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Stay safe to carry on.

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In many of the conversations we’ve had recently with FMs on bringing staff back into the workplace, it’s not so much being back in the office which most concerns employees, but the risk of infection while travelling into work. There is an understandable reluctance amongst workers to return to crowded public transport. A recent report found that 56 per cent of commuters who travel into London planned to do their journey to work differently, with a worrying number (49 per cent) planning to use their own vehicle – up from 23 per cent pre-pandemic.

What the empty roads and lower carbon emissions over the past three months has taught us is that we don’t want to go back to choking on exhaust fumes. There is another way. As the feature on sustainability in this month’s issue explains, FMs will need to respond to an expected surge in the number of people who take up cycling into work by improving end of route facilities. This is not only beneficial for the planet but for people, and ties in neatly with wellbeing at work policies. For those concerned about the dangers of cycling in traffic, the good news is that safe cycle routes are being stepped up within many conurbations. Along with its social distancing plans, the City of London has created protected cycle lanes in some of its busiest streets with a further 50 more traffic changes in the pipeline. This represents just one example of the opportunity to ‘build back better’ as expounded by campaigners and business leaders. FMs are at the forefront of this in terms of driving sustainable strategies, whether it’s in the way they run buildings to how staff are encouraged to adopt environmentally friendly routes to work. FMJ will be expanding on these positive COVID-19 outcomes in the months to come.
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Next Edition
Our case study features Manchester Metropolitan University’s All Saints and Birley Student Living campus. We hear how the Estates, Facilities, and Capital Development (EFCO) division managed when the Covid-19 crisis meant academic buildings swiftly closed and teaching switched to virtual provision. Sebastian Gray, incoming Chair of the Rumford club explains how members from the built environment and engineering services sector can meet and debate. With the current prevalence of working from home, a cybersecurity expert explains why FMs can play a critical role in protecting data and systems. We discover the ways Artificial Intelligence (AI) could play a crucial role in disease control within commercial buildings and why FMs in multi-tenanted buildings will need to be aware of changes to fire safety regulations.

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As lockdown measures lift, employees may begin to return to the workplace, at least those who can’t continue in their role remotely. However, Coronavirus presents a significant operational problem, especially for employees in an enclosed working space.

To help address this issue, you may want to consider a staggered shift approach which will help meet workplace health & safety considerations, while making it easier for your staff to return.

WHAT IS A STAGGERED SHIFT PATTERN?

It’s where a business plan for employees to start, and finish, work at different times. That’s during the course of a working week. It’ll take the same hours, but with a change in their structure. During the coronavirus pandemic, it’s an essential approach as it can help you control social distancing and infection risk.

The staggered shifts consideration after Coronavirus lockdown is something that is two days off to then three. It’s particularly important if you’re in the retail industry, have a bar or restaurant, or run an office.

If you have a lot of employees, or they work in an enclosed working area, then you can take this approach to make sure you stick to the government’s rules.

Here are some of the advantages of this system:

- It’ll help you and your staff fix times when they (or you) want to start and finish.
- The approach will help avoid traffic in your workplace, particularly during peak hours, so, there will be no crowding onto lifts or queues in the canteen.
- In a quieter workplace, you can monitor your health & safety procedures more effectively, as there are fewer people at any given time.
- It’ll ease pressure on employees, many of whom will feel nervous about their return to work.

In short, you’ll have more control over how your business functions. It may seem odd, but in effect, the fewer employees you have at work, the better you can manage the situation. And that can help your productivity. As well as minimise the risk of infection.

A SAMPLE STAGGERED SHIFT SCHEDULE

How should you approach this system? Well, it’s a bit easier than it looks. You can follow a certain structure. For example, you can use the 5/4/9 plan. That’s a “compressed” work schedule. Your employees will work nine–hour shifts—and one eight–hour day. Making a total of 80 hours over a fortnight. There’s also a four-week cycle, where your team works two consecutive shifts. What follows that is two days off  —then three days back on. Before two more days off. That then heads around in a rotating fashion, making for an unusual structure—but one that provides you with room to control the coronavirus outbreak.

Ultimately, it’s down to your business—you can plan out what you think works best as nothing is set in stone. But remember that these aren’t just standard shifts—they can help you to limit the threat of Coronavirus.

You must also take all the other steps you can to support your employees. The UK government advice may also change in time—so, stay alert for updates.

MITIE TO ACQUIRE INTERSERVE’S SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION

Mitie is set to purchase Interserve’s Support Services division for a combined consideration of £21 million, comprising £120 million in cash and a 23.4 per cent shareholding in Mitie to be held by or on behalf of Interserve’s shareholders.

Completion of the transaction is subject to certain conditions, including approval from Mitie’s shareholders. Should these conditions be satisfied within the expected timeframe, the merger of Interseve Support Services is expected to complete by the end of this year.

Interserve and Mitie are both leaders of the UK FM outsourcing industry. The combined organisation will be evenly balanced between the public and private sectors and will be the largest facilities management company in the UK, employing over 77,500 people.

The Board of Interserve Group Limited believes that the proposed transaction creates a larger and stronger UK FM business and is highly attractive to its stakeholders, including its employees, customers, partners and shareholders.

Following completion of the transaction, Interserve Group Limited will continue to focus on delivering its business plans for its three remaining divisions, Construction, Interserve Construction Limited and Equipment Services (RMD Kwikform) and Citizen Services. Alan Lovell will continue to lead Interserve Group Limited as Chairman, supported by Mark Morris, Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer.

VIRTUAL GOALS - 2020 RICS STRATEGIC FM CONFERENCE

By now, many of you are used to ‘attending’ one to two-hour online webinars; but the idea of a day-long online conference as hosted by IFMA-RICS on 16 June 2020 seemed an ambitious concept. However, as chaired by the articulate and capable Rory Murphy, Commercial Director at VINCI Facilities, with the theme for the day being Resilience at the frontline; the future of FM, it delivered some interesting views on the current crisis, as well as discussions on how the sector could fare in the months and years to come.

Along with many discussions on the role FM has played in helping to deal with the current crisis, and how to prepare buildings and people for some kind of return to the office, the conference programme included sessions on wider FM issues, including the growing importance of wellbeing on engagement and performance.

The closing keynote looked to the future, with a panel of the next generation of FM leaders on the major shifts they think will transform the profession. A perennial problem in FM is in encouraging people promoted for their operational excellence to take on a more strategic, leadership role, which is why people should be recruited with the necessary back end management skills and given front end experience by working for a time in an operational function.

Delivering a conference online wasn’t an easy task, there were a few connection problems with some of the speakers, and the networking aspect is null and void. But RICS delivered a thoughtful and inspiring virtual conference which radiated a positive message on the direction of travel for both the Institute and the FM sector as a whole. www.fmj.co.uk/virtual-goals-2020-rics-strategic-fm-conference/
Facilities Show rescheduled for next year

Facilities Show and its co-located events, originally set to be staged on 8–10 September 2020, will now be held at ExCeL London on 18–20 May 2021.

This decision, taken as a result of consultation with exhibitors and other stakeholders, comes as a result of the continued disruption caused by the COVID–19 pandemic, in particular social distancing regulations and restrictions to international travel.

Although the Facilities Show is confident it can provide a safe and secure environment for its visitors, it believes the new date provides the best possible platform for exhibitors and visitors to do business.

Over the coming months, Facilities Show will offer alternative solutions to keep the facilities management sector connected. In May, it welcomed thousands of colleagues to Digital Week, a series of webinars led by experts and thought leaders, and will continue to offer new platforms and initiatives to keep FMs connected.

New award recognises efforts in the fight against COVID–19

The IWFM Impact Awards 2020 has created a new category in recognition of the work that workplace and facilities management has done to combat COVID-19 and protect the public.

The COVID–19 Response Award acknowledges individuals or teams and the positive impact they have made in responding during these unprecedented times.

The category is free to enter and multiple entries are allowed. The entry criteria period is between 1 March 2020 and 1 August 2020 and entries must be submitted by 12 August 2020. Visit https://www.iwfmawards.org/covid-19-response-award/

Cleaning and Workplace and Management Move up the Rankings

According to the second quarterly RICS UK Facilities Management Survey (May 2020), the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has had a mixed impact on demand for FM services with cleaning and workplace and relocation management expected to be fastest growing areas in the year ahead.

Unsurprisingly, demand is falling sharply across retail but accelerating at speed within the healthcare sector, evidenced by a net balance of 68 per cent of contributors citing an increase in healthcare demand (up from +44 per cent in February). A flat demand trend was reported across the education, private industrial and other private sectors.

Looking forward, UK lockdown has also seen changes in expectations for which areas of FM will see the strongest growth over the next twelve months. In February, sustainability management came out with the strongest rating for growth over the next 12 months, but in May cleaning is now viewed as the area likely to post the strongest growth in the coming year. Likewise, workplace and relocation management moved up the rankings and now display the second strongest expectations across all categories.

Respondents were also asked in extra questions for this survey about the longer term impacts of the pandemic. Interestingly, although opinions were mixed, the largest share of contributors (just over a third) felt that less than 60 per cent of the workforce would return to the workplace once lockdown restrictions have been lifted. Six per cent felt that all workers would return to the workplace as normal following the removal of restrictions.

On a scale of 1 to 6 (1 being not at all prepared and 6 being completely prepared), 46 per cent of contributors gave a score of 5 out of 6 regarding their preparedness for the reopening of buildings once the lockdown is lifted. Overall, the average rating came in at 4.7 out of 6 indicating a relatively high degree of readiness for the reopening of buildings as lockdown eases.

Despite the challenging backdrop across the UK economy, a net balance of +28 per cent of respondents report that employment levels across the FM industry continued to increase in the three months to May. Looking ahead however, expectations for employment over the coming twelve months turned marginally negative, with a net balance of -8 per cent of respondents anticipating a reduction in headcounts (down from a reading of +32 per cent in February). Furthermore, even though workloads are still expected to increase in the year to come, a net balance of -27 per cent of survey participants foresee profit margins deteriorating.

Data analytics remains the area which has seen the strongest growth in investment over the past year, with a net balance of +72 per cent of respondents reporting a rise. Alongside this, investment into internet of things (connectivity) has also seen significant growth, as a net balance of +65 per cent of respondents cited an increase over the past year.
RICS FM Survey predicts dramatic change in utilisation of work space

As some of the restrictions imposed during lockdown now begin to ease, it has become clear that the legacy of the health crisis will lead to some substantial longer-term changes in the way people work and how buildings operate. To help shed light on some of the issues facing the sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, feedback to the latest RICS Facilities Management Survey has been especially useful.

Of particular interest at this point, opinions and expectations were collected regarding the proportion of the workforce that would likely return to the workplace as before once the lockdown has been lifted. While it is early in the process of unwinding the lockdown, the largest share of contributors currently believe that less than 60 per cent of workers will return, relative to the pre-COVID norm. It goes without saying that such a major reduction would cause a dramatic transformation in how space is utilised in the future.

For those that do return, employers will need to consider carefully the new measures to be introduced in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of workers. Survey participants feel the most important features to bring in include new hygiene facilities, more rigorous sanitation schedules, increased signage and guidance around the building, clear rules around the number of people on the premises at one time, and ensuring the setup is appropriate for workers to be able physically distance themselves. There was also a widely held view that, where possible, all employees should be given the flexibility to work from home if they wish to do so.

Survey participants were also asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 6 how prepared they were for the reopening of buildings, with 1 being not at all prepared and 6 being completely prepared. In the latest returns, the highest proportion of contributors (46 per cent) gave a score of 5 out of 6, while the average rating came in at 4.7 out of 6. Encouragingly, both indicate a relatively high degree of readiness for re-openings even if there is still more work to do at this stage.

It is also interesting to see how the pandemic has reshaped demand for FM services to varying degrees across different sectors. Indeed, while the retail sector has unsurprisingly seen a sharp fall in demand, at the other end of the scale, the survey feedback points to demand accelerating sharply within the healthcare sector. Meanwhile, a flat trend was reported across the education, private industrial and other private sectors, although this stands in contrast with the modest growth reported across each of these areas in the previous survey results. It remains to be seen exactly how these patterns will unfold going forward, with some effects set to be more transient than others.

Nevertheless, it does seem likely that at least some of the shifts in demand resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak represent longer lasting structural changes. On that front, the insights gathered through future surveys will be even more valuable in providing a clearer understanding of the post-pandemic landscape.

For more details visit www.rics.org

The People behind the numbers

For months now, we have all followed the COVID-19 pandemic and oftentimes the focus has been on the numbers: how many people have been infected and, worst of all, how many lives have been lost. It is crucial to monitor these figures, of course, but they are also impersonal and only provide a limited understanding of the awful impacts of the situation.

Away from these numbers are all of the people struggling as they suffer the impacts of, amongst other things, disruption, isolation, fear, anxiety, stress, and, tragically, grief. Then there are the organisations forced to close or limit their operations, which of course has a ripple effect: people’s lives turned upside-down and livelihoods threatened or taken away through no fault of their own.

While many in our industry have been on the true frontline of the pandemic, keeping our buildings and people safe, IWFM’s Customer Experience team has been on a different kind of frontline: engaging with and reacting to our members’ needs since lockdown measures changed everything. If we can be certain of anything in these uncertain times, it’s that a lot of people are under tremendous strain, whatever their circumstances.

As lockdown began, we understood the need to be dually proactive and reactive. In practice, this meant ramping up our member outreach with phone calls and emails to check in on them, while at the same time preparing to support members as best we could, anticipating that, to help our members through these ‘turbulent times’, we would need ready-made solutions.

Flexibility has been key; so, too, strategic planning to ensure we covered all bases, from personal and professional worries to membership concerns. Solutions have varied from providing discounts and deferments to pointing professionals to useful guidance and insight to help them navigate the crisis. Sometimes, people simply need someone to listen, which highlights another key focus of our work: our ‘tone of voice’ to ensure members receive the same standard of empathy and compassion with each interaction.

The reactions to our engagement strategy have been overwhelming. At a time when we were all distanced, the power of human interaction and compassion – even by telephone and email – truly came to the fore. A lot of members have been grateful simply for being contacted and offered support, while many others have reached out in distress and left the interaction relieved and grateful. If there is greater job satisfaction than helping others, I cannot conceive it.

It seems the human cost of COVID-19 will be felt for some time, but if we continue to support one another, I am sure we will emerge from this crisis with renewed hope and exciting opportunities. The way many of us work is likely to change indefinitely and you can guess which profession will lead and facilitate the change. The economy will rely heavily on our profession to rebuild; in the meantime, we encourage the profession to lean on us.
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MAKING THE SWITCH

Lauren Pamma, Electrification Proposition Lead at Lex Autolease, discusses how facilities management businesses can benefit from switching to electric vehicles and how to start the transition

Record low levels of transport during the pandemic have had a noticeable impact on urban air quality, and our economy needs to look to capitalise on this shift by accelerating the transition to electric vehicles. Meanwhile, as businesses look to recover and learn from the COVID-19 crisis, there is an opportunity to review how sustainability is factored into their future plans as both a key corporate responsibility and for associated cost saving benefits.

The UK’s commitment to net-zero by 2050 has already seen businesses accelerate their transition towards more environmentally friendly technology, through investment in electric vehicles has been slower off the mark.

However, in recent months, government incentives, including the unrestricted access to Clean Air Zones in cities across the UK for low emission vehicles, have driven an appetite for electric vehicles among businesses who rely on inner-city travel to serve customers.

What should businesses consider when exploring their EV options and are the benefits of low and zero emission vehicles worth the investment in the long-term?

A PHASED APPROACH

As with many fleet decisions, finding the right vehicle depends on what job the vehicle needs to do. For many FM services providers, there’ll be pockets of their operation where the transition to electric can be made more easily, rather than by a wholesale overnight switch away from diesel or petrol.

For low-mileage job roles, for example, such as supporting customers within a concentrated urban area, electric vehicles present an opportunity to reap savings on fuel, maintenance, repairs, company car tax and charges for entering Clean Air Zones.

However, firms that require drivers to cover more miles to attend to multiple sites, involving motorway driving, may still be better off adopting the very latest clean diesel vehicles while the national charging infrastructure remains under development.

Firms should consider exactly what each vehicle in their fleet is required for, and begin phasing out traditionally-fuelled vehicles for electric technology where it will fit seamlessly into their operation. A detailed vehicle audit will make it possible to identify where the switch could most easily be made.

THE PLUG-IN RISE

It would be naïve to assume that moving away from established, traditional-engine vehicles is always straightforward. Even though electric vehicle technology has made considerable inroads in recent years, it remains in its infancy – something that is reflected in relatively low adoption figures.

