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In Brief

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Innovise



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Welcome to i-FM in Brief



OUR THEME in this edition of i-FM In Brief is sustainability - a topic that in one form or another has found a place on virtually every boardroom agenda in the land.

Dealing with sustainability in any summary way, though, can be difficult. As our contributor Frank Logan points out, the term has a widely agreed meaning - often expressed as the 'triple bottom line' encompassing economic, social and environmental issues - but it is frequently used in a more limited sense, say, as just another word for 'green'. We've tried to keep the focus appropriately broad - as should any organisation that seeks to take sustainability seriously as an operational objective.

Each of those triple bottom line areas relates directly to facilities management, of course, and FMs are typically in a position to have a significant impact on the implementation and monitoring of relevant policies and actions. This is certainly an arena in which FM can take a lead, for example in terms of identifying and introducing good practice. Adding to the challenge for facilities management, however, is the fact that sustainability is beginning to seem like an area in policy and practice that is due to

move on to the next level of maturity. Some corporate and government commitments, for example, have been watered down or sidelined altogether as the focus remains on battling the economic climate - understandable, but the issues captured in the concept of sustainability will not go away. At the same time, evidence has recently emerged from Leeds University that many companies around the world have yet to make the shift from commitments as good PR to commitments that are pursued right through the business.

These issues emerge from the content of this edition, and many are discussed regularly on our website. i-FM In Brief is designed to bring you up-to-date on some of the many things that have been happening in the industry and on our website over the past few months, to ensure you have the information you need to succeed in your role as a facilities manager.

If you are involved in FM as a key business-oriented discipline, we're here to help you understand the industry and thrive in it and with it - whether you are a service provider, buyer or advisor.

David Emanuel - MD i-FM.net

NJC scoops 2011 e-business award

Amonet, a new purpose-designed and web-based management information system, built and operated by Not Just Cleaning Ltd, has won this year's i-FM e-business Award.

Amonet is a fully web-enabled CAFM system which significantly improves communication, service transparency and performance of facilities and maintenance activities. Easily accessed through any standard web browser, the system provides a powerful, adaptable and easy-to-use platform, giving complete control and a single, holistic view of FM services.

Amonet provides critical operational, compliance and performance data available on-demand to all permission-based users in any location. The centralised data and document management provided by the system supports compliance with ISO 9001/14001 and OHSAS 18001. It also provides a secure, seamless audit trail across locations, divisions, people and services, in granular detail.

Commenting on this year's award winner, the judges said: "It's great to see a small company using technology very effectively to enhance their own business and the services they deliver to their customers. This is an impressive end-to-end system that shows real thought in its development and care in its implementation. The concept serves as a first-rate model for others in the sector to emulate."

AMONET

Sustainability in the news:

Sustainability is a big topic, both in terms of the span of the subject area and the news coverage it generates. Summarised below are some of the key stories that have been covered on i-FM in just the past six months.

Mixed views on green targets

Only 14% of facilities management professionals believe their companies should be more ambitious in setting environmental standards in the workplace as part of a strategy to reduce carbon emissions.

That fact comes from a joint BIFM and Low Carbon Workplace survey which also found almost 80% of those responding saying that the scope of their organisations' workplace environmental objectives should be achievable. But only 64% are actually confident in their organisation's ability to achieve those goals successfully.

'People' factors remain the main obstacle to achieving workplace environmental objectives, according to the report. When asked about the single biggest challenge facing them, 30% of respondents cited budget constraints, with the same proportion citing winning and maintaining staff engagement. Yet, despite evidence of a willingness among employees to support environmental goals, 71% of respondents said their organisations do not state these objectives in staff job descriptions. Low Carbon Workplace advises companies to ensure senior-level backing for carbon reducing strategies to sustain levels of employee compliance.

“Organisations must bridge the gaps to deliver on their green ambitions for the workplace. Engaging all the

stakeholders, working together to overcome competing priorities and putting in place a broad-based carbon management programme is fundamental to achieving deep-reaching carbon reductions,” said Katharine Deas, Managing Director, Low Carbon Workplace.

CBI backs mandatory carbon reporting

In its submission to a DEFRA consultation on the measuring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, the business organisation argues that mandatory carbon reporting would help firms monitor and manage their emissions effectively.

But it has also warned that many businesses already have to report emissions under a variety of other mechanisms, including the Carbon Reduction Commitment and EU Emissions Trading Scheme, and urged the government to 'get rid of time-wasting duplication'.

