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HR and FM
Applying social capital in the workplace

Interiors
What can we learn from Sweden?

Sustainability
Greg Davies comments on the CRC

How do you FM that?
No 10 cuts carbon

Power to the People

Julie Kortens, head of FM at Channel 4, calls for the gap between FM and HR to be bridged

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MAY
2010



LEADER

WHEN YOU READ THIS WE MAY WELL KNOW THE RESULT OF THE GENERAL ELECTION. As I write, there is no clear policy from any party regarding facilities management (no surprise there). All built environment issues are swept up in general business matters and sustainability. It is likely that in operational terms, it will be business as usual, no matter if Labour hold on to power, the Conservatives form a government or a hung parliament forces some eagerly anticipated co-operation.

But the debate about public spending will not go away and it will affect FM. The threat of job losses and budget cuts might lead to outsourcing and opportunities for FM providers, but it puts pressure on the industry to innovate and still deliver quality services at a reduced cost. Perhaps better use of IT is one answer. Maybe improved use of space, tougher procurement methods or better team working is the way forward. The next 18 months are going to be tough, no matter which party is in government, but it will be a chance for FM professionals to shine.

Operational efficiencies, improvements in carbon emissions and careful management of costs put FMs in the front line. The big groups might seek to consolidate and accept lower margins for a period, but medium-sized and smaller FM operators will have to win work by differentiating themselves from the competition. The emphasis will be on quality and consistency of service; the great people employed and the commitment to shared values, behaviours and professionalism. So, the advice and experience shared in the pages of FMX will be useful reference material.

People are going to make all the difference, so managing them well and understanding their own needs are going to be crucial. In this respect David Wheeldon's report into social capital (page 52) and the WorkSAAS approach to managing people (page 55) are worth a read. But one key area that we keep returning to in FMX is the design and use of space. In our piece on page 43 about St John's school in Marlborough, we combine political discussion with ideas about design. It is a debate that won't end after the election, and we are sure to return to it in the next few months.

One last thing: FMX will be at The Facilities Show at the NEC, 11-13 May. Why not drop by on stand B75 in Hall 1 and share your views about FM, the industry and the profession?

Andrew Brown
Consulting Editor

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ALL IN ONE

WorkSAAS is a system based on 'cloud' technology which aims to deliver efficient and flexible work management, as Keith Sparshott explains