The most recent set of figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) show that plug-in models made up 16 per cent of total UK new car registrations, with pure-electric models accounting for 12 per cent. Wide-spread adoption is still hindered somewhat by the upfront costs of electric vehicle models, along with the limited range and lack of charging facilities across the UK’s road network. However, there are currently around 60 electric models available on the UK market which can travel more than 200-miles on a single charge while investment in public charging infrastructure is improving. As appetite increases and government investment gathers pace, it’s only a matter of time before electric vehicles become embedded into the UK’s road network.

For utility and facilities management providers, completing the transition to low and zero-emission technology in line with improved product availability and increased accessibility of chargepoints will ensure the lowest emission and most cost-effective route is taken.

COST SAVINGS

As with implementing any new technology into a business’ operation, whether costs can be kept under control is a deciding factor. That’s why the relatively high list price of electric vehicles can put decision-makers off. But it’s important to look at the bigger picture and consider the full lifespan of the vehicle, offset against the initial upfront cost.

As the UK continues to expand its list of Clean Air Zones, which will see vehicles with higher Co2 emissions charged for entering certain cities, adopting an electric vehicle can be a smart investment – especially for businesses with plenty of travel into or across cities. Monthly savings on fuel costs alone are also worth considering as the pound at the fuel pump can easily represent half of a fleet’s total operational costs.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PARTNER

While there is much to consider when specifying an effective fleet, best practice often comes down to thinking ahead and taking the time to select the right vehicle for the right job. With the right fleet partner by their side, facilities management providers can create a fleet that is effective and efficient, both for now and for the future.

A key benefit of vehicle leasing is that it gives firms the flexibility to choose the right vehicles for their needs, as well as access to expert advice which helps them to do so. The relatively short replacement cycles of a fleet – 48 months on average – also allow for a faster transition from traditionally-fuelled vehicles.

Electric vehicles have seen rapid advancements over the last few years. Now, coupled with the environmental and cost-saving benefits, it’s becoming a question of when, not if, utility and facilities management businesses should begin the transition to alternatively-fuelled vehicles.
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This briefing outlines the range of issues that employers need to consider in developing controls for employees who are required to travel for work during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not intended to cover how people get to their normal place of work, i.e. commuting.

OVERARCHING LEGAL REQUIREMENTS
In terms of travelling for work (or business travel); employers will need to ensure that they are protecting the safety of their employees and others, so far as is reasonably practicable, under the general health and safety obligations of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Failing to discharge these duties could result in criminal prosecution of the employer and in some cases its directors or senior managers. In addition, if the employer does not take adequate measures to safeguard employees and an employee consequently contracts COVID-19, then a civil claim could be made against the employer for damages for the resulting ill health or death of the employee and those directly affected such as members of the employee’s household.

DETERMINING WHETHER EMPLOYEES SHOULD TRAVEL FOR WORK
Before requiring employees to travel for work, employers must be able to justify their decision, and should only consider it as an option where the activity is considered to be ‘reasonably necessary’ and cannot be completed in some other way. For example, if customer meetings have been successfully completed over the past few months remotely, do they now need to be face-to-face?

Once a decision has been made for business travel to recommence, employers should include this in their COVID-Secure risk assessment. Employers must also be aware of the need to protect employees who are ‘clinically vulnerable’ and avoid putting them in situations where they are at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 – for example, requiring them to use public transport for work. This also applies to employees who are shielding people (normally in their household) who are ‘clinically extremely vulnerable’. Employees should also be reminded about the need to self-isolate if they experience any COVID-19 symptoms.

DRIVING FOR WORK
Firstly, employers should consider whether drivers need some basic driver awareness/driving skills refresher training before they get back on the road (as driving skills can fade after an extended period of not using a vehicle). Employers should also check that vehicle maintenance has been completed where required and that their insurance cover remains up to date.

Drivers will need to carefully plan their route, including any breaks, before setting out – as traditional routes may have new restrictions. Normal rest areas may also be closed (or offering a limited service), so employees may need to bring their own food and drink. Drivers also need to ensure that their vehicles are roadworthy, especially if they have not been used for an extended period of time.

Employers also need to be mindful that journeys may take longer than normal and, even where travel time is not considered part of the normal working day, the foreseeable effects of adding driving time to the period employees need to remain alert and focused should be considered when scheduling work activities.

Drivers should expect more pedestrians and cyclists focused should be considered when scheduling work activities.

Overnight stays

Motorway services.

There may also be occasions where employees who do not normally drive for work are required to use their personal vehicle for travel. In addition to measures outlined above, employers must ensure that licence checks are conducted together with ensuring that personal vehicle insurance policies cover employees for business travel or the employer has an overall insurance policy providing such cover for use of private vehicles for business travel on behalf of the organisation.

PANDEMIC CONTROLS AT THIRD PARTY SITES
Before sending employees to third party (i.e. customer and client) sites, employers need to satisfy themselves that there are appropriate measures in place for them to maintain social distancing and that welfare facilities are suitable and sufficient. Employers should also ask the third party or site in question to confirm that they have completed a COVID-Secure risk assessment (and possibly obtain a copy in advance) and that any control measures identified have been implemented.

In addition, employers could also investigate whether their employees can arrive outside of normal site start/finish times to avoid larger crowds or, if the site visited has staggered start times, to co-ordinate arrival times to target the lowest traffic times. Work should also be planned with the third party to avoid as much face-to-face contact as possible. For example, physical paper records could be replaced with digital information to reduce means of transferring the virus.

Employers should also provide their employees with additional hygiene supplies, particularly hand sanitiser.

For a full guide to Mobile/Travelling Employee Safety and COVID-19, including:
- Public transport, flights and ferries
- Taxis and private hire vehicles
- Cycling for work
- International travel
- Overnight stays

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make more of your floor
It’s an undisputed fact that facilities management plays a pivotal role in all workplaces – from office settings to leisure facilities – but we’re about to see it really come into focus. That’s because today, more than ever, FMs are needing to adapt and develop a new normal in order to make workplaces not just secure, but ‘COVID-secure’.

It’s no exaggeration to say COVID-19 has changed the world we live in. It’s changed how we interact with each other, how we shop, and how we do business. However, while lockdown has halted the economy momentarily, workplaces cannot remain on hold forever, which is why we’re now seeing them gradually and carefully reopen, with a redefined workplace emerging.

Before the pandemic, companies probably had workplace policies they were comfortable with. Considerations like cleaning regimes, asset tracking and planned preventative maintenance (PPM) will have been in full swing and while under regular review, the likelihood is they were working.

Fast forward to now and those policies will no longer be sufficient for a back-to-work strategy. How can we effectively manage room bookings and ensure sufficient time in between meetings, avoiding back-to-back meetings? How do we successfully maintain assets and ensure sufficient time in between meetings for cleaning? How can we effectively manage room bookings and ensure sufficient time in between meetings, avoiding back-to-back meetings.

A REDEFINED WORKPLACE

When it comes to instilling confidence that workplaces are clean, safe places to be, actions often speak louder than words. And that’s why it may take more than just intuitive scheduling behind-the-scenes to make people feel comfortable.

A survey for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in May showed that almost half (44 per cent) of respondents were concerned about catching COVID-19 at work. Employees need to see safety measures in place and trust that they are being maintained.

For businesses who require hand sanitising stations, they may need to purchase hundreds to cover their premises adequately, as well as additional equipment such as temperature gauges and PPE. This adds an extra maintenance burden. Policies need to be in place to ensure someone is refilling the sanitisers, that each temperature gauge is properly serviced and that batteries are replaced regularly.

Just like any asset, these too can be managed within a CAFM system, ensuring their PPM is automated, compliance is met and employee confidence is upheld.

ENFORCING COMPLIANCE

One of the key advantages to CAFM when it comes to a ‘back-to-work’ agenda, is its ability to enforce compliance. ‘Checklists’ can be implemented to trigger a series of questions that must be answered by the person undertaking the work, such as “Have you disinfected the…?”, “Are you wearing the correct PPE?”, “Have you read and signed the health and safety policy?”, “Have you ensured that…?”. As well as acting as a reminder to ensure thorough hygiene, the data captured is also extremely useful for audits and provides businesses with an extra layer of reassurance that new processes are being followed.

A similar rule can be applied to meeting spaces with businesses easily able to change the downtime allocated between meetings, avoiding back-to-back bookings that leave no time for deep cleaning.

A REDefined WORKPLACE

For the foreseeable future, it's true to say that workplaces and venues across every industry will need to be nimble to meet the challenges of COVID-19, and provide their employees with a safe, clean and comfortable place to work.

While each business will have its own processes to put into place, the commonality between all workplaces is the need to automate as many of these as possible. With so many additional elements to consider, implement and maintain, tech really is the only option to ensure reliability and deliver compliance 24/7.

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MARK OF APPROVAL

FMJ AIMS TO SUPPORT TECHNICAL EXPERTISE IN THE FM MARKET

Retendering is often the first port-of-call for facilities managers who want to understand whether they are getting value for money from their service providers. John Brownless, Partner at LitmusFM looks at the alternative option of benchmarking.

In a post-pandemic environment, facilities managers face significant changes with increasing economic and environmental pressures. Many FM service providers play a decisive and positive role - especially when they are embedded within an organisation - by suggesting, implementing and encouraging the adoption of best practices, technological improvements and alternative ways of working.

However, for many FMs it is difficult to understand if they are receiving value for money from their current FM service providers compared to other similar settings. Even for those establishments which are achieving top performance levels, there can still be savings and other performance opportunities identified. As businesses start to recover from the uncertainty of the crisis, ensuring the best value is being achieved is more critical than ever. But what are the options?

Retendering is one, but this can mean starting over with a new supplier relationship rather than building on the current relationship. This isn’t always the answer as it may not be a relationship issue; more an issue with the systems, processes or agreed service levels in place. It also often causes a level of disruption – to both workflow and employees.

Every time a retender takes place, facilities managers start afresh and have to allow time while the new service provider gets to grips with the operation, systems and ways of working. This doesn’t happen overnight. It also has potential to lead to significant disruption for employees at a time where they too have faced uncertainty around their jobs and what the future holds post-pandemic. Rather than creating more disruption, the focus will be on rebuilding and creating a stable future once again.

Benchmarking

This is where benchmarking comes in. The use of benchmarks offers a tried-and-true approach to homing in on the efficiency and quality of both combined and individual facilities management services. Benchmarks help make informed decisions; decisions that will encourage stability and strength moving forwards.

Like I’ve said, for many facilities managers understanding if value for money is being received is hard to understand. But this doesn’t have to be an unknown. There are consultancies that have years of experience, data and knowledge and can help ascertain if value is being delivered.

We’re not just talking about cost. Yes, cost plays a significant part, but benchmarking goes much deeper than simply pennies and pounds; detailed benchmark analysis is proving to be critical to the successful management of broader transformational change, including cost management initiatives, reengineering of business processes and implementing quality control measures.

Benchmarking also focuses on how to better the partnerships already in place. Partnerships that were built before the pandemic, remained throughout the crisis and continue post-crisis. Cultivating long and lasting relationships with service providers brings far greater reward than switching to a new service provider constantly. If both parties work collaboratively and are committed to each other’s success over the long term, it is likely to bring much richer results and innovations.

Another benefit that benchmarking brings is an understanding of what others in the sector are doing. Drawing learnings and comparisons from what others are doing, helps ensure new ways of working are successful and right for an organisation.

It’s also essential that once benchmarking is complete and operations are streamlined, that they continue to be measured and monitored on an ongoing basis so there is confidence that they are delivering. The mantra when undertaking a benchmark project should be: benchmark, negotiate, measure and monitor.

Benchmarking is for all establishments, from those in need of dramatic overhaul to ensure a prosperous future, to those performing strongly and only needing small tweaks to their operation. Where things are at now, doesn’t need to be where they are at a year down the line. Taking stock, stepping back from the day-to-day and taking the time to review where changes could enhance the overall performance, will help business rebuild and regrow as we all look ahead to the future.

CASE STUDY

A large aerospace company that employs 34,800 people and works with more than 7,500 British companies had one single FM supplier. The contract had been in place for approximately 20 years and had developed and evolved over this period. As a result, internal discussions had taken place around “best value” and whether the FM services should be market-tested.

The Litmus Partnership was asked to carry out a Total Facilities Management Services review and audit of the existing contract. The brief was to review and carry out benchmark audits across the entire UK sites with the aim being to carry out the audit in a phased approach due to the size and geography of the locations.

The first stages were to review the current solution and then capture and evaluate the FM services within the south of England, which comprised of over 31 sites. The FM provider was asked for the current specifications and costs to enable benchmarking against the sector.

To enable credible benchmarking data, a series of national survey data and a Litmus database based upon 25 years of procurement management from over 2,000 FM tenders was consulted.

Following the completion of each stage of the review, the client was provided with a detailed report, providing a clear view of the value they are receiving from their supplier. This is enabling the company to have a clearer FM Service strategy for the future, which has enabled it to integrate the approach to the delivery of FM services into the overall Estates strategy going forward.
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Home working lessons for FMS

How ironic. Facilities management spent years distancing itself from cleaning and janitorial services, casting these out as undervalued, commoditised and marginless activities, in favour of the sparkly lights of workplace management. Then, in a matter of weeks, these services were thrust into the spotlight, front and centre of every corporate’s office re-entry plans.

So, where does the sector go from here? The scale of opportunity for FM teams to demonstrate their value is unprecedented. Yet the chances of squandering that opportunity are of a similar magnitude. Suddenly, cleaning is sound business. Board rooms are empty, but the C-suite has moved workplace to the top of its agenda. Soon, however, it will want data and later it will demand proof.

The initial data from Leesman’s assessment of employees’ home-based experiences suggests that employees have adapted well to their new settings. More than three in four (77.5 per cent) of the first 10,000 employee respondents report that their home environments enable them to work productively. Compare this with our corporate office survey data where only 52.8 per cent of respondents can say the same for their office workplace.

Perhaps, however, this says more about the quality of the experience that the average corporate office provides, and casts doubt over whether these spaces are really designed for the employee and their role.

The corporate office has a new competitor on the block: employees’ own homes. And for corporations, that’s an attractively cheap alternative to upward-only rents and service charges. But, before anyone signs an execution warrant for the workplace, they ought to hear the whole story. A deeper look into Leesman’s new data reveals that home working suits certain activities crucial to the vast majority of today’s workforce. For example, people do a lot of individual focused work. In our office-based index of 740,000+ responses, 91 per cent of employees describe this activity as important. And despite the shift to home working, people’s roles haven’t changed. In the home working data, 91 per cent of respondents claim that individual focused work is important. Yet 87 per cent of home workers report that their home environment supports this activity, while 78 per cent of office workers feel the same way about their workplace. We might infer from this that the home offers fewer interruptions and that employees benefit from exercising greater control over their space and schedule.

It’s a similar story for other activities such as meetings. Home-based employees feel considerably better supported than their office-based counterparts when it comes to planned meetings (+12.9 per cent) and video conferences (+28.4 per cent). Perhaps this is down to the Zoom revolution. As the only way for colleagues to stay connected while socially distancing, video conferencing tools have surged in popularity since March.

However, our research also bares the inherent limitations of video conferencing and home working more generally. The data suggests that employees working from home feel far less able to learn from others and interact with colleagues. Zoom calls have their advantages, but they will never replace those precious few minutes before and after a face-to-face meeting. There’s a lot of cynicism for so-called ‘water cooler moments’ – much of it justified – but it is undeniable that bringing colleagues together under one roof creates more opportunities for interaction, socialising, collaboration (spontaneous or otherwise) and team learning.

Our home working survey has almost reached 50,000 responses. When it does, we will have more insights into this mass home working experiment. Already, however, our data has revealed some urgent pressure points. As organisations form their back-to-work strategies to minimise the spread of COVID-19, FM departments will need the data to determine why their colleagues want to return to the office and what support they will need when they get there. At a moment when millions of people are rushing to conclusions about the new normal, and plenty of workplace vendors are flogging their products, knee-jerk decisions could prove to be the FM department’s undoing. Not following the data will tear up years of carefully considered progress in workplace.

Knee-jerk decisions could prove to be the FM department’s undoing. Not following the data will tear up years of carefully considered progress in workplace.
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Mobile Wash Basins

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<th>Description</th>
<th>NET Price</th>
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<td>£473</td>
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<tr>
<td>MWBTA</td>
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With the gradual return of staff to the workplace, in-house catering facilities which have been on hiatus during the lockdown can begin to ramp back up. But with the situation still being far from normal, how can caterers and their FM clients find ways to deliver food and beverages while adhering to social distancing measures?

In FMJ’s regular monthly column, our team of FM experts answer your questions about the world of facilities management.

