

# Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard  
published monthly in Facilities by Lexis Nexis between 2008 and 2016

## **S**ustainability

The most widely used definition of Sustainability is: “To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In a business context Sustainability is about the ability to operate in a manner that does not harm the environment and with a positive effect on the planet and its population.

Sustainability has become an increasingly important issue for Government, professional institutes and the business community in general. However it is not always appreciated that it is the members of the facilities management profession who are at the forefront of the delivery of sustainability in terms of its impact on the selection, operation and management of properties and resources.

Facilities Management’s role in Sustainability is one of supporting the organisation’s leadership by delivering services critical to operational activities within the premises and local community. The level of commitment provided by the Board to Sustainability is a critical factor in this.

Facilities managers have a crucial role to play in the development and delivery of more sustainable facilities, through a number of stages in the life cycle of a building. These benefits are provided through the integration of FM and design knowledge into the facility to reduce or eliminate waste, reduce or generate energy, minimise water usage, prevent pollution, reduce carbon production etc.

Sustainability in facilities management is as much delivered through management systems and processes as it is through specific ‘Green’ initiatives. By building Sustainability into operational procedures, procurement policies and supply chain processes the FM can have a significant impact on the environmental performance of the organisation.

It makes good business sense for any organisation to consider issues such as carbon emissions, resource efficiency, heat and energy efficiency in their commercial properties. Sustainable buildings can help to cut utility bills and demonstrate a commitment to sustainability. Money can be saved on the construction and operating costs of buildings by improving resource efficiency and including equipment and technology that uses low quantities of energy and water.

Facility Managers must also remember that Building Regulations and legislation are increasingly focused on ensuring sustainable buildings. Any building adaptations will need to comply with requirements controlling environmental issues such as energy efficiency. The government is also introducing a number of measures that require businesses to improve the energy performance of commercial buildings. These include air conditioning system inspections and Energy Performance Certificates.

Sustainable FM’s should use the waste hierarchy to underpin their waste strategy. This means focusing on reducing waste initially as this returns the largest cost savings and best environmental benefits. They should then look at opportunities to reuse, recycle and recover waste materials before using landfill as a last resort. Waste reduction relies on strong leadership. Facilities Management has a key role to play here.

*The best book on FM and Sustainability is ‘Sustainable Practice for the Facilities Manager’ by Sunil Shah, published by Wiley-Blackwell ISBN-10: 1405135573*