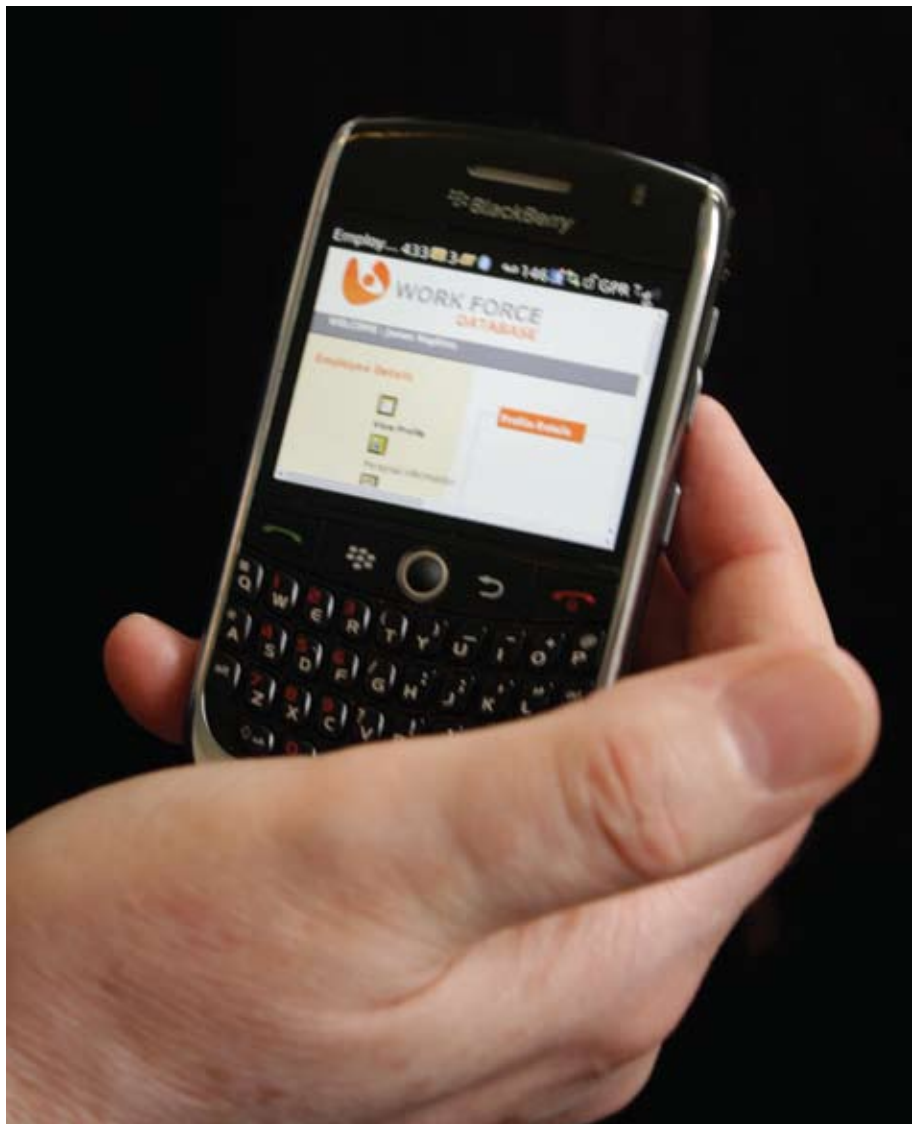
MANAGING AN FM TEAM so that the right person with the right skill set is available to complete a task is essential to achieve optimum cost of service delivery in today's environment. Overlay this with the need to ensure that workforce competencies are up to date to be legislatively compliant, and life becomes challenging. Alongside health, safety and sustainability demands, these issues add to the ongoing complexity for facilities management today.

Being able to manage this complexity online with on-demand access, anywhere, any time, makes life much simpler. An integrated work management system approach linked to 'cloud technology' provides the needed flexibility for today's changing FM business.

Much has been written about the potential impact of the Corporate Manslaughter Act and its implications for employees and employers in the management of work. Key to the whole process is the effective control of work tasks to eradicate exposure to bad practice.

Paper-based systems or sophisticated computer systems working off a localised server have limitations. Their application is limited either by geography or accessibility for a workforce which is often mobile, working in remote sites or with limited access to a computer. Investment in the latest computer system can expose the company to the requirement for expensive cyclic updates. Often the company systems have only limited accessibility for operatives and none for contractors, and this is without accounting for the capital expenditure required.

'Cloud' technology is becoming an accepted way of overcoming these issues whereby the company gains access through a licensing process to a software application, 'software as a service' (Saas) ▶



Paper-based systems or computer systems working off a localised server have limitations

Key to the process is the management of tasks in real time

held remotely in the 'cloud' or 'ether'.

High initial capital costs are avoided. ROI is improved and constant system updates are carried out by the system provider without the need for new purchase orders. A key benefit in this approach is the universal accessibility it gives to all operatives; direct labour or contractors as well as management.

Integrated approach

WorkSAAS has applied this approach to develop an integrated work management system (iWMS). This links the management of tasks to be carried out with the competencies of the technician and the workplace environment in which the work is to be done. The key is the management of the process in real time. This on-demand system avoids lost time preparing pre-task methodologies, seeking for approvals or catching up the paperwork after the task has been completed.