**THE CATERING DESIGN EXPERT’S VIEW**

**STEVE HUTCHINGS, DIRECTOR OF CATERING DESIGN GROUP (CDG)**

The workplace dining experience as we know it is set to change dramatically. Every catering operation will have to adapt to this new norm, and while it may seem daunting, there are steps that all catering operators and their FM clients can take to ensure a safe and comfortable environment.

Regardless of the size and scale of a catering facility, the first thing is to scrutinise every aspect of a catering facility, from the design, layout and operational requirements to staffing, logistics and the use of technology to help reduce the risk of contamination.

This isn’t just about removing some tables and chairs to manage social distancing. Take front of house, for example. Consider a redesign of the layout to improve customer flow and social distancing compliance. Touch points like salad bars, deli-bars, buffets and beverage service stations that require customers to serve themselves must be reviewed and alternative service styles considered, such as increased grab ‘n’ go. Removing specific serving points has the potential to create additional space for people to social distance. However, the downside is the demise of a much-loved self-service feature so it’s important to reassess menus to ensure they are meeting customers’ expectations.

Introducing assisted service and new collection points and delivery options will add to the eating experience. Design elements such as directional signage and graphics on walls and floors will be essential to control traffic and aid customer flow. Staff restaurants and other catering facilities will also have to factor in increased hygiene points like touchless sanitisers and protective screening. The availability of technology for contactless ordering, payment and collection is now essential.

Mindful of how long the COVID-19 virus remains on different surfaces, this is a good time to consider investing in different materials such as anti-bacterial wall cladding, anti-microbial upholstery for seating areas and anti-bacterial touch screen technology.

What goes on back of house will be equally important. For example, the rezoning and the reorientation of areas such as kitchen workstations to reduce the risk of cross-infection is essential. Assess your kitchen equipment to see if it is fit for purpose and what works may have to be done to change the position of big items like dishwaters and ovens.

Re-examining shift patterns is also important to ensure minimal cross-over of staff. Staggering start, end and break times is one way of tackling this issue. Review storage and waste facilities/capacity and think about the risk points in your deliveries process.

Outdoor spaces will take on a whole new world of possibilities to add to the workplace eating experience while keeping people safe. As always, this is budget dependent, but there are things to make an outdoor space attractive and safe without a massive investment, such as the use of a temporary structure like a marquee or portacabin.

There has to be a complex rethinking of an entire catering facility to make it a safe space for all but maintaining ambience and the dining experience is also important as this is vital for staff wellbeing and morale.

‘Designing Safe Spaces for Catering Environments’ by Catering Design group is available on request by emailing Steve Hutchings: steve.hutchings@cateringdesign.co.uk

Regardless of the size and scale of a catering facility, the first thing is to scrutinise every aspect of a catering facility, from the design, layout and operational requirements to staffing, logistics and the use of technology to help reduce the risk of contamination.

- Steve Hutchings
THE CONTRACT CATERER’S VIEW
IAN THOMAS, CEO, BARTLETT MITCHELL

Firstly, like many other contract caterers we also have a portion of our operations remaining open (over 15 per cent) during this time across a wide variety of sectors. The common theme across these sites has been the straightforward implementation of new COVID Secure processes and how quickly teams and customers have adapted.

From the moment lockdown started we, like others, switched to planning phase and learning and sharing with others. The collaborative process has helped drive an extremely robust re-mobilisation plan and new processes that match or exceed existing Government guidance.

Central to the next phase is confidence, whether it’s for our teams through training and daily Health Declaration Surveys; our clients through advice on safe operating procedures; or our customers who want social distancing and hygiene factors to be overtly visible. All of these are available now and being used successfully.

Obvious physical measures including; ‘sneeze screens’, floor markings, removal of all self-serve offers, ‘Chequer Board Seating’ and single directional flows have already been long planned with overtly visible and robust cleaning regimes in both front and back of house areas.

Social distancing is not an ideal measure given that many clients have spent years moving to maximising occupancy per square metre, however, we have the tools in place to safely manage this. Following the government’s announcement that social distancing is to be reduced to one metre, this will enable swifter progression to wider building occupancy and businesses to progress to the next normal.

Workplace dining will still be a very important requirement for the majority of our clients. Food is seen as social glue for company culture which is vital as offices open. Some argue it may be recognised as the primary benefit to drive productivity and engagement.

Food and beverage offer as lockdown lifts will undoubtedly change. There will be fewer people in buildings during the early phases and as businesses adopt more flexible work patterns. Initial demand is likely to be for a simple Grab and Go offer. However, we are also finding that clients are asking about food that combines comfort and health, followed by a desire for menus that excite and contrast home cooking. Longer

THE FM / CATERING CONSULTANT’S VIEW
JULIAN FRIS, DIRECTOR, NELLER DAVIES

Food is essential to life, but also to socialisation, productivity, motivation, wellbeing, connectivity – the list is endless. The real ROI in the future is around staff – without them you will not have a business. Right now, clients really have to think about how they want to look after staff catering needs. In particular, social distancing measures will require a rethink in service delivery, but it is crucial to ensure that businesses are still offering a level of service to maintain sustainable employee engagement, as well as minimise risk.

Removing foodservice altogether would be disastrous,
especially when the high street only remains partially open, and with much of the same challenges and creating an increased risk to staff. This could also be compounded by staff bringing their own food into the workplace and the infection control risk of shared fridges and kitchenettes.

We also have to consider that if more than half of the workforce are working from home, how are we going to keep them in the loop and equally as motivated? This is where an organisation’s Employer Value Proposition or EVP is so important. An EVP represents the values and culture the employer embodies and the practical benefits for employees such as learning, growth, development opportunities and benefits.

People are five times more likely to be highly engaged if their organisation has an effective EVP, according to Willis Towers Watson. For catering, this means that the employer needs to consider higher subsidies to support their staff with the benefit of potentially higher motivation, productivity and resulting in better outcomes for all.

We have even seen some discussion around home deliveries being offered to staff so that they receive the same benefits when working from home.

Nevertheless, in practical terms, the social distancing measures will determine the amount of people who can actually be accommodated and be assigned a dedicated desk. They would have to be essential or key workers within the organisation e.g. facilities manager, H&S officer etc. Any staff wishing to come into the office will need to book ahead and state their reasons for being there.

Managing transmission risk is going to be crucial. Employers are effectively managing this now with a sensible mix of on-line and face-to-face working. There will naturally be costs associated with this change in facilities and services. If managed sensibly and thought-through, cost impacts could be outweighed by implementing more technology and trusting more remote working. The ROI will be great and a long-term view should be taken. Investment needs to happen now.

Service providers need to go beyond the installation of queuing, ‘sneeze screens’, anti-bac dispensers and contactless payment. Assisting the client in developing an EVP, investing in digitisation, re-engineering the model and adopting a more Vested/collaborative approach is where businesses will find that competitive edge.

HOSPITALITY RECRUITMENT EXPERT’S VIEW

SAM BALDWINSON, AREA MANAGER, REED HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE

In the last few months catering businesses and their staff have been looking to find ways to exist under lockdown. While many in the hospitality sector have been able to find innovative ways of continuing to deliver, while remaining compliant with lockdown rules the closing of offices has held some caterers back. However, now that lockdown has loosened, catering businesses can get started again, but in order for it to work, this will require efforts from employers, employees and clients.

During lockdown one of the hardest hit sectors has been hospitality. With bars and restaurants singled out as the last to reopen, hospitality businesses are extremely vulnerable to falling in financial distress or going out of business. In fact, research from Real Business Rescue found that 29 per cent of four-year-old food and beverage businesses fell into financial distress. This is why it is imperative that businesses in catering innovate with methods such as home deliveries - even from high-end restaurants - and setting up stalls outside bars and restaurants to sell produce. However, this tactic has been impossible for caterers providing services to FM clients. That is until the easing of lockdown in the past few weeks.

The changes to lockdown have acted as a starting gun for caterers supplying to FM clients. Getting back into business for these companies is not just about bringing in revenue and reconnecting with clients. In a business such as catering that relies so heavily on the power of its people, it has to create a safe environment for employees too in order to attract the best back in.

For a start, hygiene kits for employees are now essential. Anti-bacterial wipes, hand sanitiser gels and face masks to be worn throughout shifts, should be supplied. Reminders to wash hands properly and to socially distance will also be part of the package for safe reintroduction of catering teams. Government guidance also says that additional personal protective equipment should be worn if in a food processing environment. Allowing for additional time to maintain cleanliness and COVID-secure environments in schedules, will also become normal. In this instance employers may even choose to account for additional round-the-clock cleaners to help.

But hygiene is not the only aspect needed. A vital part of keeping employees and clients safe and happy will be adhering to social distancing. This will have to be applied from the creation of food to delivery. Some companies have already created socially distanced catering packages. These reduce the amount of shared platters on offer by offering individual selections, removing the traditional queue and close contact for food.

Learnings from other areas of hospitality can also be used. Companies should start to deliver to the entrance of facilities and verify that the delivery has been made from a distance. This could be the time that, if it hasn’t already been put into place, digital verification is brought in by catering companies.

Following the guidelines outlined on the government’s website and observing what other companies have already done is not just a matter of compliance. It is also a chance to impress and reassure clients and employees. Now that lockdown has eased caterers are eager to get back to work, but by doing this correctly there is two-fold benefit. Caterers have an opportunity to not just recover but can please clients and employees in the process by distinguishing the business as ‘safe and secure’ during this time of crisis to help attract new business and new employees.

Do you have a question that you’d like answered by the FMJ Clinic?
Email: sara.bean@kpmmedia.co.uk
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MJ recently reported that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) - the part of the Ministry of Defence responsible for infrastructure, including military housing, training and construction, had announced the shortlist of the FM services providers for its new Training Estates Services Framework Agreement. The successful contractors have the opportunity to tender for a range of facilities management services such as engineering and building maintenance, as well as specific defence-related requirements including specialist land, training area and rural estate management services.

The announcement heralds a new way of working for a key public sector department with an average spend of around £3 billion per annum in both the UK and overseas. The Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) programme will change how it approaches projects in the future, by increasing the number and range of suppliers, and enabling small and medium-sized firms as well as larger suppliers to bid.

Says David Brewer, Chief Operating Officer for the DIO: “The DIO provides everything from security services at ministry establishments to the catering, cleaning, engineering and maintenance. It looks after a massive training estate covering around two per cent of the UK land area and approximately 169 sites of special scientific interest. It’s also responsible for running large training areas in places like Canada and Kenya.

“We also have an important role in ensuring we provide the right environment for our service men and women to live and work. Our broad remit is to look after the service family accommodation, comprising around 60,000 homes around the world. We’ve got approximately 45,000 buildings in total that we look after and one of the most extraordinary things about our role is its breadth, variety and complexity. We are even responsible for a care home for military veterans.”

Added to this says Brewer: “We undertake all sorts of major projects. This year we’ve completed work on the Army Basing Programme supporting nearly 100 Army units to relocate to the UK from Germany and dockside infrastructure for the...
Queen Elizabeth Class carriers to name just two projects.”

While the majority of what it does maybe familiar to FM providers, including running living and office accommodation as well as mess (catering) facilities, the DIO is also responsible for specialist services, ranging from the accommodation and facilities on a military base to radar and missile stations.

**CONTRACT CHANGES**

The DIO has three major components to manage; the military-built estate, the accommodation and the training estate.

Over the course of its last round of contracts for accommodation and the built estate, although multiple contracts were up for tender just one organisation, a joint venture with Carillion and Amey won the business.

Amey, which stepped in after the demise of Carillion, currently provides all of the built estate and accommodation services while Landmarc provides all of the training estate services in the hard FM space.

Says Brewer: “While we’ve been pleased with the way our current suppliers are working with us, we’d like to get more than a couple of suppliers in the mix. We’re not in any way dissatisfied with them but we do want to enter into a new period where the expectations are framed a bit differently, and reflects both the market and us as an organisation.

“We are really keen to make sure we’ve got a range of service providers across each of our disciplines. That will provide a bit of resilience and also the opportunity from industry providers to drive continuous improvement.”

He continues: “What is also important is that the contracts we have now were agreed during the last recession so you had some very clear messages out there to manage costs in procurement activities. The world has moved on. We’ve matured quite a bit as a client organisation and are aiming to become one of the most enlightened facilities and infrastructure clients in a major space. That means really genuinely wanting to build partnership relationships with the suppliers who work for us and major changes for us as we step up to the role of integrator and expert client.”

**COST VERSUS QUALITY**

Following a lot of debate in recent years over procurement in the public sector and concerns about a perceived race to the bottom in terms of the quality of delivery, the Cabinet Office published an Outsourcing Playbook. This stressed that it is “Government policy to award contracts on the basis of value for money.” It goes on to define this as securing the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay over the period of use of the services bought, making it clear that this is not about minimising up-front costs.

This presents a difficult balancing act, especially when you consider the size and scale of contracts in which DIO is involved. Says Brewer: “I have seen in past situations where contractors end up with the lowest common denominator, where one organisation is prepared to go unrealistically low and pulls everyone down with them.

“This is why we’ve tried really hard to get messaging out to people that this [procurement process] is about value for money and it is not a cost driven piece. The first thing is being really clear with the messaging to the market and to all the potential bidders that we are not looking for the cheapest solution. We are not going to allow any kind of game playing around with the financial models – but will scrutinise what is coming in rigorously – for instance that a technical submission is consistent with the financial submission, and that the two line up.

I have seen in past situations where contractors end up with the lowest common denominator, where one organisation is prepared to go unrealistically low and pulls everyone down with them.”

“We’ve also been pretty sophisticated in the way we’ve developed our assessment methodologies, using all of the methods that are viewed as best practice.”

This includes collaborative workshops within the delivery teams; and board level interviews with the suppliers around how they are going to create the environment for customer service, innovation and value for money. There is also some heavy weighting in the quality component of the bids, including provisos in the tender documents on how contractors would go about creating excellence.

“I think that excellence is something that should be in our DNA”, says Brewer. “We are pretty determined we are going to create a high-performance environment which is customer focused and mutually challenging. I expect there to be a conversation of equals between my teams and the suppliers about how we drive value for money and service.”
There are a number of areas that he believes are particularly important about the environment contractors are delivering into that will set them up for success. He believes strongly that people are at their best when working in environments where they doing something that they really believe in and feel passionately about.

“Within the DIO team there is a mixture of people who are current serving military, ex-serving military or civilians with long standing military connections, all deeply committed and who really believe in what they are doing.”

**PANDEMIC READY**

With the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown taking place just as the tenders for the FDIS Accommodation services were going out, a review was carried out to check if the process could take place remotely. Online workshops with bidders were held to determine whether it was helpful or unhelpful continuing with the process during lockdown; recognising that this represents a major economic and employment opportunity.

Says Brewer: “We had open conversations and concluded we were still well placed to have a healthy competition. We made a few tweaks after recognising bidders might find it hard to get pricing from their supply chain so the timing was extended.

“So far, we’ve got one national accommodation contract and four regional ones, with all the bidders we expected to bid for the national one doing so, and regionally a strong representation in all areas.” With the latter, he explains: “We didn’t want organisations to bid for every region if in some areas of the country they weren’t set up to deliver a good service, so we asked ‘which areas are you most concentrated and suit you the best?’”

The DIO has also managed to maintain service largely as usual throughout the lockdown; from the repair and maintenance of military personnel’s houses to taking the necessary steps needed to ensure troop’s accommodation is made safe for occupation. It has also been involved in areas where the military has been deployed to help deal with the pandemic, including setting up the Nightingale hospitals, testing centres and mortuaries.

“We as service providers have had to support all of those areas while implementing changes to the way that we operate”, says Brewer, “and I’ve been delighted with the way both our hard and soft FM providers have worked with us over the last few weeks.”

**FUTURE INNOVATION**

Brewer admits that the DIO has not historically been at the forefront in taking advantage of the latest technologies, which is why the new contractual arrangements are geared towards creating a strong culture of innovation.

“Technology and innovation are a key part of the tender process,” he explains, “in order to help create a commercial platform where everybody involved in the process is driven to ensure continuous improvement throughout the life of the contract. To build all of the mechanisms that enable that, my team will play a different role from that of a client role of the past in being a catalyst for technological innovation.”

He adds: “One of the reasons for getting multiple providers involved was you get people who’ve been working on different developments who can bring that back into our delivery.”

FM services suppliers often comment that it’s difficult to innovate when faced with relatively short three to five-year contracts. The new DIO contracts are for an initial seven years, with the option of a further three-year extension to a 10-year relationship, offering much more scope for development,

Explains Brewer: “The idea is to get through the initial mobilisation phase, ensure that the systems and suppliers are up and running and quite quickly determine if [the contract] is working. Once it is established we will aim to commit to the full duration of the contract as quickly as possible. In this way we’ve created the contractual and behavioural mechanisms that allow us to develop strong partnership relationships.”