Rhian Kelly, CBI Director for Business Environment, said: “Mandatory carbon reporting is a great way of making boardrooms aware of the savings possible through energy efficiency.”

But, Kelly added, it is important that companies 'don't end up getting bogged down reporting'.

Carbon reduction falling flat

Greenhouse gas emissions increased by 3% in 2010, as opposed to the 3% reduction required to meet government-set targets.

The Committee on Climate Change attributes the increase mainly to the cold winter months of last year but says that even after adjusting for weather impacts, emissions were

broadly flat. The increase means that a 'significant acceleration' in the pace of emissions reductions is required, according to the government's independent advisory group.

Committee Chair Lord Adair Turner commented: “Although we can meet the first carbon budget, this is mainly due to the recession. It is crucial that government sets out detailed policies to support power sector decarbonisation and energy efficiency in homes and businesses.”

Following the release of the Committee's report, the CBI noted that its own Climate Change Tracker, published earlier this month, showed that not enough progress had been made in decarbonising energy, buildings, transport and industry.

Green buildings link to productivity

A workplace with good air quality, comfortable temperature, natural light and other features associated with green buildings is likely to result in a more productive workforce, according to research conducted by property advisors Jones Lang LaSalle.

The firm has analysed previous studies looking at the connection between green buildings and employee productivity. It concludes that, although the impact of green features on productivity is difficult to quantify, the existing data shows a clear correlation between a comfortable and healthy workplace and occupant well-being, which translates into lower absenteeism and greater productivity.

“When business people put forward a financial case for green buildings, they often focus on energy efficiency because the cost and

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benefit are easily measured," says Julie Hirigoyen, Head of Energy and Sustainability Services at Jones Lang LaSalle. "But the opportunity to increase employee productivity even by a few percentage points is a much greater financial plus, even if the benefit cannot be precisely quantified."

UKGBC to tackle greenwash

The UK Green Building Council has launched a green building guidance task group in response to the proliferation of information, tools, products and services around the concept of 'green buildings'.

The new task group is charged with providing a comprehensive framework for the construction and property sector that will signpost businesses to the most appropriate information and advice they need in order to embed sustainability at the heart of their organisation.

Due to report early in the New Year, the group is to explore issues such as how products and services can meaningfully be compared, what constitutes best practice in sustainability and what evidence currently exists that provides a business case for organisations to become more sustainable.

Green Building Council CEO Paul King commented: "Even for the most committed, the sustainability landscape can be confusing and sometimes overwhelming. People looking to demonstrate good or best practice - wherever they stand in the building lifecycle or supply chain - need practical and clear guidance to help them embed sustainability in their business and benchmark themselves against their peers."

Carbon: new issue in procurement

Research from the Carbon Trust indicates that up to half of multinationals could move to selecting their suppliers based upon carbon performance.

According to the study, 29% of suppliers are likely to lose their places on new 'green supply chains' if they do not have adequate performance records on carbon. Conversely, the research finds that 58% of multinationals will in the future pay a premium for low carbon suppliers to reduce their overall corporate carbon footprint.

The report suggests the heightened scrutiny on supplier performance is likely to come from increased external pressure from shareholders. 74% of UK respondents said shareholder pressure would be a key driver for them in tackling carbon emissions.

Retrofit now, says Boris Johnson

The Mayor of London has called on the capital's businesses and big landlords, private and public, to help deliver London's biggest ever retrofitting programme.

Retrofitting business premises with energy-saving measures will not only save up to a billion pounds a year in wasted energy costs but could significantly help towards eradicating youth unemployment, the Mayor argues.

He said: "There is a massive economic prize coming from retrofitting activity, not least in terms of the solid investment opportunity it represents for private businesses. We need them to recognise that this is in their best interests because of the energy savings that will derive and it is a massive potential generator of employment for young people."

Johnson said that London government is already working to stimulate retrofitting on an unprecedented scale across the capital through programmes seed-funded by public money. These are now set for rapid expansion using private and European financing, he explained.

Sustainability group slams government

The AECB, the sustainable building association, has called on the government to stop wasting billions of pounds on a 'green energy' strategy that delivers neither value for money nor energy security.

Instead, the group says, the focus should be on the cheap and even free green alternatives that are being ignored or sidelined.

In a confrontational statement, AECB challenges the government and the energy industry to show the value for money behind the 'electricity generation first' vision for a low-carbon future and to assess other options on a level playing field.

