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Recruitment



The Facilities
Manager Within

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Introduction.

A Facilities Manager (FM) is a hidden hero in a company. A great facilities manager is just like the power company; you don't think about them until they aren't working correctly.

Many companies work hard to find Facilities Managers to hire from the outside. They will post advertisements in newspapers and online boards. They will even host job fairs in the hopes that a superstar will walk through the door.

Doing it alone can be expensive and time consuming. The trick is to hire well, train right, and trust the process. Getting the right person requires expertise and skill. You want to make sure that they start with the qualities you need and then grow inside your company to be the FM that you want.

In this short work, we will:

- Discuss the most important traits of a Facilities Manager
- Review training methods that are most effective for FMs
- Look at ways to set your new manager free to work in their own building for your enterprise.

The Most Important Manager in the Building

The Facilities Manager is **one of the most important managers in your business.**

In their role as FM, this is the person who literally makes sure that lights turn on, the roof is intact, and that the buildings are well maintained.

Without a reliable and competent facilities manager, many properties would fall into disrepair quickly. A building that isn't working well will cause disruption to your employees, and in turn, your business.

An FM makes sure that the internet connection stays on, that the building is warm enough to work in, and that the roof isn't leaking.

Without them, nothing else can be achieved. With this level of importance, the right candidate needs to be skilled in managing both facilities and people.

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The Important Traits of the Facilities Manager.

While education level is a consideration when hiring a facilities manager, there are some basic personality traits that are even more so.

Outgoing personality - A FM must coordinate hundreds of people at the same time. It's important that they can be professional, likable and patient to get the best out of all of them.

Attention to detail - There are hundreds of details that an FM needs to notice on any given day, from rubbish in reception to the running condition of the lift. Your entry-level candidate should come with the ability to demonstrate attention to detail at a basic level.

These two traits can be difficult and time-consuming to teach. There are some people who have them and others who don't. It's not a criticism, but if someone has these traits ingrained, they will make a better FM than someone who needs to be taught.

that you can trust to bring you the right candidates.

This isn't a job for a generalist.

Your Facilities Manager search team should be people that understand the importance of personality and have a proven track record of delivering the right candidates.

They need to understand the position itself well, so that they can ask the right questions. That way you receive a stable of candidates that meet your needs.

Looking for education and certifications is all well and good, but if the necessary personality traits aren't there, your FM will be more of a liability than an asset.

Start with Entry Level.

Sometimes it is very sensible to start with someone who is entry-level and grow them within your company.

If you start with someone who has the personality and some of the training, you will be able to mould them into the leader that your specific organisation needs.

When looking at entry-level candidates, it won't be experience that you are looking for, but the personality, drive, and interest that an FM needs to have. This will set you up with a great Facilities Manager to run your operation well.

The advantage to training a person this way is that you end up with someone you can trust to make decisions the way you would.

They are not bringing old habits to their new position.

Training a Hero - The Right Entry-Level Candidate Development

The training program for a Facilities Manager is similar to other internal training, except that there is a great deal that one can learn from a hands-on experience. Your entry-level FM may have come to you with university training and no experience or they may have experience and no training. You can balance their weaknesses by choosing the right internal training priorities.

Teaching through leading.

One of the most effective ways to train new staff is to lead by example. In the case of your FM, this can be showing them the specific techniques that you use to keep track of details.

Whether you use notes cards or software, a recording device or simply memory mnemonics, these can be the same tools that your protégé will use as well.

There are also processes that you use to make decisions. Many of an FM's decision are simple, such as calling the elevator company for the broken elevator.

Other decisions, such as whether to pour quick set concrete for a new floor or to choose a harder, longer setting floor, are based in a clear understanding of your organisation's needs.

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Formal training.

There are several schools in the UK and around the world that offer complete training courses for Facilities Managers. These can range from six-month certifications to four-year degrees.

Offering this to an employee can be an excellent way to help them grow. If a local university or trade school offers courses, this can be a start to their education. This can be done right through your company's existing educational assistance programs as well.

Book training.

There are hundreds of very complete books offered that will teach your rookie FM about the job. Using these books and your expertise (or that of your existing FM), you can forge your own formal training program.

If your company has several facilities and you want the FM program to be a major factor in your company's stability and profitability, you can design a program that offers certification from your organisation.

On The Job Training.

An apprenticeship is still one of the leading ways to create great Facilities Managers. Since a huge portion of the job is hands-on, it can be very profitable to create an apprenticeship program.