Brewer also believes that it’s not feasible to create prescriptive, inflexible contracts – as they would be out of date in six-month’s time and “like a dinosaur” in 10 years. He’s very clear that the new contracts will take a dynamic and evolving route and not end up delivering a static service. For this reason, transparency from the tender process, throughout the lifecycle of the contracts will be crucial.

“Like all big organisations I’m sure there are occasions where we don’t get it right and the messages don’t get through, but we’ve made a philosophical commitment to working in partnership and once you really believe in that and respect the unique skills that suppliers bring to the mix it’s in your best interest to be transparent”, he says.

“We want every organisation to put their best offer forward. Fundamentally that philosophical commitment to transparency and openness will be at the cornerstone of our success going forward.”
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Paul Blackhurst, Head of Technical Academy for Rentokil Pest Control

On the Scale of the Problem

Rodents are traditionally timid creatures, are nocturnal and prefer to stay sheltered or out of sight from potential predators. But since the implementation of social distancing and lockdown measures, there has been an increase in reports of rodents changing their behaviour. Recently, the US Centre of Disease and Control reported a rise of cannibalism and infanticide among the rat population of New York, and National Geographic suggested rats are becoming bolder and increasingly spotted in daylight. This is likely due to the fact there are fewer people around in town and city centres, commercial centres etc where rodents are attracted by easy access to food. In the UK, residential rodent enquiries to Rentokil reached record levels for the months of March and April; a time in which rodent enquiries traditionally decline as the weather warms up. While the 45 per cent surge in enquiries over the lockdown period can partly be attributed to more people noticing rodent activity while they may be working from home, there’s a longer-term trend that we believe is contributing to the rise. Warmer winters are allowing rodent

Hide and Seek

With many commercial buildings standing empty for weeks on end, there is growing evidence that rodent problems could escalate. Pest control specialists outline the problem and describe how the latest digital solutions could provide a solution.
populations to survive the colder months which usually curtail population numbers, and the warmer weather is also meaning rats and mice are potentially producing more litters in a season. The residential enquiry figures are a warning sign to many of those responsible for commercial premises that have remained unoccupied during the government’s lockdown measures. Empty buildings can be a haven for rodents to flourish unchecked, providing safe harborage and often a source of food as well. Facilities managers may be wise to re-think their preventative pest control strategies, whether they are partially operational or are in the process of reopening, as the lockdown is eased.”

As more businesses look to resume operations, social distancing and hygiene in their premises need to be prioritised. Facilities managers, particularly those responsible for hygiene and maintenance in office buildings that have been vacant for the past few months, will want to ensure that pests haven’t moved in while their occupants have been working from home. Rodents are opportunistic creatures and will always be attracted to buildings as they typically provide shelter, an abundance of water and food, and many small, convenient spaces for them to hide. Fortunately, there are steps businesses can take to prevent rats and mice from taking up residence in the first place.

**USING TECHNOLOGY TO FIGHT RODENT INFESTATIONS REMOTELY**

Businesses are increasingly turning to digital technologies to address pest issues as they provide continuous site surveillance to help inform pest prevention strategies. Connected and fully integrated pest control solutions can act like rodent burglar alarms that provide more insight into rodent activity than ever before. Connected devices send an alert to a technician when a rodent is detected. It can also determine exactly where in the building, and when, a pest has triggered an alarm. The technician can then visit the premises to dispose of the pest and address the root cause of the pest problem.

With a digital pest control system operating as your eyes and ears on the ground 24/7, there is no need to schedule unnecessary additional visits from a technician. The deployment of digital technologies enables businesses and pest control teams to monitor rodent activity remotely, reducing the risk of a rodent infestation occurring and safeguarding premises, ready for when employees begin to return to the workplace.

**UNPRECEDENTED INFORMATION ON PEST BEHAVIOUR**

Rodents are nocturnal creatures who come out of their hiding places at night in search of food and water. We analysed the trigger information from over 7,000 of our PestConnect systems deployed across the country and found that the most common time a rodent activated the digital pest management system in an office setting was 0.36am – a time when even the most dedicated worker is unlikely to be in the premises. While it is useful to know when rats and mice are most active in the office, the system can also accurately tell you where in the building rodent activity has occurred. This can help facilities managers to find those hidden entrances and hiding places that may not otherwise be discovered without the insights provided by this digital technology. From there, they can adjust their course of action and become really targeted with their pest prevention strategies. For example, analysis of data found that 30 per cent of rodent infestations in warehouses and distribution centres originate in the loading bay area. The likely explanation is that the rodents enter the premises while the loading bay is open, but not in frequent use. This intelligence can be used by a facilities manager to institute a policy to close the loading bay entrances in off-peak periods or install further pest proofing solutions.

For example if there are concerns that the loading bay area is the source of a pest problem, there are products that can prevent rodents accessing a site through dock levellers. Harnessing the latest technological breakthroughs and innovations, digital pest management solutions can help businesses manage and prevent infestations without causing harm to the environment, and with a level of efficiency and visibility not possible without connected solutions.

While deploying digital technologies on premises is now widely considered an integral part of a building’s pest control strategy, it is also important that the right protective measures are put in place to stop rodents entering the building in the first place. Once rodents gain access to a facility, they can be very difficult to control. For example, a mouse can survive on as little as three grams of food per day and eat from up to 70 different sources of food within 24 hours. So it’s important to make sure any food stored onsite is properly sealed in containers, or is thrown away in tightly sealed bins as rodents can easily tear through bin bags. Mice can also fit through a hole as small as the width of a biro, and rats have been known to enter buildings through damaged drains. Building and facilities managers should ensure gaps around the building’s exterior are sealed with wire wool, caulk, metal kick plates or cement.

It’s always far easier to prevent rodent populations becoming established in the first place as opposed to dealing with an infestation, and a proactive, digital pest management strategy will mean that costly infestations are much less likely to disrupt your business.

Digital pest control solutions provide an unprecedented level of insight for facilities managers, so they can create a
highly effective pest management strategy that complies with all health and safety legislation, minimises technician call outs, and reduces a business’ environmental impact with the amount of pesticide laid on site.

ROBERT FRYERS, CEO AND CO-FOUNDER
SPOTTA HAS AN EXPLANATION OF THE TECHNOLOGY BEHIND THE LATEST PEST CONTROL SYSTEMS

Pests of all shapes and sizes have inflicted financial and operational pain on businesses for generations, with the potential to contaminate buildings, spread disease, damage stock, gnaw through wires and ruin a business’ reputation. Facility managers need to be alert and react thoroughly and quickly to the threats that pests pose.

A shift to smart buildings provides well-documented opportunities for enhanced efficiencies and reduced costs, but it also provides an opportunity for facility managers to revolutionise pest control. Facility managers who utilise technology can reduce operational costs and move their pest management programme towards a proactive, ‘always on’ approach, reducing long-term costs and diverting their time from reactively handling infestations to proactively managing other matters.

Pest control has often been viewed by business leaders as a reactive task: Wait for the pests to appear, cause damage or breed to infestation levels, and only then activate a pest control programme. Placing traps after a rat has been seen, calling in sniffer dogs to locate pests or conducting a visual inspection for bed bugs – which may only measure around 5mm - has long been standard procedure for most commercial pest management plans. Smart technology offers a more proactive way to manage pests in commercial environments.

OPPORTUNITIES OF IOT SYSTEMS

The advancement and diversification of Internet of Things (IoT) devices allows facility managers to address age-old problems at their property. Artificial intelligence is advancing the role of detectors to provide information and insight to problems previously monitored by trained staff. Using sensors and machine learning, detectors are able to assess and identify problems, providing the necessary insight for the facilities management team to resolve challenges.

Many companies have reported 10 to 15 per cent cost savings from IoT projects(v), so it’s important facility managers look at the value devices can bring and the operational savings they offer when considering smart systems for their properties.

In recent years we’ve seen pest traps become increasingly intelligent, capable of identifying rats and mice, evolving to detect even some of the smallest of pests like bed bugs(vi). Using image sensors and machine learning, IoT devices analyse pests and send digital alerts to inform key staff of the type and location of pests so they can be dealt with appropriately. Enabling facilities management teams to be responsive to pest problems, IoT systems also help reduce the need for human monitoring, working in tandem with long-life batteries and high-performance wifi networks to provide frequent updates and advise when and where human intervention may be required.

IoT devices are a welcome tool to businesses in addressing challenges and to facility managers who struggle to identify problems which are hidden from view. New devices and applications are capable of sharing information through mobile apps, online portals or email to provide a complete performance review of the building and highlight any problem areas. As building management becomes more complicated, facility managers must have access to the right data for decision-making in order to be able to understand the problem and respond by identifying the appropriate solution.

COMPATIBLE NETWORK SYSTEMS

The challenge for facility managers is to find a way to connect these systems and ensure each device is capable of working in buildings without interference. Coverage is particularly essential for older buildings to become smart: we’ve all experienced wifi dropping off in large, old and complex buildings - which is no good for IoT devices that need an ‘always on’ approach to deliver value.

Suitable IoT networks use technologies such as LoRa (short for long-range) wireless radio because it covers a long range at low power and low cost, unlike troublesome WiFi systems. With a robust LoRa network, facility managers can onboard new smart devices quickly in the race to modernise, reduce costs and provide better living and working environments.

FUTURE OF SMART SENSORS

Selecting and installing smart sensors is no longer a daunting task, with systems moving away from ‘high tech’ explanations to streamlined instructions and benefits, designed to tackle real-world problems in an easy-to-use way. FMs have the opportunity to work with their wider organisation to utilise detection solutions that will help them identify problems quicker, innovating how they minimise risk and manage staff resources. From tackling pests to monitoring utility use and performance, smart systems can help facility managers identify and react to problems swiftly, using less time and money on tackling problems in the long-term.

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How empty have your commercial premises been during lockdown?

SEARCH ‘CLEANKILL’ FOR FAST & EFFECTIVE PEST CONTROL
While FMs grapple with the realities of dealing with COVID and how to help their workplaces evolve as lockdown eases, the importance of organisational agility has been thrust firmly into the spotlight. Jon Wilson, Senior Workplace Consultant at office interior design business, Claremont, explains more.
The last few months have been a master class in agility. It has been enforced on businesses of all shapes and sizes as offices closed and employees adapted to working from home. Now, FMIs are playing an integral role in helping organisations reinvent themselves for this new agile era – not just with short-term workplace fixes, but long-term solutions that act on our agile experiences and re-examine our relationship with space.

The nature of how organisations use space has been changing for some time. We’ve already had the large scale move away from cellular working in favour of open plan offices. We’ve also had the introduction of activity-based working and the use of different zones to support mobility in the workplace. Now, COVID-19 is pushing this evolution further and even the least agile-ready organisations have started to make changes.

So, what changes can we expect to see in the wake of COVID-19? One of the biggest changes we’ll see in the short to medium term is that of more space. Right now, social distancing has had a big impact on our psyche. We’re not going to feel comfortable in a crowded lift or train for some time.

At work, circulation spaces will become wider, lift capacity will be restricted, some areas may be decommissioned altogether, floor plates will be reconfigured, furniture will be moved and spacing between desks widened. New protocols will also be needed to help people enter, exit and circulate around spaces safely.

As space plans are revisited to take into account these new challenges – it’s likely to stimulate much wider discussion about spatial needs and priorities. If the majority of a 300 strong workforce can work from home, could a smaller office geared towards collaboration and client visits save money and present an agile alternative? In a post-COVID era, would offices better serve as brand hubs and places of significant shared experiences – rather than just a building to provide shelter from the elements?

We fully expect to see more businesses asking these commercial, behavioural and aspirational questions and re-evaluating their needs with space utilisation studies, cost comparisons, behavioural analysis, staff surveys and new working models.

**SPATIAL CHANGES**

At the point of our collective return to the office, personal space and control of that space will be important to many and this will require new things of facilities professionals. It will be a difficult balancing act as organisations seek to ride a possible bumpy recession by looking to optimise their people and property outlays. Space and the perception of space will be a priority.

Cleanness is closely aligned with the need for space too. Not only will the workplace need to be seen to be cleaner, with regular sanitisation throughout the day, but employee etiquettes around respecting and maintaining cleanliness will have to be revisited and enforced. For some this will bring an abrupt end to the idea of shared spaces, which is particularly challenging to the ‘ours to share’ mantra of the agile office environment.

**WE ARE SOCIAL CREATURES**

After months of very limited face-to-face contact we now know the true value of socialisation. Not seeing colleagues face-to-face, no matter how good the remote communicating technology, is an issue for most businesses and FMs will now be looking at ways to make the workplace home to be a very sociable experience.

While the experience of work will remain ‘socially distanced’ for some time, we can expect to see much greater focus given to sociability and community. The serendipitous chats at the coffee machine, the banter and the ability to ask a quick opinion are valuable parts of the social glue that binds teams together at work.

Instead of rows of desks and static work spaces, offices will need to become places where employees choose to be for the tasks they can’t complete at home. Re-imagining the workplace as a destination will involve the use of more dynamic and interactive zones that support knowledge sharing, socialisation, collaboration and staff engagement. When this is over, we will want to reconnect with our colleagues more than ever and workplaces must respond.

Most of us will have noticed that formality has left ‘work’ over the last few months. Once you have seen your boss or a client in their kitchen with the kids interrupting or a dog barking, working relationships won’t ever be the same. Up close and personal zoom calls have helped to make intimacy become a new business necessity. The acceptance, in these most exceptional of
circumstances, of a more informal, almost intimate collaboration style with clients and colleagues is helping to break down some long-held business formalities. Increasing de-formalisation in the workplace may exponentially gain traction across sectors that have previously side-stepped the idea and will lead to much flatter and less hierarchical working styles, cultures and workplaces.

MINE NOT YOURS
We can also expect that with people less willing to share keyboards, headsets, chairs and even desks for fear of contamination – ‘owned spaces’ will become more important. In the short and medium term aftermath of a pandemic this makes perfect sense and will hopefully be a relatively short lived departure from the normal principles of the shared agile environment. For now, belonging through ownership may change the landscape of the workplace. For some organisations this will also be the perfect excuse to tidy up the detritus of office life – freeing up valuable space and helping to improve air quality too.

Minimising contact with surfaces will also become important; powered doors, sensor taps, smartphone-controlled coffee machines and access control systems will become more mainstream in the wake of COVID-19. Naturally bacteria-controlling and impregnated materials will be deployed where necessary to reduce infections.

A NEW SET OF WANTS
With an enforced period of reflection, employees will have questioned the long working days, the stress, missing out on family time, time spent travelling and the sedentary behaviours associated with their previous working lives. Consequently, when they do return to the office their experience must be frictionless and hugely positive. For example, if a team choose to come together in the office to collaborate on a project – they need to know they can book seating together, they can access shared resources and that technology connects seamlessly. If they can’t, they won’t go there.

Employers must provide uplifting working experiences and make coming back to work a pleasure. Good coffee and tea, healthy snacks, a robust COVID plan, detailed long term health and mobility plans, access to natural light and fresh air and a commitment to wellbeing, are also order of the day.

The needs-must approach to organisational agility from the last few months looks set to herald a new attitude that will continue in a post-virus, recession-era business world. While business leaders prepare for an economic downturn, facilities management professionals must guide their organisations as to what’s possible when it comes to true operational agility. Whether that decision making is motivated by cost savings or a desire to do things differently, the process starts with taking a close-up look at workplace occupancies and behaviours as well as overheads and property commitments. The real opportunity now lies in using COVID-19 as a catalyst for proactive change that will help firms stand-out, thrive, flex and adapt to whatever change comes next.

Jon Wilson has over 30 years of experience delivering award winning workplaces for a wide variety of clients. He has specific expertise in translating organisations’ needs, design objectives, business drivers and goals into workplace design.
The diverse set of services required to manage any large premises often means facilities managers will call on several different teams or individuals during all hours of the day - often outsourcing to multiple contactors. Orchestrating the smooth operation of a site is always a complex task, and one that is made even more difficult right now.

As lockdown eases, facilities managers have some high hurdles to jump - and their primary focus will be health and safety. There will be a whole host of new considerations to add to their usual checklist, all of which combine to ensure that they uphold their common and statutory duty to protect the health, welfare and safety of their employees.

