



This *Focus on...* paper explores the issues facing the facilities management industry and the role qualifications are playing in developing professionalism.

The industry's role in the UK economy

The facilities management industry is relatively new, but in recent years it has matured and has been able to demonstrate its value to businesses by providing an efficient method of managing non-core activities (Facilities Management Journal, 2013). In 2012, the UK facilities management industry was valued at £106.3 billion.

This is expected to increase by £10.7 billion to £117 billion by 2017 due to new growth opportunities created by the popularity of outsourcing key support services through bundled and integrated contracts that enhance core services by adding value (Facilities Management Journal, 2013; Facilities Management Magazine, 2013) – Market and Customer Insight (MCI) (2013) estimate that demand for contracted services will increase by 9% between 2012 and 2017.

Evidence suggests that this growth, particularly in sales, will contribute to the creation of new jobs in the sector with 72% of

the facilities management companies recently surveyed stating that they would recruit new employees (FM World, 2013).

However, market pressures have created a cost focused culture where clients are increasingly adopting a 'more for less' procurement approach that has left facilities managers expressing concerns that price competition will increase restricting contract values (Asset Skills, 2011; Facilities Management Journal, 2013). Furthermore, a recent survey suggested that 85% of facilities managers believe it is hard to quantify the true value of facilities management to their organisation (FM World, 2013).

Facilities management companies are now differentiating their services and entering new markets to meet new client demand (Facilities Management Magazine, 2013) – for example, recent research identified opportunities for the provision of energy management services with an integrated approach to energy procurement and effective management that can be incorporated into corporate environmental policies that demonstrate a client's corporate social responsibility (Facilities Management Magazine, 2013).

Workforce Issues

Research suggests that there are three key issues facing the facilities management industry with regard to its workforce:

1. Professionalism

The facilities management industry is relatively new and, as a result, the debate about increasing the professionalism of the workforce has become more prominent in recent years (FM World, 2013). The pioneers of facilities management relied on their skills, experience and aptitude to drive success; however, more employers are demanding facilities management qualifications that ensure individuals can demonstrate their discipline, motivation, desire to learn and commitment to their profession (FM World, 2012).



2. Workforce Characteristics

In recent years, the facilities management industry has invested in improving the skills level of the workforce so that it is now regarded as a profession, with a number of opportunities for further education which are essential for attracting young people to work in the industry.

Attracting skilled, young people into the industry has become a priority in recent years as recent research by Asset Skills (2013) indicates that a quarter (25%) of the facilities management workforce is aged over 54. Many facilities managers have expressed concerns that the industry is running the risk of losing valuable experience over the next decade, without recruiting the young people to replace this talent (FM World, 2012).

Some employers argue that recent changes to legislation allowing older workers to work for longer will reduce the loss of valuable knowledge; however, this would only be a short-term solution and it is not clear how many employees would work beyond retirement age (FM World, 2012).

Facilities management businesses must therefore focus on portraying the industry differently and engaging young people, while they are still in full-time education to promote these excellent opportunities (FM World, 2012).

3. Gender Diversity

According to Asset Skills research (2013), the majority of the UK facilities management workforce is male (62%). This reflects a national trend where the top companies across the UK recruit equal numbers at graduate level, but only 17% of women achieve board level and senior management appointments (Facilities Management Journal, 2013).

Prominent figures in the facilities management industry argue that achieving a greater balance across the workforce in terms of gender in the future will provide employers with a more diverse talent pool with a wide range of different skills that will support innovative thinking and better decision making (Asset Skills, 2013; Facilities Management Journal, 2013).



Skills Implications

To meet customer demand for services and to overcome workforce challenges, facilities management employers are investing in new technologies to streamline their business operations and are increasingly focusing on the skills, knowledge and attributes of staff which will be vital for the survival of the business in the future. For example:

- Customer service skills
- Change management skills
- Space management skills
- Communication and conflict management skills
- Knowledge of Health and Safety
- Team and independent working skills
- Leadership and management skills
- Procurement and contracting skills

WAMITAB recognises the link between business success and an effective workforce that is able to operate productively, while complying with policy and legislation. To support employers, WAMITAB provide qualifications that combine a number of units to develop a dedicated programme that will support individuals employed at operative to management level as they develop the skills, knowledge and attributes to address the resource efficiency of their business.

About Us

WAMITAB is an awarding organisation and charity that develops qualifications for those working in cleaning, street cleansing, facilities management, resource management, recycling and parking from operative to management level.

By qualifying the workforce, we aim to embed a culture of safety and progression, making the industry more attractive as a career.

If you would like further information on our wide range of facilities management qualifications, training and apprenticeships follow us on our social media channels and visit www.wamitab.org.uk.



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This paper has been written and produced by the Project Team at WAMITAB.