Facility Management

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Abstract

In the pre-1980 era, many large facility, universities, and international schools were content to maintain excellent physical plant headed by an experienced maintenance manager or engineer who had received little or no formal training in facility management. When times are difficult in the world of business, when there is increasing corporate restructuring and growing uncertainty, decisions are driven by pressures to improve quality, reduce costs and minimize risks, while maintaining the same level of services before the cuts. In the last 15 years, we have seen the arrival of facility managers.

Keywords: *Maintenance manager, facility manager, custodial maintenance, corrective maintenance, campus architecture, contractor, relocation process.*

Introduction

In the last ten years we have seen the new arrival of a new kid on the block (Alexander 1996). What gave rise to the appearance of facility managers and where do they go from here? Their emergence can be traced to one thing – competition.

It is competition that drives the business world to embrace quality, to re-engineer the processes and to look at the way in which work is done to bring about improvements in performance.

Old and New Responsibilities

The traditional role of maintenance personnel, such as technicians, janitors, building engineer, is custodial maintenance that encompasses all day-to-day routine maintenance activities and corrective maintenance. These are performed to repair and restore items after problems are identified but before major breakdowns or emergencies occur. According to Rondeau *et al.* (1995) they did not command a presence either within the organization or without. These are individuals without other skills or interest in the boardroom (Becker 1990).

However, a gap continues to emerge throughout the facility's life because user expectations increase, and, indeed change in nature.

Teicholz and Ikeda (1995) pointed out that maintenance staff and managers are partly responsible for the gap in understanding between themselves and their executives. Maintenance professionals have performed well, in most cases, with limited financial and personnel resources. The result is that management has come to expect a continuation of this high level of performance at no additional cost.

When times are difficult in the world of business, there is a continual pressure to reduce personnel and operational costs while maintaining the same level of services as before the cuts. While maintenance managers may have been first to recognize that the technology being demanded by the organization was making their job much more complex, they have been slow to alert their management to the fact that integrated automation has significant technical, administrative, and ongoing financial implications (Teicholz and Ikeda 1995).

Facility management currently must cope with not only an increased work load (comprised of traditional facility functions), but also additional issues that did not concern them in the past-issues that are "strategic" in nature. In general, the facility staff is becoming more management oriented and must understand facility issues in the context of a single business/organizational model. Facility personnel must respond to this challenge by understanding the implications of these new strategic issues. The most effective tool that can help staff cope with these issues is the computer.

The benefit of a successful implementation is a computer system that is dynamic and can grow and adapt itself to the changing needs of the corporation. A successful system will have quality control procedures built in, provide accurate and current information that can be used by both facility and corporate management, and provide archival information that will become that basis for future decision making. In this manner, management can understand the facility implications of business decisions. Also that the facility staff can understand, communicate, and document the implications of facility on corporate decision making.

Becker (1990) identified: (i) information technology, (ii) cost of mistakes, (iii) global competition, (iv) high cost of space, and (v) employee expectations as the five factors which stimulate the growth of facility management. In his view, these cause modern facility managers to be seen as a vital service group by their "customers" who are employee of the organization. In Becker's words, they have moved "from the basement to the boardroom".

Scope and Objectives

The scope of this study is limited to facility management and the role of the facility professionals.

The objectives of this research are listed below:

- Old and new responsibilities
- Definitions
- Contracting method
- Campus architectural facility
- The relocation process
- Job satisfaction
- The future of facility management

Definitions

In the late 1970s the profession began to receive recognition and to define itself more formally within the US and Canadian corporations, and became known as facility management (Rondeau *et al*.1995). During this period, the Facility Management Institute, a non-profit educational and research organization described the profession as managing and coordinating interrelated "people, process, and place" issues and functions within the corporation or organization. The United States Library of Congress, in 1992 (as cited in Rondeau *et al.* 1995), defined facility management as: "The practice of coordinating the physical workplace with the people and work of the organization; it integrates the principles of business administration, architecture, the behavioral and engineering sciences".

The International Facility Management Association (IFMA) has grouped the numerous job responsibilities of facility professionals under nine major functional areas (Rondeau *et al.* 1995).

- Long-range facility planning.
- Annual facility planning (tactical planning).
- Facility financial forecasting and management.
- Real estate acquisition and / or disposal.
- Interior space planning, work specifications, and installation and space management.
- Architectural and engineering planning and design.
- New construction and/or renovation work.
- Maintenance and operations of the physical plant.
- Telecommunications integration, security and general administrative services (food services, records management, reprographics, transportation, mail services, etc.).

Contracting Method

Innovations in facility management contracting have closely paralleled those of the construction industry. The internal pricing of transactions has prompted the consideration of buying the same service externally. In construction, the traditional method of procurement involves the use of the main contractor and subcontractors. The analogous situation in facility management is the fully out sourced package. Subcontractors are employed by the facility management contractor for operational cleaning, security, grounds maintenance services and also the management service – the core strategic element of facility management.

The average facility owner waits a long time before deciding to put up a building. Once he makes up his mind to do so he becomes impatient resulting in a rushed job of the sort where nobody has really thought out the details. The owner frequently changes his mind; all sorts of improvements, mistakes and difficulties are discovered as the job goes on. The architect is constantly forced to make variations from the original contract. Each change causes delay and extra cost, and gives rise to claims for additional payments by the builder (Moxley 1993).