For those who manage in-house teams and for those who send their staff to work in various locations, there is one important aspect which cannot be overlooked: lone worker safety. Lone workers are defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the UK to be ‘anyone who works by themselves or without close or direct supervision’. This covers those who are completing tasks out of direct sight or earshot of colleagues and supervisors, as well as those who travel alone to a location to do their work. In terms of facilities roles, the definition could cover security guards, night workers, receptionists and cleaning staff. It could also extend to catering operatives or grounds maintenance workers, depending on the circumstances of their work.

Coronavirus has increased the already high numbers of lone workers in the FM setting; depleted workforces, budget constraints and the need for social distancing measures have led to altered shift schedules and more tasks being fulfilled by one person rather than two - sometimes in unfamiliar surroundings. It is therefore vital that every employer understands the steps they should be taking to protect their lone workers appropriately.

UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS
The first step to working out how to protect lone workers is understanding the risks they face. The problem isn’t necessarily that the job they are doing is a more dangerous one; it’s that there is no-one to call on if things go wrong. Threats from the public or from slips, trips and falls become more likely to lead to significant harm. And while some lone workers will value the autonomy of their role, working alone can also have negative psychological effects. Lone workers are far more likely to suffer from psychological distress, anxiety and loneliness than their team-working counterparts.

When it comes to making on-the-spot decisions, lone workers are once again faced with an increased risk. No opportunity for a second opinion means a raised possibility of poor decision making - in some cases leading to workers placing themselves in unnecessary danger or in situations that can quickly escalate and become unmanageable for one person alone.

MITIGATING THE RISK
The risks to lone workers are best understood and reduced through the use of a detailed risk assessment. Anyone with responsibility for employees will need to assess the dangers inherent in their daily tasks and identify ways to reduce those risks. An employer’s responsibilities are laid out by the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), with requirements for risk assessments made more explicit through the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. It is here that employers can find detailed guidance on what precisely a risk assessment should entail - and this is broken down into practical steps on the HSE’s own website.

It’s important to note that, alongside this, the HSE has recently updated its guidance on lone workers, in recognition of the fact that there will always be greater risks to those working alone. The guidance requires that lone workers are properly trained, monitored and supervised, and also that employers ‘keep in touch with them and respond to any incident’.

FACILITATING BETTER COMMUNICATION
When it comes to fulfilling the regulatory requirement to monitor, supervise, stay in touch with and respond to incidents affecting their lone workers, today’s facilities managers are fortunate to have access to a wide range of communications technology; from smartphones that have become a part of everyday life to dedicated personal safety devices with GPS tracking, two-way audio and fall detection capabilities built in. Lone worker safety expert Peoplesafe provides a broad range of solutions; giving employers the option to select a mixture of different devices for different lone working roles.

The best next step for FMs reopening their sites will be to revisit and refresh risk assessments; to determine how health and safety changes will affect the physical and mental health of their employees and to consider what additional equipment might be needed to protect and reassure lone workers.

Given the dispersal of staff owing to social distancing rules during the Coronavirus, protecting facilities management’s legion of lone workers has never been more important says Peoplesafe CEO Naz Dossa
A new campaign was launched by the bicycle industry in early June: #BikeIsBest. Backed by the industry and piloted by Fusion Media it neatly argues that riding a bicycle is good for your mental and physical health, eases congestion and reduces CO₂. It’s a win for wellbeing and our environment. Bikes are one of the most sustainable modes of transport. So, it makes sense then for a service sector that touches the lives of almost everyone in one way or another to get on board the bike boom. But how do FMs get behind the bike revolution and how can bikes improve sustainability for the FM industry anyway?

There are two routes to how bikes can make a positive contribution to sustainability in FM. The most obvious is making it easier for people to choose to ride a bicycle to work – because it is not as straightforward as bike campaigners always think.

Vaida Stankute works for boutique FM provider Anabas as Head Concierge at one of Anabas’s clients just off Regent Street. She’s been cycling to work for the past three years. “I started cycling because it was good exercise. When you’ve got a busy job, it can be difficult to fit in exercise. Cycling allows me to keep fit and healthy while travelling to work.”

FACILITIES ARE KEY

“We have really good facilities in the office – showers with toiletries, towels and even hair straighteners. They do everything they can to encourage people to run or cycle to work. There are also great bike storage facilities and lockers. If you don’t have that, then that can be quite a barrier. I know people who want to cycle but don’t because they can’t have a shower afterwards in their building.”

End of route facilities are critical – particularly if the idea of riding a bicycle is going to be attractive to people other than enthusiasts like Vaida Stankute. But finding the space and securing it from a landlord can be complex and expensive. There are security issues, ease of access and design too. It needs client commitment – from the owner/developer and FM too.

Luc Bonnici of end of route facilities provider Five at Hearts explains: “The
challenges with existing building stock is working with small and irregular spaces, but there are smart ways to space-plan that can improve capacity without compromising on the user experience, and user-experience is paramount to a successful facility.”

All of which is within an FM’s remit and the innovation needed is what the sector prides itself on. So, why is there some reticence to engage with cycling?

“Developers and Asset Managers have typically been the earlier adopters as they see the commercial value of providing their tenants with high-quality bike and change room facilities,” says Bonnici. “In the last few years, this portion of the building - the wellness space - has gone from a back-of-house feature to one of the main features that agents use to lure and retain occupiers: it’s very competitive amongst the real estate players so they see the value in getting this space right.”

**COVID DRIVEN DEMAND**

There’s a commercial advantage for FMs to use cycling to deliver sustainability in the form of wellness, not just low carbon gains. But despite what Five at Heart argue, this can be a hard box to tick even before COVID-19 and its consequences.

Breda Smead, Operations Director, SmartSec Solutions has seen a 30 per cent increase in demand for cycle racks and typically car park spaces that are being used for external bike parking.

She says, “Some people will want to drive to work to avoid public transport, that’s going to put more pressure on the facilities manager who typically oversees this area. It’s going to mean they need new processes to manage this scarce resource in a transparent and fair way. Many of the buildings we support have closed their shower facilities because their risk assessments require them to sterilise or deep clean them between use and this is seen as impractical. Organisations need to be careful how they position additional cycle racks. Bike theft can be an issue depending on the access and egress from the building, if shutters are particularly slow or on a delayed timer a thief can be in and out by the time the shutter closes.”

Bonnici has the answer: “Go digital. Use things like access control and digital locks for kit lockers. Demand for bike spaces and lockers is always shifting and going digital offers FM’s the control to adapt and manage the amenities as needed. From a tenant perspective, they have a better user-experience if they can operate / access using their swipe cards or even their phones.”

There are plenty of options and suppliers like CyclePods, Turvec, Green Roof Shelters and Cycle Works to name a few. You just need to find the space and specify accordingly. However, the issue of dealing with parking pressure is paramount. Do you create space for bikes by taking it from car parking? COVID-19 might (nobody knows yet) conceivably increase commuting by car and some FMs are concerned about parking pressure because their sites’ parking was already experiencing excess demand at peak on weekdays, pre-COVID. Many of them will need to reallocate parking space from car to bicycle. This takes cojones in many settings, but it is the sensible thing to do in terms of making best use of space – after all 10 to 20 bikes can fit in the place of one car. It is unbeatable.

So, on a site, FMs are experiencing the same space (road) reallocation issues as highways engineers in local authorities. What is important is for the right solution to be found by facilities teams working alongside HR.

“It is an HR and wellbeing issue, but they need the FM team to assist in setting up the facility and usually managing it,” says John Garrard of Incentive FM. “It needs to be a directive from the employer, and they must be happy to pick up the costs for this. If there is a desire for the employees to cycle to work this can be advertised using posters or websites to advertise the fact. We offer a cycle to work scheme which has good uptake, but the staff rarely use the bikes to travel to work.”

Vaida Stankute: “Confidence is an issue. People are scared to cycle in London because of the traffic and potential accidents. You always hear scary stories. I tell them that you get used to it and you’re fine so long as you’re careful. It’s a bit like being a pedestrian. Just because there’s a green light, it doesn’t mean you don’t look around and double-check. You have to do that as a cyclist.”

What can FMs do about this? Simon Venn, Mitie’s Chief Government and Strategy Officer, argues the Government must do more to provide safe infrastructure, which means barriers and protection not just paint.

“One way the Dutch responded to the 1973 oil crisis was to invest in cycling infrastructure to guarantee their people could keep moving if fuel for cars ran out. It was not the main factor, but it played a part in kick starting the cycling revolution across the country and helped create the bicycle culture The Netherlands has now,” he explains. “The Dutch attitude is about functionality. The bike is a utilitarian transport method. We can drive that change here to combat the climate crisis and as a response to COVID-19 if the government use it as an opportunity to put the infrastructure in place.”

**SUSTAINABLE DELIVERY**

Not everything about using bikes to improve sustainability is in the remit of FMs. But a lot is, including some day-to-day operations.

The delivery sector – companies like DPD, FedEx, UPS, DHL Express and City Sprint have all proven that the last mile can be
made by a bicycle. They’ve pioneered the use of electric assist cargo bikes to transport upwards of 150 kg of goods. Third party cycle logistics firm PedalMe has moved entire offices for organisations. But it is in construction where real progress has been made. In trials with Crossrail managed by TfL and reported by the Considerate Contractors Scheme, PedalMe ferried loads from a builder’s merchant in Wood Green, North London to deliver to a Crossrail site at Whitechapel. Normally a van doing this would cover 33 km – that’s around 330 kilos of CO2 and take about 76 minutes. The bike was half an hour faster. The trial was deemed a success. Other similar examples have been carried out and cycling logistics is becoming a major theme in how major projects move materials. Can this be translated into FM?

Dr David Land at Just Ride the Bike says yes, “The traffic management changes implemented to aid social distancing are fast tracking measures councils have long sought the budget and time to deliver. They are all about restricting the access of vehicles into central business districts. So, if there was a time to consider a different operating model for FM logistics then it is now. E-cargo bikes definitely offer a viable option – but they need to be tested.” Just Ride the Bike is advocating research to establish a business case for switching all, or part of the white van based mobile service engineers onto bikes.

Simon King, Director of Sustainability and Social Value at Mitie says, “I get the proposition, and e-cargo bikes can play a part in moving to a low or zero carbon FM offer. But there’s a long way to go before we can turn this into reality. The whole operational model needs to be assessed as typically operatives will carry anything from engineering tools to a water bowser.” That means setting up a hub type operation – not dissimilar to that of last mile delivery companies, but probably more complex. This is where FM operations move into complex fleet management models.

King continues, “The stem, or the route taken from home to the first job, is one obstacle. Then there is the type of vehicle used and the load capacity of the bicycle. Yes, there are varieties of bikes available from two wheelied to four, but there is a lot of research to be done to see what we can do and what the bikes are capable of.” Right now, Mitie is committed to switching its entire fleet of vehicles from internal combustion engines (ICE) to electric. They have around 5,500 cars and vans and have committed to move to EV by 2025, so that on its own is big carbon reduction. But can a switch to e-cargo bikes go further?

Richard Armitage of the UK Cycle Logistics Federation (UKCLF) says, “We know exactly what e-cargo bikes are capable of. They regularly move loads of up to 250 kilos in London and in major cities such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in London have researched the role of e-cargo and bikes and the London Bridge BID hired MP Smarter Travel to run its bikes for business programme – so clients are driving this too.

“With the right contract, the right client, and the right mindset there is every reason to believe that bikes can provide logistical support that’s not just beating ICE and EVs in terms of CO2 emissions and wellbeing but is financially viable too. Right now, they have a point, FM service providers have to balance consistency of service, sustainability, and ethical goals against what’s commercially feasible. E-cargo bike manufacturers and trade bodies such as UKCLF, the European Cycle Logistics Federation and Cycling Industries Europe are assembling a strong business case for their emerging sector.” Dr Dave Land agrees: “Cities and major urban spaces of all kinds will make it harder and harder for any organisation to drive vehicles in central areas. That includes electric vehicles. Therefore, to be sustainable every business reliant on a van needs to rethink their business model. So, if FMs want to achieve long term sustainability for themselves and offer it to their clients it makes sense to get on board the bike revolution, now.”

UKCLF - http://ukclf.org/
ECLF - http://eclf.bike/
CIE - https://cyclingindustries.com/
City Changer Cargo Bikes - http://cyclelogistics.eu/
ELY HOSPITAL OPTS FOR AN ECOCOOLING FRESH AIR SOLUTION TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

The Princess of Wales hospital chose EcoCooling’s evaporative cooling solution to address the high temperatures in both clinical and staff areas. The units work as part of a mechanical ventilation system that provides fresh air and will operate at a fraction of the cost of refrigeration based air conditioning.

The challenge
Not only was the existing air conditioning system ageing and therefore becoming increasingly ineffective, but it was also very costly to run, which was an ongoing concern for the hospital. Another consideration for the hospital was the cleanliness of the air.

The legacy air conditioning system was based on the recirculation of air over refrigerated cooling coils, potentially allowing harmful bacteria to be reintroduced to the areas. Now the opportunity presented itself to install a solution that used fresh air rather than recirculated air, to help dilute levels of bacteria.

The solution
EcoCooling’s evaporative coolers offered the obvious solution, as they met all of the cooling and ventilation requirements for the ward and staff office, whilst being a certified legionella safe system.

Following a site survey, a system consisting of two EcoCoolers was proposed. The new system would provide 40% more cooling than the existing air conditioning system at a fraction of the operational cost. Most importantly being a fresh air solution, there would be no recirculation of air or germs.

Being a versatile solution, the coolers could be installed on the ground, therefore removing the need for roof work, which helped to minimise disruption to patients and staff.

An additional benefit is that open doors and windows do not affect the EcoCooler’s performance so suitable internal non-fire doors within secure areas can be left open, which reduces touchpoints, further minimising the spread of bacteria.

The long lifespan of the EcoCooler also means it will not need replacing as quickly as the previous air conditioning units, which coupled with the significantly lower running costs and simple maintenance procedures make it the lowest total cost of ownership solution for the hospital.

The result
The hospital now has a system that works effectively to ensure comfortable conditions for patients, staff and visitors, even on the hottest days. It is more cost effective to run and substantially more energy efficient than the old system, helping to cut costs and reduce the hospital’s carbon emissions, therefore supporting its sustainability objectives.

Being a fresh air solution, the hospital areas are no longer filled with recirculated air, instead, staff and patients are in a healthy, fresh air environment that is safer as it reduces the risk of infection.

Benefits
- Keeps patient and staff areas comfortably cool even on the hottest days
- A supply of fresh air that has naturally lower bacteria levels than recirculated air
- Low total cost of ownership, with much lower running costs and a longer life span
- Ability to leave doors and windows open without affecting the performance of the system
- Efficient cooling solution with much lower running costs and energy consumption
- No need for harmful refrigerants, making it an environmentally friendlier solution

“We couldn’t be happier with the EcoCooling installation in our inpatient ward and our staff area. The solution perfectly supports our Trust’s sustainability objectives, not only is it effective and low cost, it uses fresh outside air to help keep the air clean. It’s an excellent system I think it will become more popular as hospitals look to move away from systems that use recirculation" said Chris Leonard, Estates & Facilities Manager - Compliance & Technical for Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust.

www.ecocooling.co.uk
sales@ecocooling.co.uk
(0)1284 810586
FORBO: HELPING TO MAKE SPACES COVID SECURE

Forbo Flooring Systems has launched an array of services, guidelines and new products to assist specifiers, contractors and facility managers throughout the development of new technologies and expand the resilience of existing emergency lighting systems. The whole world has had to adjust their lives to remain safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Forbo understands the concerns and complexities that now exist as a result of this, including social distancing. As such it has recently launched a range of Coral Logo entrance flooring mats, which have been designed to encourage social distancing and prevent unnecessary slips.

In addition to this, Forbo has also developed a new service for its Tessera Layout and Outline carpet tile collection and its resilient sheet ranges. The service allows specifiers to choose carpet tiles that feature directional arrows within the design, or have loose arrows cut into existing resilient installations or resilient materials, to aid wayfinding and to help clearly identify one-way systems within a building.

As well as to aid wayfinding, Forbo has also launched a selection of circles which are available in its new Allura LVT range. The circles, which can be laid within a square tile format, will help to encourage people to remain two metres apart – especially in queues!

Forbo’s website is also home to a variety of online tools, such as downloadable literature and a room planner.

www.forbo-flooring.co.uk/covid
01773 744 121

NEW RANGE OF EMERGENCY LIGHTING FROM ADVANCED

Advanced is extending its range of emergency lighting solutions with the launch of EasySafe addressable, low-voltage emergency luminaires and exit signs.

All EasySafe products are designed to work with LuxIntelligent, Advanced’s emergency light testing system. Powered directly from the LuxIntelligent panel, Advanced’s EasySafe devices require no local power supply and are compatible with any existing LuxIntelligent luminaires and exit signs, enabling the easy installation of devices onto existing wiring to form one intelligent emergency lighting system.

