

Facilities Management from A to Z

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Trust is a key factor affecting relationships and effectiveness of the facilities supply chain. If a facility manager outsources any of their critical facilities services but does not trust the service provider they have appointed then a considerable amount of time and resource is liable to be wasted on audits, inspections and performance monitoring.

On the other hand, a facility manager who places implicit trust in their supply chain but who employs no governance controls or performance measurement at all is failing in their duty to their own employer. Blind trust is not a noble gesture of confidence but rather an admission of negligence which will inevitably prove expensive.

Trust is both individual and institutional and grows based on an alignment of interests between all parties. This evolution can be an arduous growth process that demands patience, clarity of thought and goals, and a will to succeed.

Such long-term investments have clear implications for management of the facilities supply chain. Getting the balance right between control and trust is vital. When trust is viewed as an investment it implies an expectation of a return or dividend. Is a service provider worth investing in or is a customer really worth the investment of trust? These are difficult calculations to make, but they are essential to long-term success.

In his book 'The Speed of Trust', management guru Steven M R Covey describes this optimal point of balance as "Smart Trust". This Smart Trust, according to Covey is characterized by judgment and is created where a high propensity to trust is combined with a high degree of analysis. Nobody would recruit a member of staff without references or a probation period but once proven then trust can be applied.

In its simplest form trust in relationships is the belief that a party's word is reliable and that they will fulfil their contractual obligations. That reliability is essential in the provision of facilities services; however, the return on an investment in trust comes when performance is required that goes beyond the letter of the contract. The most tangible proof of trust in business relationships is the level of investment that each party is willing to contribute to the relationship beyond that required by the contract.

"The Speed of Trust – The one thing that changes everything" by Steven M R Covey is published by Simon and Schuster ISBN-10: 0743295609