Research by the AECB also indicates that:

- Insulating UK buildings offers the same carbon and energy benefit as building offshore wind turbines, at around a fifth the cost.

- Nationwide energy efficiency drives, such as upgrading lighting systems, could abate climate change at a profit.

Greener public building could save £8bn

A new report has suggested that the public sector could raise the productivity of its workforce by £8 billion a year by using buildings in a leaner and greener way and offering more flexible working.

The report's findings suggest that if the public sector rationalises its property portfolio, works in partnerships and improves workplace conditions by championing practices such as flexible working and working from home, it can improve the environmental efficiency of its estate while improving the productivity of its workforce between 5% and 15%. It finds that a 5% increase alone would equate to £8 billion's worth of staff time.



In 2007, an IFMA forecasting report named sustainability as one of the big issues that would shape facilities management for the 21st century. The evidence suggests this is happening faster than anyone might have imagined.

The issues captured by the sustainability concept have become a strong focus for many organisations around the UK and beyond in recent years. They are a theme in day-to-day operations, and a concern in the buying of goods and services - including support services.

To get a quick picture of how organisations are dealing with sustainability and the action areas that affect FM, we carried out an i-FM 30-second survey in November, inviting facilities managers to share their views on the key issues.

Definitions

The starting point for understanding the priority given to this subject area, and the sorts of policies and practices that organisations might put in place, has to be an exploration of what is meant by the term 'sustainability'. Used in its 'classic' sense, it refers to the 'triple bottom line' of economic, social and environmental impacts - but of course it is also frequently used simply as another word for 'green'.

To throw some light on how our survey respondents see

sustainability, we asked them to provide a few words of definition. More than half of the definitions offered used words that relate directly to the triple bottom line concept. The second most common approach emphasised the environmental aspect, with a clear focus on energy in a significant number of cases - specifically, reducing consumption to cut costs and emissions.

Priorities

We then asked respondents how they rate the importance of sustainability at their organisation. The largest proportion of the group - 46% - labelled it one of many important policy areas. Over a third (37%) described it was a key priority. Less than a fifth (17%) see it as just a routine 'background' concern.

As a follow-up, we asked if the priority given to sustainability had changed over the past two years. For over three-quarters of the group (76%), this subject area has taken on greater importance in recent times. The remainder said they had seen no change in the priority given to sustainability at their organisation.

And what is the expectation over the next two years: will sustainability shift up or down as a priority? Two-thirds of the group (66%) see an increase in importance coming.

Nearly all of the remaining third (32%) anticipate no change over the near-term; but surprisingly a few respondents - just 2% - expect sustainability to decline in importance for their organisation.

Actions

Because thorough implementation of the relevant policies and procedures inevitably involves consideration of the supply chain, we moved on to ask how respondents handle this challenge. The strategy favoured by almost two-fifths (39%) is pre-qualification of supply partners plus periodic monitoring. Near-equal proportions of the group opt instead for pre-qualification alone (30%) or a more targeted approach involving joint activity to develop performance (31%).

Finally, to understand where the responsibility for implementation of all this activity lies, we asked our respondents how sustainability is managed in their business.

Nearly half the group (48%) said that all departments within the organisation are tasked with implementation. Nearly two-fifths of the remainder (39%) reported that a specialist department takes responsibility. But a surprising number - 13% - conceded that it is not clear who is in charge.

Despite that last figure, there seems little doubt that sustainability is on the agenda at virtually every organisation and is shaping what facilities managers do. In a sense, recession has been good for the cause: the drive to cut costs, especially in areas where they have been rising - such as energy - can bring the benefits of reductions in consumption, resource utilisation and carbon emissions. A small silver lining in a sky still too full of grey clouds.





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Sustainability - it's here to stay.



Frank Logan looks at some of the new drivers that will change business-as-usual forever.

Sustainability as a principle of survival has been with us forever, of course. But it is quite extraordinary how quickly it has become, in little more than a decade or so, a mainstream topic in society generally and a key issue in the business world specifically.

In fact, sustainability has become so mainstream an idea that it is probably in danger of becoming one of those over-worked words - innovation, partnership, collaboration come to mind - that are used so often the real meaning gets left behind.

Definitions of sustainability vary with the source and the context, but the fundamental concept behind the term's current application can be traced back to the environmental movement of the '80s and a UN report which described sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. This was subsequently extended to the 'three pillars' concept - or the 'triple bottom line' - which links sustainability to economic, social and environmental concerns.