The low-voltage lights offer quick and easy fitting and service, with a simple ‘twist and click’ installation onto a first-fix base. EasySafe has been designed to offer true scalability, with just one LuxIntelligent panel supporting up to 400 EasySafe devices alongside an additional 1,592 locally-powered devices.

Matt Jones, Advanced’s Emergency Lighting Business Manager, said: “EasySafe is a valuable new addition to our range of emergency lighting solutions for our customers. Quick, simple installation, using the twist and click mechanism, and compatibility with almost any existing emergency lighting system mean less fitting time on site. And that of course brings significant time and resource savings.”

Managing maintenance and compliance is easy. Test result data is available at the touch of a button via the cloud-connected LuxIntelligent control panel, PC or mobile app.

www.advancedesdco.com
(0)345 894 7000

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP READIES EUROPEAN LAUNCH OF ADVANCED HANDHELD LABEL PRINTERS

Panduit, a leading electrical and network infrastructure solutions company and printer technology partner Epson have launched two jointly developed printers for the industrial, construction and network infrastructure markets. The MP100/E and MP300/E portable label printers offer an extensive range of capabilities in compact device formats, including fast 1.4” (36mm)/s print speed (MP300/E), wide variety of die-cut (MP300/E) and continuous label, both devices, sizes and materials up to 1.5” (38mm) wide (MP300/E), as well as USB connectivity, direct printing from Easy-Mark Plus, software and integrated automatic cutter with full (both) and half cutting (MP300/E).

The MP300/E offers 360 dpi print resolution, whilst the MP100/E is fully integrated with Fluke Linkware Live. Both devices offer a wide operational temperature range of -40°C to 66°C and come complete with printer, one label cassette, AC power adapter, USB cable and quick reference guide, for immediate use.

The MP300/E is compatible with Turn-Tell Label Cassettes, providing a new solution to clear operator-friendly print and read label requirements.

Epson will develop and manufacture new label printers for Panduit, except the own brand LABELWORKS PX series. It is anticipated that the partnership will accelerate the development of new technologies and expand the product offering to current and new markets.

www.panduit.com
(0)208-6017219
EMEA-CustomerServices@panduit.com

HUNTER DOUGLAS TOPLINE CEILING CHOSEN FOR SOUTHBANK PLACE DEVELOPMENT

A Hunter Douglas Architectural ceiling system that combines an attractive finish with superior acoustic comfort has been installed at a landmark London office and residential development.

Southbank Place, a joint project between Qatari Diar and Canary Wharf Group, is one of the capital’s most high profile developments and will comprise more than 800 new homes, 48,000 sq ft of shops, restaurants and bars, and 530,000 sq ft of office space when completed.

Hunter Douglas Architectural supplied 620 sq m of Topline, a wood panel system, for the main foyer of Two Southbank, a 407,008 sq ft, 15-storey office building. The TLS 13/3 ceiling system comprises a core of MDF engineered solid wood (ESW) with a decorative finish of high quality real European oak veneer. A small oval opening is achieved through a staggered single groove pattern while the other side has a perforation design that enables sound energy to pass through, helping to achieve superior acoustic absorption.

It also supplied 1.28m x 2.73m panels with 50mm Rockwool and 0.2mm Soundtex acoustic insulation, which results in 0.75 NRC.

www.hunterdouglas.co.uk
(0)1604 648229
info@hunterdouglas.co.uk

FOR SOUTHBANK PLACE DEVELOPMENT

Hunter Douglas topline ceiling chosen for Southbank Place development

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(0)1604 648229
info@hunterdouglas.co.uk
FULFILL JOINS LAVAZZA FROM COMPASS GROUP IN A ‘SERVICE BREAKTHROUGH’

Fulfill, one of the country’s leading vending fulfilment companies, has joined the Lavazza family from Compass Group. The business has been renamed Lavazza Professional Operating Services.

The move is further evidence of Lavazza Professional’s commitment to improving both its product portfolio and its customer services. “We’re hugely excited to welcome a well-established, reputable and market-leading service provider to the Lavazza family”, said Ashley Weller, UK Market Director, Lavazza Professional. “It represents a service breakthrough for our business, extending the scope of Lavazza Professional by allowing us to provide a ‘one-stop-shop’ solution for machines, drinks, snacks and servicing.”

“We’ve been hugely appreciative of the excellent service that Fulfill have offered our customers for more than 20 years,” Weller added, “so it was a logical step for us to bring the operation into Lavazza Professional, when the opportunity arose.”

The transition, led by Ken MacIsaac, Director of Operating Services and Project Office, Lavazza Professional, was carefully planned and managed by teams at both organisations. “We’re incredibly pleased with how smoothly it has progressed”, he said. “The changes have been well received within both businesses and we’re looking forward to unlocking the new opportunities that the future holds.”

Weller is confident that the combined reputation of both businesses will strengthen the presence of Lavazza Professional in the market. “Vending is a business that’s all about convenience”, he said. “We believe that the vending service we offer should be every bit as easy and convenient for our customers, as enjoying a top-quality drink is for their consumers. Now we’re able to offer a fully managed service, ‘under one roof’, that’s designed to deliver market-leading SLAs, we’re another step closer to achieving that ambition. With Lavazza Professional Operating Services at our disposal, we can eliminate hassle, deliver exceptional service and partner with customers to deliver a solution that really works for their business now, and in the future.”

www.lavazza.co.uk

HYGIENE MESSAGE MATS A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO SANITATION COMMUNICATIONS

Kleen-Tex Industries is one of the world’s leading manufacturers of precision mats, with global operations in Europe, Asia, North America, Africa and South America. With more than 50 years’ experience of mat production and innovation, Kleen-Tex has developed a wide range of products to keep dirt out of buildings and to help protect people’s health and well-being.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a difficult and challenging time for many businesses, but the KleenTex supply chain has remained strong and resilient throughout this difficult period. New hygiene and cleanliness procedures have been introduced to protect Kleen-Tex employees, and everyone has remained safe and well during this time.

Promoting hygiene and cleanliness has been one of the biggest on-going challenges since the start of the pandemic, and Kleen-Tex has seen a significant change in its product mix, following the introduction of many hygiene message mats such as “Please Keep Your Distance” and “Wash Your Hands”. These are visual reminders for all places where people may come together.

Gary Haynes, Kleen-Tex Managing Director, said: “Our hygiene mats have been extremely successful, as printed floor mats offer a professional, practical approach to both message communication and floor level hygiene.”

Kleen-Tex has since been awarded the ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Standard Certification for the production of textile/rubber-backed floor mats for industrial and individual customers. This certificate is the international standard that specifies requirements for an effective environmental management system (EMS). “I’m extremely proud of the team’s achievement in attaining this important accreditation during this difficult period,” said Gary Haynes, Managing Director.

www.kleen-tex.co.uk info@kleen-tex.co.uk (0)1204 70 50 70
A BIT OF LIGHT CLEANING: BARKELL LAUNCH UV COIL DISINFECTING SOLUTION

Barkell, the UV’s leading air handling specialists, have announced the launch of LightGuard, a UV coil cleaning solution, to aid companies concerned about the safety of occupied buildings in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

UV disinfection systems are coming to the forefront of the battle against COVID-19 and being deployed in airports, hospitals, personal hygiene systems and now air handling units.

LightGuard uses UV-C radiation at a wavelength of 264nm, invisible to the human eye but extremely effective at disinfection. UV-C can inactivate microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses and fungi by preventing them from infecting and replicating.

The UV-C lamps used by LightGuard are installed downstream of the cooling coil and use a photon concentrator which focuses up to 95% of the UV energy produced onto the coil. Installation is simple and the lamps are low energy, providing an all-round cost effective solution. The lamps require replacing only once a year, slashing maintenance costs due to removing or greatly reducing the need for normal coil cleaning regimes.

Adam Childs, Managing Director at Barkell, states: “As business owners consider a return to work, many are facing a ‘new normal’, where cleanliness, hygiene and indoor air quality are critical to minimise risk to staff and customers. A LightGuard UV-C coil cleaning system can be fitted in just about any new or existing air handling unit and will effectively disinfect the surfaces of the equipment, removing harmful organisms before they potentially enter the airstream.”

LightGuard is offered in partnership with Biozone Scientific International, a US-based leader in UV solutions.

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN STYLE: A CREATIVE APPROACH TO FLOORING DESIGN FOR THE CHANGED WORKPLACE

Milliken launches a design-led carpet tile collection to assist social distancing and promote mental and physical well-being in the workplace.

To support the safety and cultural needs of the new workplace, Milliken has created ‘Social Factor’: a collection of informational carpet tile graphics that can be easily inserted into an existing carpet tile layout. As the lockdown begins to ease in some countries, Milliken designers have taken up the profound challenge of creating an aesthetically pleasing floor covering collection to facilitate a safe return to work. Milliken research has supported the theory that the floor plane can play a vital role in supporting the requirements of new workplace design. Carpet can effectively be used to define boundaries, create zones, provide wayfinding, set navigation, direct traffic and provide a measuring tool through graphic messaging, colours and patterns.

Social Factor uses Milliken’s proprietary patterning technology to bring safety messages to life with vibrant and imaginative design treatments. Social Factor floor tiles not only provide an effective way to design important new safety elements into the office layout, they also help promote a spirit of positivity and sense of security.

Designs include distancing and directional arrows, footsteps, chair positioning and hand-washing icons. They provide a highly visible and easy to follow guide for employees returning to work.

OUR FOCUS ON FIRE SAFETY & INDOOR AIR QUALITY

All Clean (Worcester) Ltd. has over 25 years of experience in providing high quality services to the facilities management sector. Our extensive experience and knowledge gives us the confidence to perform our tasks to the highest possible standards. We specialise, but are not limited to, the maintenance of fire and smoke dampers and cleaning of ventilation systems.

Services we provide:

- Fire & Smoke Damper Inspection
- Swab Testing for Yeast & Microbiological Organisms
- Ductwork Cleaning
- Kitchen Deep Cleaning
- Kitchen Extract Cleaning
- CAD Drawings
- Damper Repairs

All our technicians are CITB ND qualified. Fire damper inspections are carried out in accordance with BS9999. All work is carried out to BS15780, EC852/2004 and TR19 guidelines. All our sampling procedures are independently verified by South West Water, a UKAS accredited laboratory. All Clean (Worcester) Ltd. is a member of NAAD UK.

https://floors.milliken.com/floors/en-gb/home
carpetenquiries@milliken.com

www.barkell.co.uk (0) 207 788 8234 ahu@barkell.co.uk

www.allclean.co.uk 01905 726727
sales@allclean.co.uk Contact Mark Weston
WHY YOU SHOULD ‘GO GREEN’ WITH YOUR GENERATOR MAINTENANCE

For facilities managers in any industry with a need for back-up power, the importance of generator maintenance cannot be underestimated. Downtime can be costly, and in many cases, mission critical.

According to national statistics, it has been estimated that a single hour of downtime costs a small business an average of £800 and a large commercial organisation £8,500. This is before any costs for repairing damaged IT and associated equipment are taken into account.

Power failures are usually not predictable and an extended blackout period can cause huge financial losses to businesses. This is why it is so important to implement a regular servicing contract that can help identify any issues before they become a major problem.

At PPSPower we have recently launched two specific types of service contract for generator maintenance—Red and Green service packages, both designed to be cost effective and scaled to your business’s requirements.

Why choose a PPSPower maintenance contract?

With both contracts we usually carry out visits twice a year if your generator is there for emergency standby operations – one minor and one major visit.

The minor service visit consists of 56 checks, which includes:

- A 32-point engine and fuel system check. This visit covers topping up levels, taking and reporting readings and inspecting for leaks. Cleaning key areas to ensure efficiency and tightening and greasing accordingly.
- A 24-point battery, control panel and alternator system check. Batteries are greased with vital readings recorded and reported for safety. The control panel checks ensure strong connectivity and response. The alternator checks are designed to prevent issues with connectivity and stability.
- Our engineer will also check the environment in which the generator is located and report accordingly.

On a major service visit, we carry out all of the above again and also replace the oil and fuel filters to help extend the life of these liquids and mitigate damage to the engine.

The savings that can be made using our maintenance contracts can be vast. For example, on a standard 1000 kVA back-up generator, the annual cost of an oil changing contract (including two visits) can be around £2,320, compared to just £878 for two visits as part of PPSPower’s Green contract.

Our Green contract covers all other points of a recommended industry standard guide (and more) apart from the six monthly oil change.

Stephen Peal, Managing Director of PPSPower, says: “FM bid managers should be very cautious when stating that pricing returns should be submitted in line with specific legislation and challenge insurance companies accordingly. They would be better to advise that maintenance is carried out in line with closer bespoke solution, a specialist in this field or manufacturers’ recommendations as these are often more realistic.

“It is important that proper risk analysis is carried out to ensure the maintenance regime is appropriate for the site the back-up solution is supporting. If you only consider cost/environmental savings you run the risk of becoming non-compliant.”

Once consulted, PPSPower’s service team works with the client to understand their needs and provide them with a tailored solution that is both cost effective and reliable.

The engineers make recommendations based on what the right approach for the business, as they know there isn’t a ‘one size fits all’ approach to generator maintenance and are exceptionally flexible when it comes to the right maintenance regime for you and your end client.

PPSPower’s flexible approach to generator and back-up power support coupled with its customer-centric approach has seen it become one of the UK’s most respected names in the power industry.

With the launch of its Green Service contract offering it can now also argue it is one of the most sustainable and cost effective as well.

www.ppspower.com/generators 0345 200 9888
TAKE THESE THREE STEPS TO POST-COVID-19 BUSINESS SUCCESS

Bus operators, brick manufacturers and banks – they are all benefiting from a COVID-19 disinfection and testing service from SafeGroup designed to get businesses back to work safely and smoothly.

The emergency soft FM specialist has combined its expertise in bio-hazard cleaning with the use of an innovative disinfectant system proven to provide long-term protection against the virus. This is giving facilities managers a service that significantly enhances workplace safety and – critically – delivers maximum assurance about efforts to tackle COVID-19 in a way that underpins wellbeing and workforce trust.

For many businesses, SafeGroup is a key recovery partner. Its specialist services are integrated with in-house measures, including social distancing, to provide enhanced COVID-19 protection for as long as it is needed.

The Back to Business Clean and Safe service is a three-step cleaning, disinfection and testing response to the major challenges facing businesses as they leave lockdown and reopen their premises.

**Step 1 – Deep Clean:** a full and thorough mechanical clean of premises using professional techniques and chemical products to create a clean and fresh workspace.

**Step 2 – Treat and Protect:** SafeGroup is treating premises with a revolutionary broad-spectrum disinfectant proven to be >99.99% effective against COVID-19 and which remains active against the virus for up to 30 days. The product is delivered using an electrostatic spray which maximises coverage and bonding.

**Step 3 – Testing:** SafeGroup is offering a multi-site COVID-19 swab testing service, with results returned by the scientific laboratory within 72 hours.

Nick Henderson, Business Continuity and Resilience Manager for London Stansted Airport, said: “We needed to respond quickly to reassure passengers and staff that decisive action was being taken on their behalf. SafeGroup’s decontamination service has been an important component of our strategy.”

Amy Harris, Group Health, Safety and Training Manager for brickmakers Michelmersh, said: “SafeGroup’s COVID-19 treatment service has become a key part of our strategy to maintain a low-risk environment and has been welcomed openly by all our staff.”

Craig Keates, Facilities Manager at Cygnet Health Care, said: “SafeGroup provides the best in market disinfection service we need 24/7. Our staff and clients have full peace of mind that we are doing everything we can to keep them safe.”

SafeGroup Chief Executive Office Steve Broughton said: “Our customers recognise they have a duty of care to ensure their workplaces are safe and clean. They must also address the very real wellbeing and mental health concerns of their employees and customers.

“Risk assessment of return to work plans are addressing all these issues, along with regulatory requirements that will be tested over the months to come. Our Back to Business Clean and Safe service is provide facilities managers with key solutions.”

All three service elements are carried out to an exemplar standard, including the use of full microbiological PPE where necessary. They are backed by a certification scheme so organisations can inform staff and customers of the actions taken to counter COVID-19 and treatments can be tracked.

Employers using the service include manufacturers, logistics specialists, care providers, hospitals, and schools.

SafeGroup Strategic Development Director Chris Macdonald said: “Our discussions with businesses tell us that they see making sure employees having confidence in workplace hygiene standards as being a critical priority as the COVID-19 lockdown ends.

