



FM - time to take responsibility

In recent years, facility management (FM) has developed into a discipline which is increasingly able to extend its contribution to the valued added chain of business, healthcare, public administration and other sectors. FM is being integrated more and more into the core processes, thereby generating increasing value and no longer representing a simple cost factor. Ronald Schlegel, director of Vebego Switzerland and visiting lecturer at the ZHAW Institute for Facility Management, writes a two-part feature for ECJ.

In recent years facility management has developed into a discipline which is increasingly able to extend its contribution to the valued added chain of business, healthcare, public administration and other sectors. Facility management is being integrated more and more into the core processes, thereby generating increasing value and no longer representing a simple cost factor. This brings with it greater responsibility on the part of facility management for the success of the enterprise as a whole. Are we ready to take on this responsibility? Which direction should research and development take and how should education and training be geared to meet these new demands?

Energy consumption makes great demands on Switzerland. Buildings are responsible for a significant part of end energy usage: in Switzerland in 2014, for example, this amounted to 40.7 per cent of the total consumption or 82.1 TWh (Prognos/INFRAS/TEP, 2015). Operating systems and hence facility management have a major influence on energy usage. Experience with many properties, combined with measurements taken, shows that proper commissioning and operating optimisation can lead to efficiency improvements of over 20 per cent. What needs to change, to take advantage of these opportunities and in this case, what responsibility can facility management take on?

Demographic changes create great opportunities for facility management and at the same time represent a great challenge as a result of the increasing lack of skilled workers. A clear distinction between attendance care and nursing care can create new opportunities for division of labour and for the development of new models which can have a positive impact on costs.

Global trends

Demographic developments - In many countries, particularly in the industrialised world, the average age of the population is rising rapidly and the classic age pyramid

is becoming an "urn". In Germany, for example, the proportion of over 65s is expected, depending on the scenario, to grow to over 50 per cent by 2050 (D-Statistics, Federal Office of National Statistics population pyramid). The needs of this rapidly growing population group represent major opportunities and challenges for facility management.

Independence and self-reliance are extremely important for most people even in old age and have a crucial influence on their quality of life. Although people, even in the higher age groups, are now on average considerably healthier and more active, the costs of nursing and care in the final years of life are rising sharply.

As a result of demographic developments, this increasing number of pensioners is faced with a smaller number of workers. It is thus not only the cost which presents a problem but also the shortage of skilled labour which represents a major challenge.

There is an opportunity for facility management here to play a significant role and take on added responsibility. To maintain their independence, older people often have no need of nursing care for years but instead need help with daily living activities. Many of the latter services are at present provided by trained nursing staff. Where this support is no longer possible, this is often the reason for the loss of independence. Where help with daily living activities can be undertaken by professional providers employing appropriately trained but considerably cheaper staff and where modern technology and digitalisation can be used, this can result in a significant improvement in quality of life and reduce costs at the same time. Cooperation between facility management services and the Spitex organisations can lead to a substantial reduction in costs.

The implementation of this sort of approach and the systematic use of new technology is gaining increasing ground, in spite of the shortage of trained staff

in the hospital and care sector. Modern technology should be employed to enable best use of the valuable time for direct contact between carers and their clients.

Sustainability - "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Brundtland report 1987)

The three dimensions - social, environmental and economic - should be given equal weight.

Factor of success

Sustainability is viewed increasingly as a factor of success: investors demand sustainability reports and many companies have committed themselves to the principle of sustainability, whereby facility management assumes a very important role. There are property funds, such as the CS Green Property Funds for example, which follow the rules of the sustainable property industry and are thus valued more highly; and there are institutional investors who will increasingly only invest in sustainable assets. The Dow Jones Sustainability Index has been tracking the sustainability of companies since 1999. As far as the general public is concerned, certain aspects of sustainability are playing an increasingly greater part in influencing

decisions for or against a particular product. Initiatives towards a 'green' economy are becoming more frequent and 'green' politicians are increasingly not the only ones familiar with the concept of the ecological footprint.

Sustainability is by definition a long-term consideration and thus inevitably requires operating systems to take centre stage. Operating systems imply a key role for facility management.

Facility management serves both user and investor and is consequently paid for and measured by both of them: comfort, services and costs are the parameters. To achieve sustainability, facility management must be able to influence the process at an early stage and be involved in the entire process: not advisory but responsible. This means that appropriate incentives must be offered and that facility management has the necessary competence and skills to take on this responsibility.

A substantial element of sustainability is related to energy consumption or emissions of greenhouse gases like CO₂. The proportion of end energy usage by buildings in Switzerland in 2014 reached 40.7 per cent or 82.1 TWh (Prognos, TEP, 2015). Facility management has a major effect on this energy usage.

Experience with many properties,

combined with measurements taken, shows that proper commissioning of systems and installations along with optimisation of operation can bring about an increase in efficiency of over 20 per cent. In Switzerland, for example, this could lead to a saving of 16.4 TWh which in turn corresponds to a saving of around eight per cent of end energy consumption.

Facility management can and must make a significant contribution to energy transition.

Significant change

Digitalisation - In the modern world we seem to be always online and fully networked. Machines and equipment are also increasingly connected to the Internet of Things. Algorithms can today determine what information we receive, which products we are likely to buy and which partners we should look for.

Robots, drones, advanced sensor technology and automation, the Internet of Things, Building Information Modelling (BIM) etc – these are all becoming more important day by day. They also form the basis of many innovations in facility management.

Digitalisation changes the processes linking buildings and facilities just as significantly as in all other areas. With BIM at the core of the operation buildings can be developed, planned, built and commissioned in a completely different way. The use of modern technology such as robots and automation can bring about significant change to activities and business models at the facility services level. The key task of facility management must be to integrate data streams from the various systems and sources into a profitable whole. Digital connectivity between property owners and operating company, production and users is essential to ensure integration and achieve process optimisation. This improves the quality of the value added and increases productivity. Digitalisation can thus provide facility management with the opportunity to fulfil its role as integrator even more effectively.

■ *In the April/May edition of ECJ Ronald Schlegel will explore new opportunities for and responsibilities of the FM industry.*



Ces dernières années, le facility management est devenu une discipline toujours plus capable d'apporter une contribution à la chaîne de valeur ajoutée du commerce, de l'industrie, de la santé, de l'administration publique et d'autres secteurs. Le facility management se trouve intégré toujours plus dans des processus centraux, générant de ce fait une valeur accrue et ne représentant plus un facteur de coût simple.

In den letzten Jahren hat sich das Facility Management (FM) zu einer Disziplin entwickelt, die ihren Beitrag in zunehmendem Maße auf die Wertschöpfungskette des Handels, des Gesundheitswesens, der öffentlichen Verwaltung und anderer Bereiche ausweiten kann. FM wird verstärkt in Kernprozesse integriert, und dadurch trägt es verstärkt zur Wertschöpfung bei und stellt nicht mehr einfach einen Kostenfaktor dar.

Negli ultimi anni, il facility management (FM) si è trasformato in una disciplina incredibilmente in grado di estendere il suo contributo alla catena del valore aggiunto delle imprese, del settore sanitario, delle amministrazioni pubbliche e di altri settori. Il facility management (FM) viene sempre più integrato nei processi primari, generando quindi ulteriore valore e non più rappresentando un semplice fattore di costo.