After hiring the right entry-level candidate, sit with them and describe the position in detail. Prepare them for the triumphs and the difficulties. The feeling of opening the doors on a renovated building. The 3am telephone calls about broken lifts or missing security staff.

It's important to every employee that their manager understands what their pain points are, as well as what makes their job worth doing. It lets the team member feel that their leaders are connected to their position by more than a salary.

Shadowing you and others.

The best way to get someone to do a job the way you want, is to teach them directly. This normally starts with shadowing.

Set them up with several weeks of training, observing, and doing the duties with alongside an existing expert.

Don't just have them shadow you, send them out to shadow a variety of team members to get a better overview. Everyone does things a little differently and your apprentice might learn a technique from someone else that you never thought of. Who knows, they might come back and teach you a thing or two.

Rules of shadowing.

This is a very simple outline of the timeline that you should use for your apprenticeship. We have planned it out in four phases, which might take months, weeks or just days; it really depends on the size and complexity of your facility.

Phase One:

Following you and simply observing. Insist that they take notes. Even if they never read them, most people remember things better when they write everything down. If you get an emergency phone call at midnight on a Sunday, call your apprentice in too. They need to know the hard truths of the job.

Phase Two:

Hand over a few duties. This is a great chance to see how your apprentice handles some of the duties of the job. Have them send emails, make phone calls, and work with contractors, all on your behalf. Observe them once and then let them do it unsupervised for a while. Go back to the person they spoke to and ask for their impressions as well.

Phase Three:

The apprentice becomes the assistant. Now you can start handing off entire projects. They can be one-off items, like getting the lift repaired, or larger projects, such as lining up the documents for the construction of a new facility.

Phase Four:

They do your job. This will be the best part for you. You will be able to sit back and watch everything happen. Your apprentice should now be a completely trained Facilities Manager. You are there to look for potential pitfalls and to offer advice, but they will use their own initiative to implement solutions.

Shadowing “Competitors”.

Forging working relationships with other FMs who work with other companies in your area can be a great way to get additional training for your apprentice. Speak to FMs in external organisations and create an exchange program.

Everyone does everything a bit differently, so this can be an opportunity for your trainee to learn some valuable new techniques and ideas that will make them a more rounded FM. There should be very little that is proprietary that they deal with, so there should be no conflict of interest.

Releasing Your Trainee.

Now that you have them trained, it's time to set them free to run their own facility.

Choosing the right first location.

If possible, it makes sense choose a location that is geographically nearby. This way if they run into trouble, you can be there. They can also drop by to have you review ideas and documents that might be new to them.

If nearby isn't practical, then they can use the telephone, email, and Skype to get your assistance. Having a safety net will make it easier for them to get off on the right foot.

Ongoing training.

It's important that everyone in every position continue to learn. Your new FM is no different.

There are a few things that you can do and should avoid in order to make this all much easier.

1. Avoid “Seagull Management”

A Seagull Manager is one who is there for a few minutes and they simply point out everything negative they can and then leave. If you are still in charge of the new FM, be sure to visit them with the intent of finding good things, not just to point out problems.

2. Be Part of the “Day to Day”

Overseeing a new FM can be difficult because you have your own job to do. Try calling or messaging every day to touch base and make sure that they are getting on well. You will be able to help them minimise problems before they get out of control.

3. Keep Learning

Make sure that you encourage them to attend seminars, conferences, and courses. One of the most difficult parts for them will be needing time away from work. If you facilitate that, they will feel more inclined to go out and learn more.

Review for six months.

Every month for the first six months, do non-binding job performance evaluations.

The goal is not to criticise, but to give them a formal touch point to discuss how well they are doing and the challenges they are facing.

The consistent reviews will allow them to make small incremental changes that they need in order to be a massive success.

The Greatness in the Company.

Now that you have trained and guided your new manager, you can dip back into the pool and get the next person ready.

These same ideas can apply to any position, but your Facilities Manager is so vital that a home-grown manager will likely give you more loyalty, better performance, and do things in a way that is most like your own.

Good luck.

We know you will do well.

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About Maxwell Stephens.

Maxwell Stephens are a reliable and professional recruitment firm who specialise in facilities management.

Established in 2006, Maxwell Stephens have extensive knowledge and expertise in facilities management and can offer a tailored approach, both to candidates and clients.

Clients recruiting in Facilities Management can rely on Maxwell Stephens to be the trusted advisor, helping them to avoid the pitfalls of recruiting a Facilities Manager and by being able to select the most appropriate course of action at each stage of the process.



A FINE POSITION TO BE IN



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