“This is a key reason why we’re offering the COVID-19 testing service and why our services are enthusiastically welcomed by customers. We can give businesses evidence that the risk of COVID-19 in workplaces is absolutely minimised.”

www.thesafegroup.co.uk backtobusiness@thesafegroup.co.uk 0800 668 1268
HOBART UK REACHES OUT TO OWNERS OF ITS MACHINES AS WE COME OUT OF ‘NATIONAL HIBERNATION’ ON 4 JULY

As the UK emerges from lockdown, operators are getting their kitchens ready and open for service once again. The industry has responded to the current crisis with its usual flair and innovation, with restaurants such as TGIs and Wagamama offering Click and Collect which is proving hugely popular with diners.

Other operators such as Cote have begun work to create restaurant quality dining experiences in people’s own homes, delivering chilled bistro-meals to the door. The planned restart is at different stages for different operators; now that 4 July comes with some certainties for much of the hospitality industry, all are keen to get going and open their kitchens for trade once again. And there is clearly a market for it.

Many of the big operators rely on Hobart Service to maintain their critical catering equipment and Hobart Service remains committed to offering them competitive terms and technical support to suit their specific needs.

Now, to further extend support recovery across the industry, Hobart Service is also offering open access to a library of operational and technical guides and has developed a suite of documents especially for this period to aid individual organisations to restart machines after shutdown.

In addition, to help all owners of Hobart machines through this cash-tight period, Hobart Service has launched an on-line Price Check tool to allow operators to price check quotations on fitted parts and ensure that they are getting a fair deal.

Keith Mackie, Managing Director: Hobart Service, comments: “We don’t believe any Hobart users should be paying more than list price for Hobart OEM parts. In line with innovations we are seeing across the industry, Hobart has developed a tool to allow you to check prices you have been quoted against our OEM list price.

We understand that not all owners of Hobart equipment require a maintenance contract but, after a period of shutdown, they may require an inspection and works carried out to get their machines up and running safely and hygienically once again.

Between now and September 2020 we will be offering a 20% discount on all Hobart fitted parts to new and non-contractual customers to support them through restart.”

To find out more about this and our other support measures, end users and distributors can visit https://campaign.hobartuk.com/price-request or call 0844 888 7777 today.

PRODUCTS TO SUPPORT THE ‘NEW NORMAL’ AND FIGHT AGAINST CORONAVIRUS

As the UK returns to work, organisations must make preparations to protect their employees and customers. Highlight safe distances and hygiene regulations using DURABLE’s social distancing and hygiene products.

REUSABLE FACE VISORS
Covers the entire face which minimises the exchange of droplets between people in close contact.
› Does not fog up
› Anti-glare
› Can be completely disinfected and reused

FLEXIBLE SIGNAGE
DURAFRAME attaches to any surface - perfect for communicating important safety and hygiene messages.
› Install & reposition in seconds
› Change information quickly
› 80+ different size and colour options

FLOOR MARKINGS
Highly visible and hard-wearing shapes, tapes and signs for highlighting social distancing.
› Self-adhesive

FLOOR SIGNS
Signage which can be moved wherever it is needed. Inserts can be changed in seconds.
› Anti-glare
› Adjustable height and reading angle
› Weighted base for stability

Order your Social Distancing products direct from DURABLE by emailing hello@durable-uk.com

https://campaign.hobartuk.com/price-request 0844 888 7777
TIPS FOR MANAGING THE SAFE RETURN TO WORK

As all industries begin to return to their normal working environments, it is key to make employees feel safe in the knowledge that they are protected at all times in their working environment.

Ensure PPE is always used and worn
PPE equipment from Reece Safety includes the essentials with a selection of face masks and face protection shields to limit the spread of infection; these masks are made to the BFE 98% filtration protection level recommended by WHO as a minimum protection from Coronavirus.

Ensure that the work environment is not crowded
For those working in office environments, social distancing screens as well as safety signs will ensure that employees and visitors are reminded about remaining two metres apart when in an enclosed environment. Reece can help with a range of screens, floor signage and floor tape to set this up effectively.

Educate your staff
There is constantly developing news surrounding Coronavirus, including how to protect yourself and others. It is important that companies are setting guidelines for office work as well as implementing health and safety measures for employees to adhere to.

Risk assessment
You must make sure that the risk assessment for your business addresses the risks of COVID-19 to inform your decisions and control measures. Introduced measures may include pop up handwashing facilities, COVID-19 safety signs and more waste bins and rubbish collections.

STOCKSIGNS LAUNCHES COVID-19 SIGN RANGE

Signage expert Stocksigs Ltd. has launched a new range of Coronavirus hygiene and social distancing signs suitable for use in all working environments and available with bespoke branding.

The range includes social distancing floor and wall vinyls to help ensure effective social distancing and enforce one way systems in and around workplaces, retail spaces or any environment where social distancing measures are required.

The high quality range also features specific Coronavirus hygiene signs that can be used to provide vital health and safety information to employees or customers and advice on the appropriate hygiene measures to take. These include signs with cleaning equipment, sanitising and hand washing advice as well as ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ signs.

Finally, traffic signs for roads and pathways are also available to aid social distancing in exterior environments and assist with vehicular traffic control where necessary. All Stocksigs’ products are made at its factory in the UK so customised text, branding and colour schemes can be added to signage easily on request.

Danny Adamson, Managing Director at Stocksigs commented: “Health and safety signage is more important now than ever before. At Stocksigs we can provide everything you need to make your workplace safe for staff to return and operate social distancing and hygiene measures effectively.”

A ‘BREATH OF FRESH AIR’ FOR PLATFORM LIFTS

A new lift air purifier is available through the Platform Lift Company, which rapidly and safely disinfects air inside a lift. It efficiently supplements existing cleaning procedures, ensuring lift environments stay clean.

The air purifier works by circulating the air within an enclosed platform lift through a process of disinfection and purification. The unit incorporates the sterilization technology GERMAGIC, an antimicrobial coating which gives “contact-killing”, “release-killing” and “anti-adhesion” abilities to HEP filters, and a leak-free UV Photo Catalyst, obliterating more than 99% of viruses and bacteria.

Activated using biological recognition technology, air starts being purified from the moment a passenger enters the lift until they exit. With a delayed shut down, the air purifier continues to operate to ensure the air within the lift has been fully disinfected before returning to standby mode.

The Platform Lift Company can install commercial and home enclosed platform lifts with the air purifier.

GX GLASS LAUNCHES FLEXIBLE HYGIENE SCREEN SYSTEM

Premium glass producer Gx Glass is helping workplaces safeguard against Coronavirus with its new range of safety glass hygiene screens and sneeze guards, suitable for a wide variety of office, retail, education and hospitality environments.

Toughened to BS EN 12150, Gx Glass’ range of float glass screen products will not scratch or discolour over time, providing a more durable and long-lasting investment when compared with plastic or acrylic alternatives. The glass can also be covered in a specialist coating which offers effective protection against staining and discolouration as well as the adhesion and growth of micro-organisms.

The innovative systems allow for multiple configurations with both freestanding and mechanically fixed options available in a variety of sizes for both desk and floor level. A wheeled option is also available. The screens are fully customisable and bespoke cut outs can be added for till points where necessary. Finally the range is easy to self-install, however survey and installation services are also available.

Joanna Lush, Business Development Manager at Gx Glass, commented: “Our range of hygiene screen and sneeze guards are flexible and adaptable to a given environment with a variety of fixings available. We can also provide further options beyond just hygiene purposes, such as company branding, coloured panels, and even magnetic notice board options.”

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SUITE OF INNOVATIVE MANAGED TECH SOLUTIONS LAUNCHED TO HELP BUSINESSES ENSURE COVID-19 RELATED WORKPLACE SAFETY

A first-of-its-kind suite of smart tech solutions has been launched by Contrac IT to help businesses protect their workforce and customers in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Building on technology most often seen in acute healthcare settings, Contrac IT has been granted licensing rights for the THOR UVC terminal cleaning device. Killing viruses quickly and efficiently, the remotely operated system uses ultraviolet to decontaminate both the air and surfaces in a room, killing 99.9999% of pathogens.

To ensure social distancing is maintained within the workplace, Contrac IT has also worked with partners to bring together a range of wearable tech to help keep employees safe. Available as a high vis vest, lanyard or wristband, the technology alerts the wearer when they get too close to another member of the team. Recording how and where incidents occur can then be useful in determining if additional training or adjustments to facilities are needed.

A third piece of technology monitors employees as they enter the workplace with thermal imaging cameras, detecting anyone who may be experiencing a higher than normal temperature.

All the devices, which are GDPR compliant, can be monitored 24-hours a day by Contrac IT to enable corrective action as required.

Contrac IT works with clients in food production, manufacturing and public service many of whom are big employers facing the new health and safety challenges presented by Coronavirus. Managing Director Mark Harding said: “Everyone is keen to get business back up and running but it has to be done safely. The three tech solutions we’ve brought together can be tailored to a specific workplace. They can help safeguard the health and wellbeing of workforces in factories, workshops and offices, as well as employees and customers in retail, hospitality and healthcare settings.”

UK MANUFACTURED BINS WITH ANTIMICROBIAL PROTECTION

Leaffield Environmental are pleased to announce that an antimicrobial protection can be added to their internal and external bins to inhibit the growth of microbes by up to 99.9%.

Leaffield Environmental joined forces with Biomaster, the recognised leader of antimicrobial technology for polymers in 2015 when they launched a new bin designed for the health sector. Following its successful launch many customers across different sectors have been ordering their bins with the antimicrobial additive.

The Biomaster antimicrobial additive is added during Leafield’s manufacturing process and is dispersed throughout the entire bin. It is durable, it will not wash off and will last its active lifetime. Tested on over 50 different bacteria species in over 2,000 applications. It has been proven to remove over 80% of bacteria in as little as 15 minutes.

The active ingredient in the Biomaster antimicrobial technology is Silver which provides an antimicrobial protection without allowing bacteria to develop resistance.

* Tested by Europe’s top independent microbiology laboratories to ISO 22196:2011.

DISCOVER THE COMPLETE HYGIENE OFFER FROM CONTI+

Combining touch-free sensor controlled hand sanitisers with the new CONTI+ oXan disinfection solutions can give building owners and their visitors complete hygiene reassurance whilst allowing easy maintenance utilising our bulk 10l packs.

The launch of CONTI+ oXan brings with it a new way of thinking about disinfection solutions. A simpler, more sustainable way for Estate Managers to keep their entire facility hygienically clean. One system to eliminate bacteria, viruses and pathogens from their water systems and pipework, air conditioning systems, complete room disinfection, surface disinfection and even as a hand sanitiser. Non-toxic and pH neutral so without any damage to plants, skin or cells.

Combine with the reliable, sensor-controlled wall mounted and floor standing sanitiser dispensers for a sustainable, long-term solution. Discover the reliability and innovation of CONTI+, contact Paul Musgrove, UK Development Manager.

www.leaffieldrecycle.com recycle@leafieldenv.com
01225 816541

www.contracfm.com/covid-response info@contracfm.com 01482862336
JOINING “A TRUE MARKET LEADER”

Total Security Services (TSS), the largest privately owned security provider in the UK, has announced the appointment of their new Managing Director. After five years as Managing Director at Cordant Security, one of the ten largest manned guarding companies in the UK, Brendan Musgrove now joins the family-run Total Security Services.

He told us of his excitement in joining the business and how he plans to help add to their award-winning offering: “Once I saw for myself the level of investment, and the forward-looking outlook of the senior management team, I knew TSS was where I had to be. Their IT, physical infrastructure and focus on people development is deeply impressive. “TSS has been phenomenally successful in their chosen sectors, I am privileged to be able to join a true market leader in order to help continue, and accelerate, their growth.”

Prior to leading Cordant Security, Musgrove has also managed a range of FM based business within Rentokil Initial and Interserve.

History of award-winning TSS

Established in 1989, TSS employs over 6,000 front line staff and 200 back office and mobile support staff. The security service, known best for its high-profile Retail Security work, also provides a range of security services across multiple sectors. TSS pride themselves on delivering service excellence, this being recognised by their NSI gold standard, and top 1% ACS positioning. A focus on the wellbeing and development of its team members being shown through their Investors in People Award.

The appointment of Musgrove is one of a number of management changes, designed to both consolidate their current position and continue to drive the business forward in both its current core sectors, and by expansion into new areas.

“I really enjoy working with teams to generate new ideas and approaches to the challenges businesses face. I’m a great believer that the answer to every problem is somewhere within the wider team. The key is facilitating an environment where people feel empowered and motivated to contribute in this way.”

https://totalsecurity.co.uk/ Brendan.Musgrove@totalsecurity.co.uk 0208 523 5533

ADAPT DOORS & DOOR HANDLES TO “HANDS-FREE” OPENING & CLOSING AS PART OF YOUR COVID-SECURE STRATEGY

The Hygienic Handles range of products can be readily fitted to most types of doors (including latched) so they can be easily opened and closed using the forearm or foot, depending on door type.

The products are designed and made in Britain by Hygienic Handles, a new division of Astor-Bannerman Ltd, of Gloucestershire, recent winners of an Innovate UK grant to support product development.

Ideal for the workplace, schools, universities, public buildings, toilets and other settings the products come with eye-catching door stickers to give a clear visual instruction to staff, pupils, visitors and others as to how to operate the door without touching the handle by hand.

www.HygienicHandles.co.uk 01242 820820

ELCO SET TO SHAKE UP THE BOILER MARKET WITH GROUND-BREAKING NEW DESIGN

ELCO Heating Solutions has further strengthened its range of high efficiency commercial gas boilers with the launch of the new wall-hung THISION L PLUS and floor standing TRIGON L PLUS.

Benefiting from the company’s advanced engineering capabilities, these are the next generation of ELCO boilers, offering powerful performance for flexible installation and simple maintenance.

The new boilers have been designed to cater for modern heating demands, boasting a wealth of features and benefits that enable them to be fitted in many commercial applications – either as single units or in cascade. Plus, as plant rooms decrease in size, the new boilers have followed suit, with their impressive footprint to power ratio offering greater levels of flexibility and allowing for installation in tighter spaces. Both the THISION L PLUS and TRIGON L PLUS offer outputs of 60 to 200kW from a single boiler and up to 1.6MW in cascade, as well as extremely low NOx emissions (~24mg/kWh).

All boilers achieve 2 BREEAM credits in accordance with BREEAM UK New Construction 2018.

There are seven wall-hung and seven floor standing models respectively, with each range comprising three single heat exchanger units and four double heat exchanger boilers. What separates these boilers from others on the market is their internal redundancy as a result of the DE models having dual heat exchangers that work independently from one another.

www.elco.co.uk 0345 646 0442
PROTECTIVE SCREENS FOR OFFICES AND PUBLIC SPACES, A ‘SAFE AND SIMPLE’ ANSWER TO COVID-19 THREAT

With employers looking to provide a safe environment for when office workers get the go-ahead to return to work, Onduline Building Products has launched a workplace protective screen system to help shield against the threat of COVID-19.

The ‘safe, secure and simple to install’ protective screens are made from durable, easy to clean polycarbonate (PC) plastics and are designed to sit in between desks and workstations to act as a dividing and protective screen. They make use of the same technology found in Onduline’s plastic sheet products that form part of the company’s extensive range of lightweight roofing solutions. As well as offices and other commercial buildings, the screens can also be used in public buildings such as schools and colleges.

Manufactured in the UK, no specialist equipment is required to fit them and as they are lightweight, they are very easy to handle and manoeuvre.

Paul Duffy, Managing Director at Onduline Building Products, said: “Onduline is best known for its lightweight roofing systems and plastics for agricultural, industrial, leisure and DIY applications, which continue to form 99% of our product range. “But in the same way that we’ve all had to adapt to what is an evolving situation at home and at work, we’ve taken the opportunity presented by the technology and these challenging times to bring this new product to market.

“Although a lot of people are still working at home, many employers and facilities managers will already be considering how they can safely accommodate people back in the workplace when the lockdown ends. “This system is safe, secure, simple to install and cost effective, and is readily available. It’s a solution that can play a small part in helping kick-start the economy, providing protection while they get on with their work.”

Paul added that Onduline will be donating £10 from each processed order to NHS Charities Together, https://www.nhscharitiestogether.co.uk/, which collectively represents charities supporting NHS staff and volunteers caring for COVID-19 patients.

INTERPHONE INTRODUCES TEMPERATURE MONITORING AND FLOW CONTROL SOLUTIONS

Interphone has teamed up with Dahua Technology, a global video surveillance specialist, to help private and public sector organisations create a safer in-building environment and experience as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. As an accredited Dahua Integrator Partner, the company will have access to the latest innovations in thermal access control, temperature monitoring, people counting and flow control, which will be used to develop epidemic safety protection solutions all types of premises.