It's a big word, then - and it is worth remembering, say when reviewing a prospective business partner's sustainability policies, that sustainability is not just a synonym for 'green'.

The scale of the demand

In terms of consulting, sustainability has been a huge growth market for firms with the right skills, even if those skills have had to be broadened quickly through

acquisition or recruitment as this has become a new and pressing area of business concern. All the big accountancy-based practices are active here - Deloitte, PwC, KPMG, E&Y etc - as well as many energy and engineering-based firms - plus, of course, a host of 'purpose-design' sustainability consultancies.

One specialist research and information firm reckons the global market was worth \$1bn in 2010 to management consultants alone.

Speaking about how quickly this issue is moving into the mainstream for business, Peter Lacy, managing director for sustainability services at Accenture, recently told the Financial Times: "It will become part of everything we do. Just as we no longer talk of 'e-commerce', in 10 years we may not be using the word 'sustainability'."

So what's driving this? From a market development point of view, you couldn't ask for a better set of drivers - it's the perfect storm for business development people. Legislation, corporate reporting requirements, shareholder concerns, consumer concerns, rising resource prices, moral and ethical responsibility, reputation management - the list of powerful factors is a long one.

Much of this may apply primarily to big corporations, but the concerns and obligations to act (and to be seen acting) are trickling down through both requirement - for example, the credentials needed to get on a tender list - and the broad climate of expectation in both the business world and our wider society.

And - though there is still some debate, as there is around such questions as whether green

buildings have greater asset value and whether good office design contributes meaningfully to productivity - there appears to be some evidence emerging that sustainability delivers real return on investment.

Measuring the benefits

Research carried out by KPMG earlier this year concluded that companies that have implemented corporate sustainability strategies have reaped a broad range of tangible benefits.

The study, published as 'Corporate Sustainability: a progress report', found that most of the companies reviewed had implemented sustainability strategies for brand reputation enhancement and compliance reasons - but they had also benefitted from increased profitability, new and better quality products and services, and improved employee morale.

The KPMG research revealed that:

- At nearly 40%, the main business driver for implementing sustainability practices is brand reputation enhancement (regulatory compliance is the second biggest factor)
- The biggest benefits of sustainability strategies are - in first place at 32% - attracting and retaining customers; in second place at 31.5% - increased profitability; and in third place (at 25%) better quality products or services
- The largest barrier to further progress in achieving sustainability goals is different short-term financial priorities (such as business survival) at nearly 40%, followed by risk of raising costs compared with competitors (at 36%).

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Sustainability features built into buildings seems to be having some impact on how tenants make choices, too, at least in the sense of green credentials being added to the list of considerations.

A survey conducted by GE Capital Real Estate amongst more than 2,220 tenants in the US, Canada, France, Germany, Sweden, the UK, Spain and Japan found an average of 50% saying that green initiatives are a high priority when it comes to choosing a building.

That finding is consistent with an earlier Jones Lang LaSalle/CoreNet survey on the role of sustainability in property choice.

In the GE study, the US came lowest with only 43% placing the greatest importance on green building practices. Japan came top of the poll with 59% of respondents ranking green issues as the most important consideration.

In the survey 'green building practices' included energy efficiency measures (lighting upgrades, energy audits), recycling and waste reduction strategies, water conservation practices, tax and utility rebates and indoor environmental quality controls, including efficient building ventilation.

The survey also covered energy certifications. Again, in the US just 40% of tenants rated energy certifications 'valuable'. However, in Sweden (51%), the UK (46%) and Spain (46%) tenants see energy certifications like LEED and BREEAM as useful factors in the building choice.

Overall, GE's study found energy efficiency ranked as the top priority for tenants in most countries, followed by waste reduction. Indoor air quality was also important.

What to from here?

David Cameron's aspiration, expressed last spring, of leading the 'greenest government ever' is looking a bit doubtful as Whitehall struggles to deal with the financial realities of today's world. Nevertheless, there is an underlying commitment there, as well as a considerable ongoing pressure from the EU in regards to the sustainability agenda.

Couple that with cost, ethical and customer drivers and it is clear that sustainability will remain a key business objective.

Indeed, it seems that Accenture's Peter Lacy is probably correct: in a few years' time, these new requirements will simply be business as usual.

Frank Logan is a former practitioner and long-time industry observer.



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Editor's choice - recent sustainability features on i-FM

Effective action on sustainability demands a carefully planned and implemented strategy, plus good information for monitoring success. The extracts here draw from three specially commissioned features that offer advice in a range of different areas.

