

## Facilities Management from A to Z

Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard  
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## eception

The design and operation of an effective reception service can be one of the most important activities that the facility manager does in contribution to the reputation and image of the organisation. Studies have demonstrated the importance of first impressions in creating a positive customer service image and there are many anecdotal stories about deals lost where important clients were delayed or annoyed by inefficient receptionists.

Every organisation and building is different so the scope and service levels in each reception area need to be designed to match the particular needs and constraints in each case. For example where there are high security risks the customer handling aspects of reception may be secondary to the process of vetting and controlling visitors.

The kind of visitor is another key factor. The service will be need to be very different in an organisation that only has the occasional high value customer to another where there are large numbers of consumers arriving on a daily basis.

Physical constraints such as the location of toilets for visitors or water and waste services will affect decisions about the location of security barriers and beverage facilities. The choice of furniture for reception desk or waiting areas must give the correct corporate image.

Maintaining the polished image of the reception area is vital. Expensive furniture, lighting and well trained staff are all wasted if a flickering light cannot be quickly repaired or dirty coffee cups promptly cleared away.

The choice of duties for reception staff is also important. If the primary function is to meet and greet visitors in a professional manner then additional tasks like switchboard or post duties may be inappropriate. However in some organisations the reception is the administrative hub of the organisation. Receptionists should also possess excellent communication and customer service skills to allow them to meet the varying demands of visitors and colleagues.

*The Institute of Customer Service has many resources relevant to those looking to improve their front of house service performance [www.instituteofcustomerservice.com](http://www.instituteofcustomerservice.com)*