The responsibility for this rush and inefficiency lies squarely on the shoulders of the facility owner. He can prevent it if he wishes. He thinks he is going to get a cheaper and quicker job by rush methods, but he is profoundly mistaken. The work will take longer and cost more and he is ultimately the chief sufferer.

One of the major needs in the building industry, therefore, is for the facility manager to endeavor to convince the building owner to adopt business like methods in the preliminaries of the contract.

Campus Architectural Facility

A campus is an ensemble of buildings, landscapes, and infrastructure used for higher education. Campus architecture, above all else, declares itself as architecture through: (i) clarity of purpose, (ii) logic in plan, (iii) perceptible and enjoyable vertical and horizontal circulation patterns, (iv) the dimensioning and flow of space to be experienced as volume, (v) the selection of exterior materials and motifs as a conscious, congruous demonstration of building function, structure and style, and (vi) the installation of necessary building technology managed by a facility manager to sustain and support building activities and for economic operations and maintenance.

Occasionally, there may be legitimate reasons to construct an edifice out of context, such as Frank Gehry's Fine Arts Building at the University of Minnesota, or a group of buildings, such as Frank Lloyd Wright's West Campus of Florida Southern College (Dober 1996). In the new Assumption University campus at Bang Na, we see the future today.

The Relocation Process

This part of the study described the human factor in office staff relocation. It is written for people who constitute the team that makes the relocation happen and those on the periphery who, if they have been involved in relocation in the past, dread the disruption that the relocation causes. To begin with, there are the thousand and one logistical details that go into the designing, planning, and implementation of a relocation project (Attwood 1996).

When a university campus is relocated from a city to a suburban area, many students, lecturers, and staff who appreciate the good environment of the new campus will volunteer to be relocated. The Office of Student Affairs, however, faces with minor problems that students encounter in their daily routine of travel back and forth between campuses (Liu 2002).

The relocation process is not just about moving furniture, equipment, and people from one place to the next. It is not just about occupying the new campus or work space. A relocation project is a people project. It is about real-life people who are affected by every decision that the corporate management and the relocation team makes. It is about

respecting their needs. The facility manager must perform the seemingly impossible task of keeping the affected people happy and supplied with everything they need to perform their jobs – without running into massive cost overruns (Attwood 1996).

Managers are beginning to develop methods and techniques for communicating effectively with building users so as to understand their new environmental requirements. Two-way communication about the work environment is shifting from a "reactive" to a "proactive" model of facility management (Vischer 1996).

As managers become more adept at negotiation and communication with building occupants, they are strengthening the boundaries of their profession. By encouraging feedback from employees (also lecturers, staff and students / parents) about the new campus environment, facility managers open up communications on building-related issues, encourage business management to participate in accommodation decisions and potentially expand organizational definitions of corporate accommodation issues that go beyond the immediate building (Vischer 1996).

Job Satisfaction

Buildings not only provide a workspace, they can actually motivate how work is done. Building operators should not simply be attempting to fulfill minimum maintenance obligations but should be continually striving to maximize the building user's potential. Ironically it is the increasing cost of personnel rather than buildings that has focused attention on building performance.

We live in an era of transformation – of technology, of social values, and the way work is done. In order to meet an increasingly global and competitive environment, organizations are undergoing re-engineering, work process redesign, and other forms of restructuring and basic changes of the way work is accomplished. The goal of such transformation is to make the work of the organization more efficient and productive. It can lead to more production with fewer resources and at a lower cost. However, the belief that a happy worker is a productive worker can be misleading. Lawler and Porter (1967) investigated the relationship between satisfaction and productivity and found that the correlation was very weak. This contrasted with the correlation between satisfaction and two other factors, absenteeism and turnover, which were shown to be strong (Alexander 1996). They proposed a modified causal link, in which performance (productivity) resulted in rewards which, in turn, resulted in satisfaction. Clearly, facility managers in this context can be seen as a provider of rewards such as additional workspace, improved working conditions, and better views. They instill the radical notion that individual performance matters. Once the workers get used to the idea that individuals deserve to be treated and rewarded on their own merit, they will be less likely to tolerate arbitrary treatment elsewhere (Lerner 2001).

Conclusion

Market research has identified the need in facility management for a kind of hybrid manager. This cross between professional manager and technical professional is one which combines the ability to make things happen with a level of technical understanding. This enables facilities in organizations to be tuned to strategic needs. The development of an appropriate balance requires management and technical skills. Such a balance can lead to healthy and ecologically sound buildings in a business context, and resolve the relationships between organizations, the individual, the environment and the business community (Alexander 1996).

Occupancy-based management standards for facility managers are essential. An open, individual, corporate, continuing system for such standards has to demonstrate ability to manage at junior (operational), middle (tactical), or senior management (strategic) levels. The aim is a mix of technical competence, language skills, cultural sensitivity and, at the top, a controlling vision that can bind activities together in many different countries.

If facility management is to be acknowledged as a profession with its own rigorous discipline in the 21st Century in Asia, it needs to sow the seeds for a strategy and infrastructure to promote development. "Centers of Excellence" should be created and linked into a network, to provide the focus for all this.

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