

Facilities Management from A to Z

Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
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Time management

Time is one of the limited resources that busy facility managers value most. The extensive remit of the FM function continues to increase each year and the pressures on facilities professionals continue to rise. For this reason it is important that every FM has good time management skills.

Time management has been defined as “the act or process of exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase efficiency or productivity.” Time management can be improved through a variety of skills, tools and techniques to better utilise time when addressing tasks, projects and goals.

Time Management activities include planning, prioritising, goal setting, delegation, monitoring, organising, scheduling and the analysis of time spent. Time management is usually considered a business activity, but with work increasingly impinging on personal life some managers apply the techniques to their personal activities as well in search of an improved work v home balance.

Many people find that modern business tools, such as office software and smart phones, help them to manage their time more effectively. For instance, a computer based diary programme like Outlook can make it much easier to schedule and keep track of events and appointments with links to tasks and related mail messages

Whatever system is being used the first step to improving time management is to analyse the way time is being ‘spent’. Bad habits can be identified and any imbalance between corporate objectives and the time invested in them can be addressed.

Effective time management includes ignoring distractions that prevent important tasks from being completed. For example, nonessential contact with friends and family during work hours might cause loss of focus or procrastination; Reading every email as it arrives and then reading them again in order to deal with them is duplicated effort.

If workloads are not organised and prioritised schedules not established, tasks will always be left to the last minute and deadlines will be missed. Poor Time Management will inevitably affect work quality. In trying to complete tasks at the last minute, quality is always sacrificed for speed.

Many facility managers lives are busy simply because they do not take time to plan, opting instead for an entirely responsive approach with more time devoted to administration than to customer service. More effective FM’s delegate routine activities to other team members and focus on dealing with more important issues in person.

There are many useful books on Time Management. One of the most popular is ‘Do it Tomorrow and Other Secrets of Time Management’ by Mark Forster, published by Hodder & Stoughton ISBN-10: 0340909129