

IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN THE FM INDUSTRY

Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Any industry at some point must look inwardly and assess the way it operates. Improvements increase monetary gains, grow companies, inspire workers and change lives. The Facilities Management sector is no different.

The FM sector utilises some ground-breaking technology such as - HVAC technology, artificial intelligence, IoT sensors, and wearable technology such as smartwatches and 'X-Ray' glasses. However, there are areas in which the industry feels outdated.

A study by CloudFM found that the hospitality industry "is missing out on savings of £736 million a year due to outdated facilities management practices" - [FMJ](#)

The report goes on to say that the sector is in dire need of innovation to "realise savings and cut carbon emissions on the journey to net-zero", utilising the IoT technology to provide a maintenance regime and improve the "operational efficacy of everything from ovens to air conditioners."

This is just one of many ways the sector can grow and improve its wider industry and that is what we will be exploring in this guide.





SKILL GAPS IN FM

Skill gaps are not exclusive to just the Facilities Management sector - many industries suffer these gaps for a variety of reasons: education, recruitment, training and development to name a few.

These skill gaps can cause roles and vacancies to remain open and an organisation to struggle to get the talented people they need through the door to fill these gaps in the workforce.

According to FMJ regarding the sector's skills plight - "FM's economic contribution to the UK economy is considerable. Recent analysis from CIBSE found that the sector accounted for as much as eight per cent of the UK's GDP, employing some 10 per cent of the country's workforce. Clearly, these figures and the valuation of the engineering sector cannot be treated independently of one another. The skills gap is, therefore, as much a problem for the FM community as it is for the wider engineering sector. This point may appear trite, particularly as 'hard FM' formulates one half of what typically falls under the remit of 'facilities services' and has itself been crying out for engineering talent for some time".

So how can these skill gaps be plugged?

Well according to ABM UK's Managing Director John McPherson - collaboration is an underutilised way of closing the technical skills gap that currently inhabits the sector. A lack of new talent is making its way into FM while the old guard who do have these technical skills are nearing retirement age.

A quote from Mr McPherson's opinion piece in FMIndustry reads - "Business-run apprenticeship schemes are crucial to filling that skills gap. Internally, ABM currently has 89 apprentices across 34 level two to seven courses available across the UK, and over 60 additional applications in process. We understand how important it is to continually grow these numbers to further improve skills and talent within the organisation.

There is no denying that COVID-19 delayed progress in tackling this issue including our ability to spend Apprenticeship Levy funds to the fullest extent. To ensure that investment still works hard for the industry, ABM is working with the London Progression Collaboration, pledging £192,000 of unused funds to enable small and medium-sized businesses and social enterprises to reskill low paid Londoners. The partnership will see the creation of level two to four apprenticeships which will build skills where there is a skills shortage".

SUSTAINABILITY

Improvements to sustainability agendas within an industry aren't one-time fix issues. Industries must continue to test boundaries and push their organisation limits to see how much more sustainable their operations can be.

Therefore, how can facilities managers continue to intergrade greener initiatives into their workplace performance?

SUSTAINABILITY ANALYTICS

Sustainability analytics is data around the sustainability endeavours currently in effect around a business.

Gathering this data allows you to learn about what is happening now as well as forecast future sustainability schemes which allow you to plan accordingly.

"Conduct an audit to see where your facilities are wasting energy— is there a particular piece of equipment that is using it inefficiently? Is there a certain season during which your energy usage skyrockets unnecessarily? Does your usage correlate to occupancy patterns? With data in hand around these types of queries, you can make data-backed repairs, maintenance and replacement decisions that will make your facilities greener." - [ServiceChannel](#)

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

Constantly seeking alternative energy sources is a great way to drive up sustainability figures.

Making the most of electric, solar, wind and other alternative and renewable energy sources can make a huge difference and most importantly - cut down the number of fossil fuels used. This is not only beneficial to an organisation and industry but to the world as we continue to battle against climate change.

"Electric alternatives should be considered where appropriate, especially in the case of vehicles and equipment. These little steps go a long way in implementing sustainability." - [InnovateFM](#)





PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Having equipment break down is not only an annoyance when it comes to replacing or getting it fixed in time so that progress on a project is not halted - it's also a financial headache.

According to MaintainX - "top-notch facility managers do more than change lightbulbs, clean floors, and respond to equipment breakdowns. They also help organizational leaders maximize asset longevity, enforce safety regulations, enhance energy efficiency, and potentially save millions".

Preventing machine breakdowns is an extremely profitable endeavour as it eliminates unnecessary unplanned downtime and curbs the amount of spending on replacements.

SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

Setting sustainability targets allows organisations to plan their green initiatives and measure them accordingly.

These goals can be as simple as recycling, working from home, which saves costs on the running of huge office space when an entire workforce is on-site and creating sustainability champions who promote these company-wide environmental decisions.

An example of an FM company setting out clear sustainability policies is Arcus. They state: "Arcus is committed to fully embedding sustainability into the management and operation of the business, ensuring an equal focus is placed on all elements of sustainability covering the natural environment, society, and business governance, as well as helping to achieve the UN's sustainable development goals. We are increasingly taking actions that result in improved, and where possible positive, social, economic, and environmental impacts because society expects this and because there are business benefits to doing so".

OUTSOURCING

The practice of outsourcing is the hiring of an outside party to perform certain roles. According to McKinsey - "Outsourcing has now surpassed 50 per cent of the total facilities management market in several regions, including Europe, Middle East, and North America".

Outsourcing has huge upsides that organisations want to make the most of, including driving up efficiency standards, reducing costs of the day to day running of the business, and bringing in expert knowledge of the industry that the business inhabits.