Features...

In the each case, the full article is available on www.i-FM.net.



Sustainability - it matters more than ever

Tim Clapham, UK Marketing Manager for Planon Software, explains the requirement for good data.

We all know that that we're using our planet's scarce resources too quickly. We all try to make small changes in our lifestyle - like turning off lights and recycling our wine bottles - but what about the workplace? Given that a massive 40% of worldwide CO2 emissions come from buildings, property and facilities managers have a unique window of opportunity to make a real difference.

It won't come as a surprise that the workplace environment is changing - social influence, market changes and improving technology are key factors. Senior management understands that this is a great opportunity to realign their organisation with their employees'

changing needs. Property and facilities managers should similarly embrace these changes, especially as they are intrinsically linked with improvements in sustainability.

But a recent survey noted that a third of FMs did not know the energy usage of their company; and even of those who did, many did not put the information to good use.

With the right software, however, FMs can overhaul their measurement and analysis procedures - and importantly they can make credible, viable recommendations to their boardroom colleagues.

Recommendations that save money, reduce emissions and add credibility to an increasingly educated client/consumer base. How many board directors would turn that proposal down?

Rewriting the book on waste management

Lesley Shearman, Executive Director of Operations at Emprise, reports on a highly successful recycling strategy at the British Library

Following the coalition government's pledge to be the 'greenest ever' government, publically funded buildings' environmental performance has come under increased scrutiny.

In addition, the Landfill Directive sets a target for reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill sites in the UK to 50% of that sent in 1995, by 2013.

Consequently, compliance and environmental concerns are a high priority for the British Library. In 2007 the Library established rigorous environmental targets, aiming to recycle 70% of its waste by 2011. The Library enlisted further help from Emprise, to aid in reducing waste to landfill and increasing recycling across its sites.

Working together, the team introduced a range of initiatives which not only made the Library's waste management processes greener, but also helped to change employees' attitudes to waste disposal and waste generation.

A three-pronged approach to recycling cans, glass, paper, cardboard, plastics and compostable food waste was developed, focusing on recycling hubs, staff engagement and public involvement.

The results were so good that the British Library achieved a 70% recycling level by April 2010, hitting the target one year ahead of schedule.

Out of this experience comes four 'top tips':

1. Establish focused targets
2. Small changes can yield big results
3. Communicate and engage
4. Publicise your results.



Sustainability in workplace food services

Simon Macfarlane, Director of Operations & Head of Sustainability at Bite Catering, explains how this key area can lead the field on positive action

Over the past few years, we have seen an increasing trend for client companies to look to food to lead the sustainably message in the workplace.

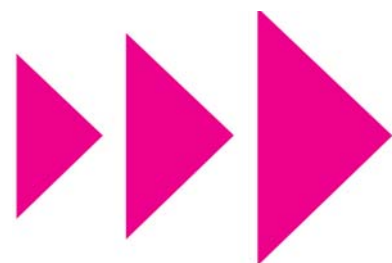
This reflects the unique role of food:

- It touches everyone in a workplace
- It is characterised by an infinite number of facets that can be used to carry and debate the sustainability message
- The majority of food services in the workplace have a commercial element, ie customers can make continuous choices as to whether or not to buy the services, depending on whether these meet their needs and beliefs.

There is inevitably a cynical fraternity, and I have heard people remark that the whole sustainability thing is nothing new, just good old fashioned business sense. In a way, this may be the case - but repackaging things brings new energy and takes it to new audiences. But that cynical attitude also misses the point that new thinking, new research, new technologies and increased urgency come only with the passage of time. Therefore, by their very nature, current sustainability initiatives have got to be advances on those of old.

We recently asked a number of leaders in the food service arena to a roundtable event to debate how the consumer considers sustainability when making decisions about what to eat over a 24-hour period. This is especially relevant to workplace FMs as, of course, they have a key influence on what their employees eat during 50% of their waking hours. The most telling conclusion from the roundtable was that, given the current economic uncertainty, consumers (employees) would not pay a premium for eating sustainably. Corporate budget holders also said that they would not pay a premium to follow a sustainability agenda. Therefore the trick is to enact those actions that either save money or, at worst, are cost neutral.

Luckily, there's a whole series of actions that are likely to be 'low hanging fruit', providing sustainability wins that either save money on the FM budget or don't come at an economic premium.



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