

Top 10 Trends Impacting the Future of Facility Management

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The International Facility Management Association announced the release of its 2011 research report "Facility Management Forecast – Exploring the Current Trends and Future Outlook for Facility Management."

To help prepare its members and the profession for the future, IFMA periodically conducts a trend forecasting workshop with a panel of industry experts to identify the emerging trends and issues that will influence facility management in the coming years. Broader industry research is also conducted throughout the year and, taken together, results from the workshop and research initiatives form the basis of this report.

The 2011 "Facility Management Forecast" can help facility practitioners succeed in their careers by identifying the industry patterns to look for, the skill sets to work on and the places to allocate their resources. It can also help facility management departments chart a course for the future and align facility management with corporate strategy. The trends identified fall into three categories: externally-, internally- and organizationally-driven.

Externally-driven trends are dictated by societal and other factors.

- Sustainability continues to grow in importance and prominence worldwide. Organizations have begun to incorporate it into business goals and culture, and within the profession, it has moved from an emphasis primarily for new construction to influencing existing building operations.
- Complex building systems and controls increasingly offer opportunities and challenges for the profession. The industry can leverage new technologies to better manage facilities, but it also needs to ensure adequate training is in place to educate practitioners on new systems.
- Facility management faces problems stemming from the aging building stock professionals manage — difficulties compounded by the global recession. As facilities and mechanical systems reach and exceed their expected operating lives, significant issues of "repair or replace" must be addressed.
- Facility managers play a critical role in business continuity after a disrupting event, not only by crafting and implementing the prepared response plan, but also by serving as role models for the organization in emergency preparedness and business continuity planning.

Internally-driven trends derive from within the profession.

- The increasing quantity and complexity of data available to facility managers through new reporting protocols poses challenges and opportunities for the profession. More facility departments have added the ability to convert raw

data into usable and meaningful information that fosters informed decision making.

- Finding top talent in facility management is gaining greater importance. Recognizing that facility management is often not the first choice of today's new graduates, the profession will need to increase its branding and outreach.
- There is a growing desire to elevate facility management to improve the recognition and perceived value of the profession within the corporate hierarchy. Many have achieved success in this arena through careful alignment with their organization's mission and by emphasizing facility professionals' role as managers of significant assets and enablers of the organization's mission, vision and values.

Organizationally-driven trends derive from the corporations and organizations housing facility departments.

- Increasingly, organizations are expanding their expectations of facility management to include both technical and business acumen, which drives the need for an evolving skill set for those in the profession. While the technical aspects are generally well understood, the increased focus on business acumen will require facility professionals to think and act strategically and to communicate their positions in the language of the C-suite.
- There is a growing recognition that facility management contributes to the health and well being of building occupants, thereby benefiting efficiency, productivity and profitability — key pillars of an organization's bottom line.
- Changing work styles significantly affect both occupant behavior and the vacancy rate of buildings, which affects how buildings must operate. Facility management increasingly faces challenges posed by open work plan arrangements, differing hours of operation, and varying occupancy rates and densities — all of which impact power use and other considerations.

These trends do not stand alone as solitary influences on the profession, but rather bear strong interconnections. The most successful facility professionals will be those that proactively meet the challenges posed by these trends and lead the way for their organizations and the profession as a whole. "The 2011 'Facility Management Forecast' presents what we see as the critical issues facing the profession," said IFMA President and CEO Tony Keane, CAE. "It not only serves a needed strategic planning purpose, but also highlights areas the industry needs to pay attention to. With advances in technology and the growing recognition of sustainable practices, being aware of the trends in this report is critical to the success of the FM professional of the future."

The "Facility Management Forecast" research report was developed in partnership with Business Integration Group and VFA, and is available for [purchase online](#). Members of the media may request a review copy at no cost. Other IFMA [research and survey results](#) are also available online.