The system works through utilising a number of reservoirs of information which are accessed and updated to ensure compliance with all work undertaken. Data on workforce competencies, direct and subcontractor, licences held and renewal dates are kept in one reservoir (WorkForce).

The capability of on-demand toolbox training is incorporated within the WorkForce reservoir, allowing operatives at remote sites to participate in site induction or asset refresher training with the facility to test included. The data is actively managed to flag up induction, refresher training or CPD requirements to ensure the team remains compliant.

Standard method statements, risk assessments and precautions for regular tasks are kept in another (WorkTask) reservoir and used as part of the job execution. The operative confirms the procedure or modifies the method statement and risk assessment to include the specific conditions found prior to doing the task.

Authorising approval is sought from the supervisor prior to proceeding. Standard templates are available when addressing non-standard tasks, enabling the system to be used for planned and reactive activities. Access anywhere, any time is achieved through PDA, laptop, BlackBerry or iPhone. The system can be used wherever there is access to a web browser.

The workplace reservoir (WorkPlace) captures details of all assets in the estate and is the repository of detailed activities carried out on each asset. It also provides incident recording for assets, allowing the operative access to any reported incidents with a particular asset or at a particular workplace prior to embarking on a task.

It also allows for the recording of incidents following the completion of a task, allowing the management team to identify areas of concern, investigate and target for action, before they become a crisis.

The system incorporates a site environmental management capability (WorkEnviron) which enables corporate and social sustainability goals to be managed and monitored at the corporate level of activity. It provides a defensible environmental management system, allowing sustainable targets to be set across the major areas: emissions to air; releases to water; waste management; contamination of land; use of raw materials and natural resources and other local environmental and community issues.

WorkSAAS provides an auditable trail for all asset activities, by whom, the authorising process and the real time to complete the task. Opportunity exists to link this into creating the invoice for the task carried out. Operational savings are achieved through more accurate management of task time.

Each person has a secure identity to log-in; biometric capabilities for signing on and off jobs can be incorporated where security of operation is required. On completion of the risk assessment and the work task request, the authorising person signs it off, thus releasing the task to be completed. The operative carries out the task, completes the record and signs it off. Any incidence is recorded, the record being updated automatically. No paperwork is created except a work permit and, where required by management, a paper copy.

The WorkSAAS dashboard allows users quick summary access to pre-planned or emergency work tasks. Thus local site staff can see at a glance any work tasks due to take place on their site or within their premises. A report format is agreed at mobilisation with different levels of detail provided to suit the structure of the management team. Escalation



How WorkSAAS fits together

procedures are automatically incorporated to ensure that proactive health and safety management takes place.

The comprehensive detail of the system has been achieved through interaction with senior executives within the FM, construction and quarry industries during development over the past four years. Active engagement has taken place with the HSE, the Mineral Products Qualifications Council and British Safety Council as part of the consultative process to ensure that the system meets all envisaged requirements.

Roseanne Hayward, managing director of the MPQC, states: 'WorkSAAS has, I believe, large potential for the industry. I would certainly welcome the opportunity of feeding into the training and qualification segment and [we would be] happy to help in any way we can.'

Douglas Eskdale, development director of WorkSAAS, says: 'The support the team has received from the industry in shaping the system has proved invaluable. It has been an enlightening journey to achieve what we trust will become an industry standard able to be used by operatives and senior directors alike.' The system assures compliance at every stage of work with a tighter control of work in progress.

Recently WorkSAAS was approved for R&D innovation funding support from Scottish Enterprise, which, recognising the uniqueness of the solution, appointed Dr Chris Bryceland to investigate its intrinsic worth, work with the development team and take it through the labyrinth of grant processes and procedures to gain approval. Keith Gordon, health and safety director for Scottish Water Solutions, says: 'WorkSAAS is innovative best practice' **fmX**

Further Info

Keith Sparshott is marketing director of WorkSAAS, a software development company focused on creating solutions for the built environment. It can be contacted through enquiries@worksaa.com