“These technology solutions will assist in the identification of those persons who may be unwell, while controlling the flow of people in and out of buildings,” explains Julian Syrett, CEO of Interphone Limited. “They will support effective prevention and control measures that will be required moving forward to protect occupants and visitors, as well as reduce the staffing requirement to carry out these monitoring and control functions at entrances and exits.”

Interphone will now have a range of temperature monitoring cameras available that includes free-standing, wall-mounted and integrated turnstile-mounted options. They are accurate up to a distance of three metres and to within ±0.3-0.5 degrees centigrade. They can be located at any entrance to provide fast and non-contact screening, with extremely high passage efficiency.

Meanwhile, an AI-empowered people counting camera will be able to automatically and accurately calculate numbers in real-time for those organisations that require limited people flow in and out of buildings.

WATERBLADE, MORE HANDWASHING, LESS WATER

We have developed and soft released our Waterblade Compact, this has a narrower flow at 100ml and is designed for smaller basins. We are delighted to have secured our first order from RS components premises in France (we have already ‘Waterbladed’ two UK sites) where they are rolling it out to over one hundred basins. For the technical spec on our full range contact nigel@bamfordswaterblade.com

It is really easy to try Waterblade out:

- Email nigel@bamfordswaterblade.com your address.
- We send you a free sample.
- You fit the sample in minutes, assess and show to decision makers. We support with prompt response to questions and data requests.
- You place an order which we supply in 5 working days. You fit and start saving Water and energy.

Waterblade is WRAS approved and Listed as Best Practice by the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

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VENTILATION AS A MEANS TO REDUCE INFECTION RATES AND IMPROVE WELLBEING

BY MALCOLM YOULL, MANAGING DIRECTOR, WEISS TECHNIK UK LTD

As the UK emerges from the Coronavirus lockdown, the main question on everybody’s mind is: what needs to be done to minimise the risk of infection? Hygiene has of course been one of the top issues during the pandemic. Hospitals have always made sure to decontaminate rooms after they have been used by COVID-19 patients. But what about public transport, offices, shops, schools, restaurants, or conference venues?

It looks as if social distancing and upping the disinfection regime won’t be enough. Whilst it is thought that the Coronavirus spreads via larger respiratory droplets as well as via direct contact with contaminated surfaces (so-called fomites) and infected people, recent studies suggest it may also spread via small airborne droplets (so-called aerosols): Because they are so small, aerosols can linger in the air for long periods of time - particularly in badly ventilated indoor environments - enabling airborne transmission. Other infectious viruses, such as smallpox or measles, are recognised to be transmissible via the airborne route.

This potential hazard has been recognised by the Federation of European Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Associations (REHVA), who have recommended ventilation control measures. An effective ventilation system, perhaps augmented by air disinfection and particle filtration, can help to reduce the overall indoor infection risk from airborne particles by diluting and controlling airborne pathogenic material. The dilution of internal air is aimed at reducing the risk of airborne viral transmission by reducing the time during which people are exposed to any airborne viral aerosols, and at reducing the chance for these aerosols to settle on surfaces. Evidence shows that viruses (including COVID-19) can survive on some surfaces for at least 72 hours, so any action to limit surface contamination is beneficial.

As COVID-19 may not be the last time we face a pandemic, we should perhaps consider it as an opportunity to make lasting changes to improve general health and wellbeing at work. Hygienic room climate issues, ventilation and air-conditioning systems are an important aspect of that. If planned poorly or not serviced properly, air conditioning units can quickly turn into transmitters of disease-causing germs. And besides, due to energy costs, ventilation rates in many public and office buildings are significantly lower than in medical settings, meaning that airflow is limited and the risk of infection higher.

As a technology provider, Weiss Technik is developing ways to prevent the growth and spread of bacteria, mould and viruses in air-conditioning systems. The new innovative recirculating air-cooling system Vindur Top was developed for use in hospitals, on wards and in examination rooms, but also for public and industrial buildings, be it universities, schools, nurseries, hotels or office buildings, as well as trains and planes. The system is often used as a supplementary or retrofit solution if the existing primary building climate equipment is no longer sufficient and additional cooling is required.

Vindur Top features HEPA filters (which filter 99.95% of all microorganism, bacteria and viruses from the air), UV lamps and antimicrobial interior coating. In addition, the system can be equipped with optional thermal disinfection. This newly developed method effectively prevents the growth of micro-organisms such as bacteria and mould in the air-conditioning unit. After the unit is switched off, heat exchangers and condensate drip tray are heated sequentially for about 10 minutes to approx. 70°C. This dries out the biofilm resulting from the cooling process, reliably destroying micro-organisms and viruses.

Viruses, germs and bacteria spread easily, particularly in high-occupancy rooms, be it hospital rooms, trains, or offices. Efficient ventilation not only reduces infection rates but also improves air quality, staff wellbeing, and ultimately productivity.

www.weiss-technik.com  +44 1509 631590
CORPS CEO JOINS LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION’S LEADERSHIP GROUP

Mike Bullock, CEO of Corps Security, has been appointed a member of the Living Wage Foundation’s Recognised Service Provider Leadership Group. The news follows Corps joining the Living Wage Foundation’s Service Provider Recognition Scheme earlier this year as part of its drive to improve the pay and living standards of its security officers. The Leadership Group was set up to influence the FM marketplace around the Living Wage Recognition Programme for service providers, advise on overall strategy relating to the Living Wage and service provider recognition and its promotion in the facilities management and outsourcing sectors.

Up to 20 people can be members of the group serving for a three-year term. In addition to Bullock, who represents the security sector, the leadership group includes representatives from the Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management (IWFM), the Cleaning and Support Services Association (CSSA), Sodexo, ISS, Facilicom and Carlisle Support Services.

MITIE APPOINTS MD FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY SERVICES

Mitie has appointed Pradyumna Pandit to the newly created role of Managing Director of Sustainability and Energy Services. Pandit has over 20 years’ experience in the engineering and technology sector, working in a number of roles, ranging from new business development to operations, and brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in energy management and optimising building efficiency. He joins Mitie from Schneider Electric, where he served as Vice President of Digital Energy for UK & Ireland. In this newly created role, Pandit will be responsible for developing and coordinating all of Mitie’s Energy and Sustainability services and solutions, such as the procurement, control and reduction of energy consumption, decarbonisation of heating and transport components in the customer’s premises, and carbon reporting and compliance. The role will support Mitie’s Plan Zero sustainability commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2025.

ISS NAMES PURVIN PATEL AS NEW CEO UK AND IRELAND

Purvin Patel has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of ISS UK and Ireland with immediate effect, taking over the reins from Matthew Brabin who is stepping down from his role as CEO. Patel has more than 25 years of operational leadership experience in companies such as Walmart and Kingfisher Group and has previously spent eight years working for a private equity portfolio company in the food service and food logistics industry. In 2014, Patel joined ISS as the CEO of ISS India and has since then successfully led the strategic transformation through the implementation of the ISS Way strategy. The growth rate within Key Accounts in ISS India has steadily increased during his period as the CEO and has witnessed high people engagement and improved financial performance.

Speaking about his new appointment, Patel said: “I am humbled and excited to embark on this new journey. These are unprecedented times we live in as we face challenges of a different kind, not just in the UK market, but the world over. But we are also seeing opportunities and I am simply amazed by the commitment and dedication of our colleagues in response to this crisis. My first task will be to navigate and lead the business through this crisis, so that we can continue to create workplaces for our customers that inspire and engage.”

IMMEDIATE RECRUITMENT

As more people and businesses are affected by COVID-19, please do let us know if you require urgent cover or help finding a new position. Covering all of the built environment, we are trying to help all staff and companies stay afloat. Please stay safe and if you need anything, call us now on 020 3176 4790.
Getting People Online

The global crisis has led organisations to completely rethink and revitalise how they recruit and onboard new employees. We learn how to utilise the latest technologies and techniques to successfully bring new people onboard, wherever they are based.

Over the last few months we’ve been forced to rethink our working lives, adopting new technology and processes to enable organisations to keep functioning despite the unprecedented challenges. These adjustments have not only affected existing employees but radically altered the recruitment process. For instance, the default way of interviewing potential candidates is now by video call something which would have been unusual only a few months ago when face-to-face was the norm.

According to Jacky Carter, Group Digital Engagement Director at Hays Talent Solutions(1): “For the roles we’ve been asked to hire during the crisis so far, all parties are quite comfortable to take this crucial first meeting online, even though it’s a first time for many.

“We’ve even built a group assessment process which is entirely online, yet enables group interaction and offers the hiring team a chance to evaluate candidates in a group setting. Ensuring inclusivity is critical in these processes – everyone must be given equal access and opportunity.”

If securing a new job looks very different from what it was a few months ago, so are the processes involved in settling in remote based employees to their new roles. Anna Binder, Head of People Engagement Director at Hays Talent Solutions(1) :

“With the shift to working remotely many employers will need to evolve their approach as they recruit and management needs to adapt, and which parts of the ‘old normal’ you will take forward important to use this precious time to think about your current work from home experience, ultimately fostering a strong, long-term relationship between managers and their team.

According to Carter, as we move through this crisis, recruitment and management needs to adapt, and employers will need to evolve their approach as they go, and look for new opportunities to connect. Says Carter: “We’re having to find new ways of having fun together over our video conferencing tool of choice and explore new ways to build and evolve our cultures in different ways than we’re used to.”

She concludes: “Having achieved all that it’s important to use this precious time to think about which parts of the ‘old normal’ you will take forward into the post-crisis era and why, and which you will happily wave goodbye to.”

Reference Notes

(1) https://www.haystalentsolutions.com/managed-service-programmes-

(2) https://asana.com/press/releases/pr/asana-anatomy-of-work-remote-teams-

Salary: £42K-£48K per year
Location: North East
https://bit.ly/3gcQg12

FACILITIES MANAGER
Salary: £42K-£48K per year
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REGIONAL SECURITY MANAGER
Salary: £45k-£50k per year +
Location: London

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Resilience is a term that can get thrown around to the point we forget what it truly means. It is in fact ‘an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change’. If there’s one positive to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s that we’ve all seen resilience like never before. As a business leader, the resilience that I have witnessed among my team is nothing short of astonishing.

Of course, there have been tough days. But if one team member is having a difficult time, there are numerous others ready to step up and help, whether that’s by taking on extra work or taking the time to have a conversation. Resilience isn’t something that just happens – it takes time and is underpinned by a handful of core attributes. From my experience, the four essentials are trust, bravery, loyalty and communication.

**Resilience through leadership**

Building a resilient team requires likeminded leadership. Business leaders have encountered the ultimate test of leadership in recent months and have been faced with extremely difficult decisions. The key challenge for many has been deciding where the balance lies between protecting the business and the employees. At times it can feel impossible to do both, as payroll is the biggest cost for knowledge-based businesses.

The Government furlough scheme has helped but not enough to dispel the anxiety and uncertainty that comes with what is essentially a stop-gap measure. Resilience among furloughed staff is just as important for those still working and leaders have a duty to ensure that they instil it across their teams. At the outset of the lockdown I worked tirelessly with my senior management team to devise a strategy that would keep the business running. This was made all the more complicated by there being so many unknown factors.

We developed a plan that I felt confident with but I wanted every one of my colleagues to know that their input mattered. So, instead of telling people what our strategy was, I reached out to everyone within the organisation to explain our plans and asked if they supported the change – this was even before the Government had announced the furlough scheme.

The feedback was positive across the board. Everyone was supportive and offered to do what it took to ensure that the business could survive the pandemic. The value of involving employees in decisions so crucial to the future of the company cannot be understated and has certainly played a huge role in the amazing resilience that I’ve seen.

**Engage and empower**

Businesses up and down the country have been asking employees to take on new roles and responsibilities, often in challenging working settings. The sudden shift to remote working has seen thousands working without the ideal IT and furniture set up, and sharing it with partners and children who are also at home.

By demonstrating an understanding of the different challenges each team member faces, business leaders can give their employees the freedom to find a routine that suits them. The result will be a team that is proactive, positive and driven. Positivity is a huge driver of resilience. People feed off of each other’s energy and a positive attitude is arguably even more important during a crisis. Businesses are having to make tough decisions at short notice. Employees taking on new roles are going to experience bumps in the road. Mistakes will be made by us all. That’s part and parcel of business.

The four key components of a resilient team:

- **Trust** – give employees the freedom to work in a way that suits them; trust yourself when making difficult decisions.
- **Loyalty** – explain the reasons behind decisions; involve employees in key business decisions.
- **Bravery** – try new things and don’t be afraid of failure.
- **Communication** – open, honest, non-judgemental and able to accept feedback and criticism.

The important thing is that we learn from our mistakes, both individually and as a team, and don’t let them get us down. Part of resilience is the ability to keep going whatever life throws at you, and a positive attitude goes hand-in-hand.

**Inspiring loyalty**

Like trust, loyalty takes time to develop and it’s a two-way street. As well as explaining what decisions are being taken, business leaders need to explain the rationales behind any proposed changes. And if a decision changes or doesn’t happen, this also needs to be communicated. Employees must be shown that the impact on them is being considered every step of the way, and that ultimately any decisions to protect the business have the dual goal of protecting everyone’s job.

At the heart of everything is communication. Leaders need to set the tone by being honest, open and non-judgemental. At the same time, they must be completely open to feedback and criticism. Being able to adapt to feedback is a powerful attribute that does not go unnoticed by employees. Doing so will demonstrate that it is ok for everyone to be open and honest, which will benefit the business.

**Set up for future success**

There are plenty of resilience training courses but it may be some time before most businesses can fully ramp up their training budgets again. Personally, I don’t believe that anything can replicate the real-world experience and if nothing else, so many of us will come out of this with a level of resilience we didn’t even know we had.

The resilient teams will not only get through this crisis, but they’ll be so much stronger too.
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FM CAREERS - CAREER LADDER

FMJ chats to a facilities professional about how they got into the sector and takes a look at their career path. This month we talk to Muhammad Asif Khan, Ph.D., Sr. Business Development Engineer at QD for Operation and Maintenance.

1. How did you progress through the profession to your current role? While looking back to 2009 when I graduated, I had no idea what facilities management was. I started my professional career in ICT sector and worked for over three years in my home country (i.e. Pakistan). In 2013, I got the opportunity to join QD O&M as a “Facilities Engineer” in the airport facilities management project. It was challenging yet exciting to work in the FM sector. Within two years, I found myself fully transformed into an FM professional. My utmost dedication and love for my work led me to take a new position of “Planning Engineer” in 2016. In this role, I had the opportunity to have a bird’s-eye view of the whole FM process and learn about various functions in an FM project.

2. What have you found most challenging about your job in FM since the lockdown? The lockdown led to more than half of the employees in almost every organisation to work from home and logically these people had no or less access to their office phone and emails with the major challenge being a delay in responses from people. I believe it happened because people were not ready for such circumstance and we learnt now from this experience to prepare for any similar situations in the future. Another challenge of working at home was to deal with the blended role i.e. you have to be a spouse, a parent and an employee in the same place and almost at the same time.

3. What qualities do you think are most needed for a successful career in FM? For a successful career in FM, one needs to be flexible and ready to adopt to changes. The FM sector is developing fast. There are major standardisation works in progress that will transform the FM sector into a very high-tech industry. This means to be a successful leader in the FM sector, you need to be a tech-lover as well as fully aware of both new international standards and local regulations for mandatory compliance. Additionally, top management need to be aware of incoming transformations and prepare their organisations by engaging their people accordingly.

4. Do you believe the pandemic has highlighted the important role of the FM sector and the part its people play in keeping workers safe and buildings clean and maintained? The pandemic has both negative and positive impacts on highlighting the role of FM in today’s world. The negative impact is with many of the companies considering FM as the less necessary function during the pandemic, and reducing FM operations to save costs without evaluating the trade-off. The much stronger and positive impact of the pandemic is the way it had highlighted the importance of FM, especially when it came to soft services. The significance of the FM personnel was realised and acknowledged by clients, authorities and even visitors. Second to health professionals, they were widely seen as the front-line fighters against the pandemic.

5. What do you predict could be the main changes to the FM sector due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic? I believe the pandemic would allow the people in the FM sector to rethink their strategies. The health and safety professionals in FM will be further trained on novel infectious diseases. They will update their standard operating procedures to cope with such long-term situations. The top management will rethink their staffing strategies and adapt to new technology. The maintenance planners will consider updating their maintenance plans and strategies. In this way everybody will consider these changes, re-define their strategies and adapt to the new environment.

Would you, or someone you know, like to be featured in our career ladder column? If you’re an operational FM with more than 10 years’ experience in the sector, then email sara.bean@kpmmedia.co.uk
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