

## Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard  
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# Mobilisation

The mobilisation of a new contract for outsourced facilities services can be a complex and stressful activity with an enormous impact upon the future perceptions, relationships and costs for all parties concerned. Despite the high risk of failure and the potential dire consequences that can arise, this is an area that is frequently rushed, underinvested and poorly resourced. Customers are keen to capitalise on the benefits of their new contract and suppliers are eager to avoid additional expenditure when they have just spent a great deal on bidding costs and probably been forced to accept lower margins than intended as a result of the tender process.

Resourcing of mobilisation management is very important. Ideally there should be no disconnect between the bidding activity and contract operation. This means that business development personnel who have developed detailed knowledge of both the client and the promised solution need to continue their involvement during the first few months of operation. Similarly it can help enormously if some of the operations team are involved in the latter stages of the bidding process especially in the design of the working solution.

Like any project a successful mobilisation depends upon the creation and implementation of a good plan with the right budget, team and communications processes. This should be led by an experienced mobilisation manager to ensure that learning from previous projects is carried forward. This person needs exceptional project management skills including planning, communication, delegation, decision making, problem solving and leadership. The team should include technical experts from disciplines like HR and Safety who will be involved with future audits and contract reviews. The timing cannot be rushed. For a large FM contract it may take as long as 12 months to achieve successful transition from mobilisation to steady state.

Mobilisation may take place alongside post tender negotiations, development of a performance management system with service level agreements (SLAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and the demobilisation of a previous incumbent contractor. These can all result in unforeseen changes to the initial plan. For these reasons alone the project plan must have a robust change management process as the final solution is unlikely to completely match the original design. The client must be fully engaged with these activities as they will have a big impact on the future success of the contract.

*For more information on professional project management visit the Association for Project Management [www.apm.org.uk](http://www.apm.org.uk)*