"While there's nothing new about outsourcing, it's evolving. A few years ago cost management would have been the main impetus behind outsourcing real estate services, these days it's as much about being able to free up in-house teams from the nuts and bolts of FM delivery, allowing them to deliver strategic value." - CBRE

However, there are ethical procedures to follow when outsourcing.

We have recently seen British cruise line P&O Cruises come under fire for their rash outsourcing methods - sacking 800 onboard staff via video and replacing them with agency workers. Companies must take care of their reputation and introduce more ethical outsourcing.

"Ethical sourcing means the business ensures that the products they source are obtained in a responsible and sustainable way, the workers involved are treated fairly. Environmental and social impacts are taken into consideration with ethical sourcing. Ethical sourcing has become important for mitigating operational risk and upholding a good brand reputation." - UnleashedSoftware



MANAGING ASSETS

Asset management is a hugely important endeavour. It allows organisations to keep track of their assets - where they are, how they are utilised and if any changes are made.

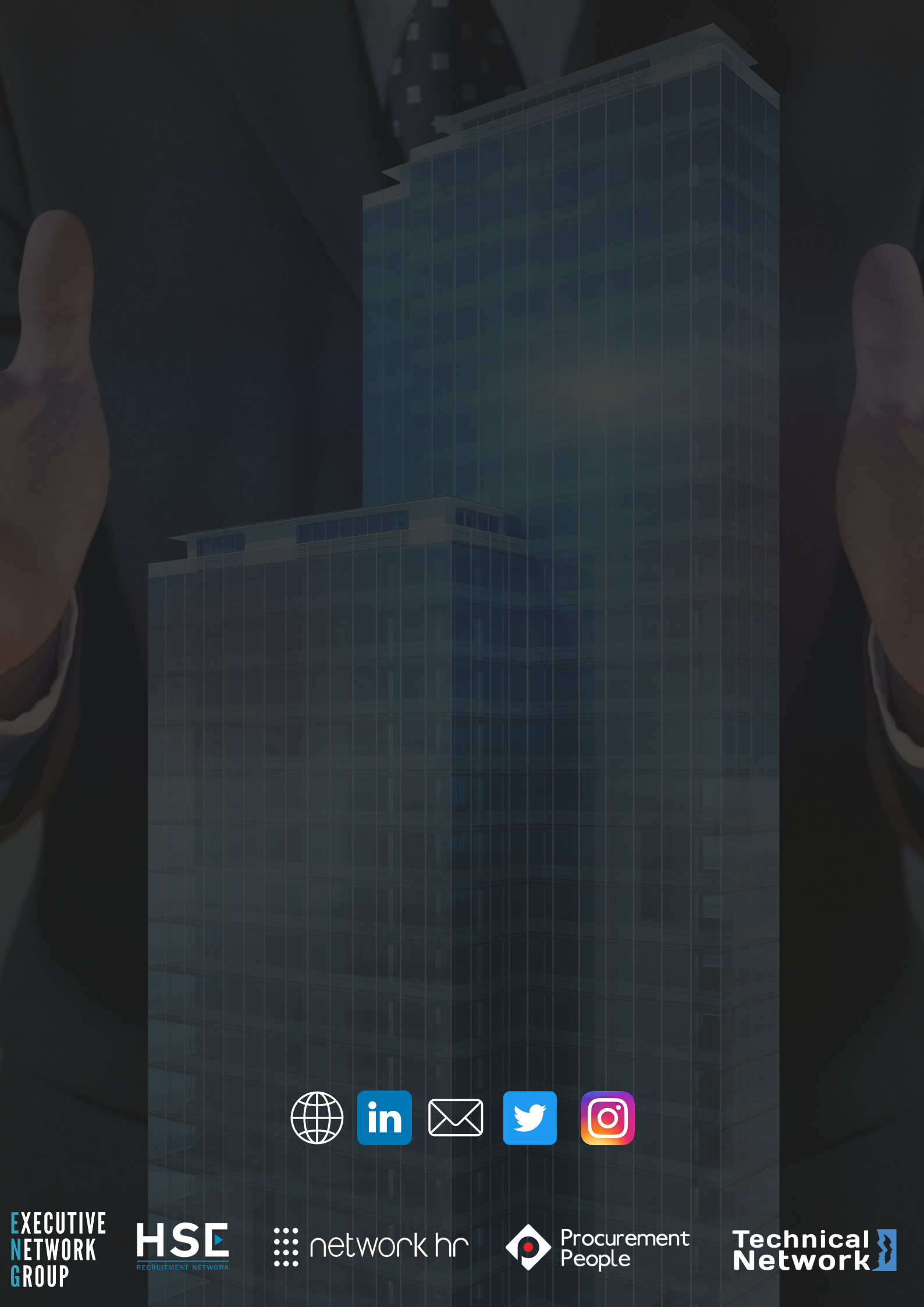
"Actively managing assets is essential for the efficient and sustainable operation of any organisation. The key principle is to intervene with repair and maintenance activities at strategic points in order to maintain the performance of an asset and extend its life.

Proactive asset management provides a holistic view of what the organisation owns or leases, its condition, location and when it will next be maintained or replaced. This simplifies the budget planning process for facilities managers and enables effective Planned Maintenance as well as reducing backlog liabilities." - [SWG](#)

According to [SpaceIQ](#) - Facilities assets come under three specific categories:

- Facility-related assets (HVAC, lighting, break room appliances)
- Personnel-related Assets (vehicles, uniforms, mobile devices)
- IT-related assets (copiers, printers, data infrastructure, software licenses)

By improving the management of these assets - facilities managers can reduce costs, extend the lifespan of these assets, and improve productivity. Improving the work conditions of staff is also a huge incentive, as the most important asset to an organisation is the workforce.



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