

Facilities Management from A to Z

Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
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There are no fixed definitions of the vast array of facilities management outsourcing models which often leads to confusion, particularly in the mind of the potential buyer. It sometimes seems as if every FM service provider uses different terminology to describe their offering. Worse still, some of them use the same terms to describe different things. Total FM is one of the oldest of such terms but there are still a number of differing interpretations as to its meaning.

The UK trade association The Facilities Management Association defines Total FM as “one point of responsibility for the outsourced services”. Facilities Management as a function includes the integration, management and delivery of all support services for a facility and so by definition it is ‘Total’. The different outsourcing models refer either to the amount of FM that is outsourced or to the method by which the contractor delivers the service.

For example, ‘single service outsourcing’ is where a specialist contractor delivers just one service but the management of that contract and its integration with other services remain in-house. In ‘bundled service outsourcing’ a number of related services are delivered and managed by one contractor but their integration with other service bundles is handled by the client.

In this way, the models that can best be described as ‘Total FM’ are those where a single contractor is appointed to deliver and manage all of the services and to integrate them as well. In practice the entire facilities function has been outsourced to one provider.

Confusion comes when service providers attempt to differentiate their Total FM offering by reference to their method of delivery. This leads to terms like “Integrated FM” or “Managed Support Services”. Some of these contractors employ all the front line staff themselves in contract structured teams; some own a number of single service organisations and integrate their activities for the client; others only employ contract managers and sub-contract all the delivery to a supply chain of single service providers; while some work in alliances with other partners to create a combined Total FM solution.

Each of these is essentially providing a Total FM solution.

The Facilities Management Association (FMA) is the UK’s only trade association representing the FM industry www.facilitiesassociation.org.uk