



premises & facilities management

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EATING THE BENEFITS

PFM's Food@Work supplement explores key catering issues

WAKING UP TO WEEE

Retailers, producers, recyclers and community groups get recycling

CLEANING UNDER PRESSURE

Apply intelligence not the knife to cut cleaning costs

FAST TRACK CONNECTIONS

IT solution is answer for growing FM business

On the up?

Is it all over? Or has it only just started? News that the UK economy had returned to growth ...just ... was pounced on by commentators and optimists to say that the worst of the economic downturn is over. I'm not so sure since at the same time there was news that universities expenditure on building had been slashed, and debates on where the axe will fall on defence spending, local government and other public sector services filled the newspapers and broadcast news..

Certainly the tenor of this issue of PFM is still about how to cope with the pressures of the downturn that have been placed on facilities services providers by their clients who are themselves seeking to cut back on costs .. but not service levels. In the firing line are cleaning and catering. On pae 43, Jim Morris explores intelligent ways of approaching cutting the costs of cleaning workplaces rather than just slashing the budget and inevitably affecting the quality of service.

The catering sector is also coping with recessionary pressures while at the same time developing strategies for sustainability in their catering operations from field to plate. In the first of PFM's new @WORK series of supplements, FOOD@WORK (pages 23-38) combines independent expert advice on these issues with experience from key service providers in 'sponsored articles'

Also in this issue, Neil Marley looks at the burden of risk that FM suppliers are often required to take on with service contracts. The range of risks has increased as clients meet the economic downturn in their own sectors, but the danger for FM service providers is that increasingly the risk they take on are critical to their client's business and reputation.

Prepared for April?

Probably the most fundamental change to the management of workplaces begins in April, and if you do not understand the implications for your business now, you need to find out. The CRC – Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme – comes into force in April 2010, and even though it does not reach its full operation until 2012, there is plenty to be done now. Those FMs responsible for workplaces in leased accommodation also have to get engaged with the process. Abigail Dean (page 21) explains the issues for landlords and tenants under the CRC rules, and how, if all parties are not to lose out, they must begin to engage with each other from now on. At last FMs have an issue that will be a key consideration on the Board since the financial health and reputations of organisations are directly involved. Are you ready to advise them?

Corporate responsibility makes a difference

International research demonstrates how the best performing companies and a robust IT infrastructure benefit from financial savings achieved from their corporate sustainability approach to their business activities.

Corporate estate managers and FM professionals in the UK now have their own seven point guide to the successful implementation of twin strategies of corporate sustainability and cost reduction. The report, published by international research analysts Aberdeen Group, places integrated FM at the heart of achieving corporate sustainability and obtaining the substantial cost benefits that sustainability can afford. It also places FM professionals at the heart of board-level corporate decision making as businesses and organisations strive for greater efficiencies, transparency and accountability of assets employed and return on investment.

Aberdeen Group reveals in their report that a unified FM strategy and a robust technological infrastructure is the basis of considerable financial savings for many of the best performing companies around the world.

The seven key points outlined in the report are:

- Knowing what you've got and what you are consuming
- Determining how to reduce space
- Managing costs of facilities
- Promoting stakeholder collaboration
- Contracting and using green suppliers
- Smart buildings: the greening of real estate
- Eliminate paper processes.

Software specialist, Planon, is showcased in the report with a case study on Antwerp, Belgium, which highlights the potential of large scale, integrated solutions to provide a simultaneous boost to sustainability and reduction of costs by encouraging companies to adhere to the seven key principles of sustainability.

Aberdeen Group's research director Carol Baroudi, who co-authored the report said "Ignoring sustainable elements of the FM equation potentially leads to far greater costs in the long run not to mention the damage to reputation that a perceived lack of endeavour in

this key corporate agenda item can cause. Through our research it was abundantly clear that the worst performing companies financially were those that had a less than comprehensive understanding of their assets which led to a lacklustre effort at sustainability."

Aberdeen Group assesses the practices and performances of over 664,000 enterprises worldwide, categorising companies into three distinct classes:

- Industry Average – 50 percent of practices that fall into the middle ground of corporate performance;
- Laggards – the lowest performing 30 percent of companies
- Best-in-Class – performing in the top 20 percent of companies reviewed.

"With regards to corporate sustainability, there are marked differences between the upper and lower end of this scale," Baroudi explained. "Best-in-Class companies are 164 percent more likely to track their carbon footprint, 84 percent more likely to track their water usage, and four times as likely to have visibility

into their FM systems. As a corollary to that, the top performing companies are also 41 percent more likely to utilise sustainability-focused technology in the governance of their corporate estates."

Larry O'Brien of Planon said: "The Aberdeen report highlights the correlation between performance and sustainability, and between sustainability and effective facilities management – although it should be common sense, it is often the case that corporate bosses do not make this connection. The foundation of driving corporate sustainability is knowing what you have. You need to be able to track your assets precisely and consistently and have information at your fingertips that you trust enough to base key decisions upon. When you have this insight, you can see what is draining energy and losing you money and put a stop to it in an instant. An in-depth knowledge of your assets can allow you to be flexible and innovative with your use of the office making huge energy and cost savings. By promoting a work-from-home culture, with less commuting by employees and less energy used in the office, you can save vast amounts of money.

• www.planon.co.uk