football, table tennis, a pool table and a baby grand piano
- Google café - healthy lunches and dinners for all staff
- Snack rooms - bins packed with various cereals, gummi bears, M&Ms, toffee, liquorice, cashew nuts, yoghurt, carrots, fresh fruit and other snacks. Dozens of different drinks including fresh juice, carbonated drinks and make-your-own cappuccino

GOOGLEPLEX LONDON: THE STATS

- Square Footage 112,000 sq ft
- London FM staff: One Googler and nine outsourced Vector staff (part of Veris Plc) including a UK services manager, two facilities co-ordinators, three facilities operatives, two facilities assistants and an on-site maintenance engineer supporting around 850 full time Google staff.
- The company had 20,222 full-time employees, around 500 of which are based in London
- The London Googleplex has 60 meeting rooms, the largest of which sits 65 people in theatre to lots of one-man pods
It is a pleasure and an honour to take on the prestigious role of Chairman of EuroFM and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the EuroFM members for their dedication and hard work they have shown to our association. However before we start let me do two things.

I would like to show my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following board members: Albert Pilger (Chairman); Ole Emil Malalmstum (Secretary/Treasurer); Rene Herrmans (Chair of education network group); and Helena Ohlsson (Chair of practice network group). It’s fair to say that EuroFM are in their debt for their contribution and hard work they have shown to this association.

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