

Digital Information Management - Top Tips

We now live in a digital world, with the days of using a pen and paper a thing of the past. This is no different for facilities managers. Information about your estate is available at the tips of your fingers which enables proactivity as opposed to reactivity.

We have outlined 5 tips to best utilise digital information.

Tip 1 - Grasp the value of planning

When Facilities Management software is engaged earlier in the design-to-build process, firm foundations can be laid for truly intelligent estates and asset management based on smart use of data. Building Information Modelling (BIM) plays an increasingly important role in streamlining Facilities Management operations:

- **Broaden your horizons:** The planning phase for an asset's lifecycle is set against a backdrop of four areas defining how a building will be run: statutory, mandatory, functional, and discretionary. Understand these areas to strategically define your approach to the journey ahead of you.
- **Share owner operator goals:** Appreciating the owner operator start point enables you to align your skills to the asset lifecycle aspirations of the building's or estate's principal stakeholders. Do your customers seek a focus on space management, asset lifecycle management, planned or reactive maintenance? Is this focus reflected in their plans? Do they understand how you can support their goals?
- **Embrace the digital environment:** The information to support you in doing your job is today far more likely to be handed across in the form of data. The minute detail you need to drive efficient service will increasingly come to you in the form of BIM objects. Discover all you can now to avoid playing catch-up in getting to grips with the BIM world.

Tip 2 - Start loving data

BIM is a connecting thread from design and concept through to construction and operation. Designers are using BIM to make their designs more efficient: reducing waste and cost on-site and enabling clash detection by producing 3D designs resulting in real models that can demonstrate performance capabilities. You need to get the what, why, and how of data:

- **What?** Although Facilities Management software is not always involved at these early stages, this is where the foundational data is born that will enable you to drive better outcomes in your role: throwing away the clipboard and pen, transitioning from paper-based records and information to digital.
- **Why?** You'll no longer have to walk miles to view defective equipment; you'll be able to call it up on screen and scrutinise its complete profile – installation date, warranty information, part number, impact on other components, tools needed for fixing/ maintenance.
- **How?** As you start to understand it, you'll be able to embellish the data and make it more valuable. You can add to its maintenance history and note trends.

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Tip 3 - Achieve greater operational efficiency

Contractors are using BIM to leverage the same benefits as designers do, but then translating these benefits into efficiency advantages by understanding clearly what they need to deliver on-site and when. BIM is therefore driving efficiencies in the operations/ manage phase as much as in the design phase:

- **Model behaviours:** Digital models are now being passed from designers to contractors and, if they are not already, they will find increasing adoption and value amongst facilities managers. This is going to make your job so much easier. Make sure you feel confident about working with these models.
- **Fingertip control:** As a facilities manager, you thrive on information. You can't do your job without it. So, imagine at the press of a button being able to find out all you need to know about any maintainable asset, or any space. The sooner you go digital the better prepared you will be for seizing new initiatives based on inevitable new facilities management software adoption trends.
- **Customer satisfaction:** With your over-arching goal of keeping the business functioning smoothly, your ability to work with data will become increasingly critical to your ability to deliver customer satisfaction. You will be pro-active instead of reactive, minimise downtime and reduce running costs.

Tip 4 - Get the hard facts from soft landings

Soft Landings (a public-sector initiative) places huge responsibilities on contractors to be specific in the information that accompanies and represents every facet in the building's construction. Contractors are also required to measure performance and operate the building for a defined period of time to get feedback on how the building is running, to ensure proper operation:

- **Look back to look forward:** BIM is used at the design stage to make sure that relevant information starts its life when the building does. Once again, being familiar with the data and how it's originated will help you demystify the process in your own mind.
- **Go granular:** Ensuring the relevance and accuracy of the data collected by the facilities management software depends on tight specification; diligence at this stage creates a solid basis for later efficiencies.
- **Participate:** Wherever Facilities Management firms or professionals can engage with designers, the opportunity is one to seize; rather than simply being a recipient of data you can start to influence the type of data that will be of most pragmatic use in running the building or estate.

Tip 5 - Contribute to the process

Facilities Management professionals will be more valuable and gain huge benefits if they bring influence on what data is collected through design and construction. This should be specified as early in the process as possible, ideally at the design stage:

- **The art of the possible:** Facilities Management is on the brink of change. Your role can expand in direct proportion to how you can envisage the possibilities delivered by smart management of information.
- **Driving better outcomes:** Facilities Management is not alone as a profession where delivering better outcomes is no longer about working harder, but about working smarter. We're in the age of technology. The world is digital. Are you?
- **Continuous improvement:** Better outcomes pertain not just to your current tasks and asset responsibilities. Start offering feedback to the design and construction teams so that lessons can be learned for future projects.