



FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

CBRE

The future of FM in the UK

‘What we do is FM;
what we create is
culture.’

The future of FM in the UK

In today's ever-changing professional world, functional teams must evolve to remain relevant. Facilities management (FM) is undergoing a dramatic and exciting transformation – one that greatly enhances its value to employers.

The traditional role of facilities management will not diminish; organisations need their buildings to operate safely and efficiently within a clean and compliant work environment. However, the purpose of FM has grown, and increasingly it plays a key role supporting organisational cultural transformation. Bringing together a broader range of services with the sole objective of delivering customer excellence and an outstanding customer experience now often comes under the FM Function. High-performing, united teams with shared values avoid siloed service lines and provide opportunity for shared delivery and a single point of contact. To customers, this presents a single responsive workforce that can, and will, address every need, with a shared focus on the end-user customer and building occupier experience.

FM is uniquely placed for this task in many workplaces due to its multiple regular touchpoints with employees, regardless of their seniority or specialism. New ways of working are created to react to the changing demands of occupants, the flexibility required and alignment to corporate objectives. We have started to see examples of organisations in all industries which, in consideration of FM's cultural impact, are looking to closely align the FM and HR functions. They recognise the impact facilities services can have on creating a positive culture, an environment optimising productivity and one that supports and encourages the retention and attraction of their greatest assets, it's people.

Over the next few years, we expect this transformation in FM supporting organisational culture to expand and be most visible in five key areas.



FM as a catalyst for cultural transformation



Service

The model which many FM teams will use as their benchmark for customer experience is the concierge service at a high-quality hotel. The core purpose of an effective concierge is to provide a seamless, stress-free service to guests. Anything that threatens to cause frustration or distraction is a cue for a first-rate concierge to step forward.

Within FM, this often means the creation of new roles such as Workplace Hosts or the expansion and development of existing teams to go beyond traditional delivery. And, with a large proportion of work-forces across the UK either working from home or operating on a hybrid basis, the value of concierge support in the workplace has never been higher.

The FM function of today endeavours to anticipate every need of building occupiers, keeping workplace experience and outstanding customer journey at the forefront of every activity.



People

The workplace is increasingly given as a reason for leaving a current employer and choosing another. Anecdotal information and data from LinkedIn enable organisations to track the next destination of employees who have exited, and in many cases, there seems to be minimal difference in the remuneration package; it is in their workplace environment and culture that employees are seeking to make a change.

The FM service of the future will be restlessly alert for early warning signs of workplace shortcomings, whilst proactively scanning the horizon for innovations that could strengthen the company's hand in the all-important priority of attracting and retaining talent.

FM's of the future must work to understand the pulse of the organisational culture and the triggers they must respond to.



Technology

Covid-19 has been a catalyst for the technology-enablement of many workplaces. The digital infrastructure must be maintained for employees to access documents regardless of time and place. Use of limited resources such as desks is dependent on a smooth-functioning booking system; sensors allow the optimisation of building services depending on the latest occupancy data. Many of these initiatives, having just emerged from pilot stage, do not have a designated 'owner'; this is a vacancy into which the ambitious and forward-thinking FM professional can step.

The role of the FM is to go beyond this traditional technology and look at how the data driven from this technology can be used to impact service delivery and have the agility to respond accordingly. At a foundational level, this may be introducing demand-led cleaning, sensor-led activities or migration to condition-based maintenance. However, the more inquisitive use of data will provide predictive insights on buildings and how we best use and design them for the future, and the FM Function is perfectly poised to support this.





Environmental impact

Organisations of all shapes and sizes have made public declarations of their intention to reduce their carbon emissions, often to net zero within a generation. The best FM pioneers are often ambassadors for this cause, championing practical ways in which the workplace can become more efficient with lower environmental impact (including building optimisation, smart technology and energy management). For this reason, an increasing responsibility of the FM leader involves networking with peers in organisations with a similar real estate footprint to share experiences and ideas. The facilities model is perfectly suited to supporting this agenda ensuring all facilities, not only aligns with the corporate objectives, but also drives them forward.

Meeting carbon reduction targets is just one of the focus areas for our customers, with the wider ESG agenda front and centre. We are seeing many organisations prioritising social enterprises and sustainable and diverse suppliers, which has taken the ESG agenda from an added extra, to a fundamental pillar. Customers are seeking solutions on how they can deliver environmental targets with a strong focus on social value for a holistic approach to sustainability. With challenging targets set, working with their facilities partners provides realistic and deliverable solutions to meet their ESG aspirations.



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

As the FM Function directly impacts the experiences of the employees, clients and communities within any building, the FM Function can act as an engine for innovation, by helping organisations unlock the potential of its people and drive an inclusive workplace culture.

The FM Function will be its most effective when its people reflect the communities where they live and work, and the spectrum of their skills and experiences complement and strengthen the ability of the team to deliver exceptional service and solutions. To remain competitive, FM leaders need to implement strategies to recruit, train, develop, grow and retain talent from underrepresented communities. By doing so, the FM Function can facilitate innovation across an organisation and pave the way for other departments to follow suit and to adopt new practices.



Conclusion

Today's modern FM function can act as the catalyst that builds a thriving culture of innovation throughout the rest of an organisation. An effective FM team built of individuals and leaders who are data-driven, creative relationship builders with a deep enthusiasm for technology, can be at the forefront of organisational cultural transformation. This is the core reason why, while what we do remains FM, that's no longer what we create. What we create is, ultimately, organisational culture.

How can we help?

For further information, please contact:



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