

Exercise in Integration- Part I  
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In a recent survey by the IFMA Foundation, FMs were asked to identify those areas in which they thought research was most important. The top two subject categories were “Energy Management” (with a subset of energy costs), followed closely by “Operations & Maintenance. The category of “Sustainability” trailed far behind in the survey.

The irony of this situation lies in the fact that energy management is sustainability and this leads directly to energy cost savings. Operations & maintenance can be improved through a sustainable approach and appropriate actions. The intention of the set of articles upcoming on the web will be to draw the correlations between IFMA’s nine (9) competencies and sustainable actions.

IFMA has defined the facility management profession based on nine competencies with which we all should be proficient (or at least conversant). They are:

- Leadership & Management
- Quality Assessment & Innovation
- Communications
- Operations & Maintenance
- Human & Environmental Factors
- Technology
- Real Estate
- Project Management
- Finance

As time goes by, and the profession develops new criteria for our responsibilities, there will be changes in content and performances but by in large, the competencies stay the same. A new competency in Technology was added to the original eight when it became such a large part of our job, and there is a school of thought that feels Sustainability should be the 10<sup>th</sup> Competency. However, it is my contention that sustainability is an integral part of everything we do and can be inserted throughout our performances as is appropriate.

Competencies and sustainable actions, especially as outlined in LEED guidelines, are tools that can work in conjunction with each other to help us do our job, save money and increase the value of our facilities. Operating in this fashion will produce benefits such as: energy savings and more efficiency, water conservation, less absenteeism, higher productivity, improved purchasing standards, waste stream management, waste diversion/recycling. What we need to do is start melding the two disciplines to treat our facilities more holistically.

While the competencies point to our knowledge base, we also must be aware of how we approach our responsibilities. To be successful in facility management, everything we do should be done with some critical themes in mind.

- Business issues- our companies want to make/save money- everything we do should reflect their intent to improve the bottom line.
- The cost of ownership- We need to ensure that we convey to mgmt what this means and how it applies to your facility...that implementation costs are just a fraction of the full life of the asset or activity.
- Life cycle costing, which will someday give way to life cycle assessment, should always be utilized so that we don't throw money away on assets that should be replaced.
- Integration of services: this refers to the holistic view with which we must address our job and our facility...recognizing inter-relationships and our effects on the facility as a whole.
- Design for operations & maintenance; we need to utilize standards and guidelines to be proactive and strategic in our thinking.
- Responsibility- We owe our best efforts to ourselves, to the company (\$) and to the employees (healthy workplace).
- Cost effectiveness- we should take advantage of every tool available to save money.
- Constant efficiency improvement- Constant efficiency improvement is directly related to energy efficiency and subsequent cost savings.
- Quality of life: we must keep our facilities as clean and as healthy as possible

All of these topics are addressed and/or satisfied by sustainable operations. As we continue this exercise, I hope to correlate the two disciplines in such a way that it makes sense to everyone and enables FMs to start their own integration of concepts.