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Part 2 of 2: Facility management

Creating the right ambience

Facility management professionals ensure that organisations function effectively

IN YESTERDAY'S article, we discussed how facility management has evolved from being regarded largely as a maintenance function to its current status as a strategic partner in an organisation's success.

Today's article focuses on the core competencies of facility management and increased demand for the industry's professionals.

Facility management is not just about looking after the built facilities of an organisation. It encompasses multiple disciplines to ensure the functionality of the built environment by integrating people, places, processes and technologies.

As the backbone of the organisation, facility management enables the best use of its built facilities by planning, designing and managing their premises and support services.

A strategic role

Facility management professionals' contributions are value-based and delivered through industry leading practices. They handle key roles in their respective organisations and have to be proactive in understanding the company's resource needs and growth plans.

Facility management expens-

es, in most multinational companies, are usually the second largest after human resources, and account for approximately 30 to 35 per cent of the organisation's expenditure.

Hence, ensuring sensible spending within the budget and meeting the vision of the company are two key tasks of facility management, which has become a strategic function of the organisation.

A facility manager's duties are geared towards helping the company and its employees concentrate on their core responsibilities. They include:

- Putting in place a disaster recovery plan,
- Continuity planning, and
- Ensuring ethical business practices.

The facility management industry has gained in importance today with increasing competition and the stress on quality and cost-effectiveness.

Quality infrastructure, the ability to retain skilled employees and achieving high levels of employee satisfaction are innovative facility management practices that will contribute to an organisation's success.

Core competencies

The core competencies of facility management are about understanding how the built facilities function and support people in their work.

This means providing the right work ambience for an organisation's employees to conduct their core business activities in a cost-effective manner.

This creates a synergy between core and non-core activities, which steers the whole organisation towards achieving its vision and mission.

A growing industry

Due to the increasing stocks of built facilities, there is an increased demand for facility management professionals to enable organisations to get maximum returns from every asset within their control.

However, facility management activity needs to adhere to a set of standards. Increasing global competition and the pressure to reduce costs require a platform where know-how and other facility management techniques can be exchanged.

In the 1980s, the International Facility Management Association

in the United States developed certification for the facility management professional (FMP) and certified facility manager (CFM). These credentials are the only globally recognised credentials for facility management practitioners, and they are recognised by the British Institute of Facilities Management and the Facilities Management Association of Australia.

IFMA has led the way in establishing recognised standards of knowledge and skills critical to the profession. It prepares practitioners for the unique challenges of the profession, focusing on competencies essential to an FMP's day-to-day responsibilities.

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