

Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
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Teamwork

The facility managers' role as integrator of multiple disciplines and leader of multi skilled service delivery workers necessitates a good understanding of how teams work. The ability to assemble, motivate and lead diverse teams towards higher performance is a skill demonstrated by the most successful facility managers.

A successful team can accomplish more complex tasks and work more effectively than the same individuals would by working on their own. The sheer number of people involved in facilities management means that collaboration and mutual support is necessary to avoid duplication, error and inefficiency. The interfaces between different elements in the FM process can be made more effective by good teamwork.

A significant factor in team effectiveness is the recognition and exploitation of the diverse skills, experience and personalities found in any group of people. When individuals are encouraged to make the most of their strengths but can compensate for each other's weaknesses, and different personality types balance and complement each other, then the overall performance is significantly enhanced.

Another critical factor common to successful teams is that the combined effort is directed towards a common clearly defined goal. Understanding how each team member's actions contribute towards the achievement of a shared objective helps to focus behaviour towards positive support and respect for fellow workers and reduces friction and personality difficulties.

As team leader the facility manager has to ensure that the objective of their team is clearly understood, that individuals know their roles and responsibilities and that tasks that have been assigned are being done. However, they also need to ensure that the team spirit and morale of the team is maintained and that communication within the team is effective.

Motivating and inspiring a team towards higher performance levels requires a positive attitude and enthusiasm for the task in hand. A coaching style that incorporates empathy with constructive criticism should be used to swiftly address any individual drop in performance levels before they affect the team. FM is a people business and must have first class performance management skills to succeed.

For more thoughts on leading teams read "Management Teams – Why they succeed or fail" by R Meredith Belbin published by Butterworth-Heinemann ISBN 0750659106 or "Effective Teambuilding: How to Make a Winning Team" by John Adair published by Pan Books ISBN 0330298097