

## Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard  
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## erb appeal

The phrase kerb appeal has become popularised by TV shows aimed at helping homeowners to sell their properties more quickly by improving the first impression received when first arriving at the building. A property's outer appearance, its kerb appeal, is often the deal maker or breaker when it comes to buying a home. It is claimed that it takes potential buyers no more than eight seconds to decide whether or not they like a house and many will simply walk away from a tawdry façade while others will decide they want a beautiful house before they even enter the door.

This principle is equally valid for those of us who manage commercial properties, especially those in the property management sector who are responsible for multi tenanted buildings. The external appearance of the property and its immediate surroundings, the furniture in the common reception area and even the smile (or otherwise) provided by the security guard can have a serious impact upon the rentability of the asset and even upon its market value.

The same principle indirectly affects facilities managed by FMs in other sectors. The impression given to potential staff, clients or suppliers before entering the building will have an influence on the outcome of their relationship with the organisation, which may be positive or negative. Retail businesses understand this well but its importance seems to be lost on many others.

A good routine for FMs is to walk the visitors' route on a regular basis. Instead of entering the building through the back gate using their reserved parking space a service aware FM will regularly approach the building from the front on foot, walk through the front door and sit in the visitors' chairs in reception.

By replicating the visitor experience in this way, problems will be identified that nobody else may bother to report; dying plants in the shrubbery, green mould on a glass canopy, litter in a doorway, untidy wires showing under the reception counter etc.

Developing a kerb appeal routine helps a proactive FM to spot such issues early, to implement remedial action and to address any inadequacies in the cleaning, grounds or fabric maintenance routines that have allowed such problems to arise

*The psychology behind first impressions and their relationship with the environments we create and inhabit is explored in detail in the book: 'First Impressions' by Nalini Ambady and John Skowronski published by Guilford Press ISBN-10: 1593857160*