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A facilities management career involves equipping organisations with a better workplace environment

THE value of facilities management (FM) is gaining recognition as its practices are being increasingly adopted by large private and government organisations in a variety of sectors, including finance, academia, commerce, industry, healthcare, the military, airport, maritime port, resorts and hospitality.

FM has emerged over the years as a result of the dynamic business environment, increasing expectations from building occupiers, advances in technology and the introduction of legal requirements. Organisations are now realising the potential of FM services that are essential to supporting the effective, efficient and economical operation of an organisation's business.

Unlike other professions, facilities management is neither a specialist nor generalist industry. Rather, it is both a "generalist specialist" profession that coordinates and integrates multi-disciplinary professions. It serves as single-source responsibility for an organisation's non-core business activities, managing its facilities and offering support services that facilitate the organisation's business.

Business advantage

Facilities represent a major investment of an organisation's resources and their running costs often account for a significant part of that organisation's expenditure.

In today's competitive business environment, the emphasis on cost reduction, product and service quality and profitability is causing organisations to expect a better return on investment on their facilities.

As such, FM is emerging as a strategic

business resource, helping organisations to achieve their objectives.

Organisations are increasingly relying on facilities management to:

- Enable them to focus on their core business activities;
- Manage risk by preventing avoidable losses and through compliance with legal requirements;
- Create value by reducing operating expenses and increasing the organisations' productivity through comfortable, secure, and safe workplaces;
- Support national goals such as safety and health standards, greening of facilities and reduction of carbon emissions; and
- Be the one-stop function to liaise with government agencies including the Housing and Development Board, the Land Transport Authority, the National Environment Agency, the National Parks Board, national water agency PUB and so on, and other agencies relating to the upkeep and improvement of workplace and built-facilities.

A stable career

Facilities management offers its professionals a stable career, as most organisational changes require corresponding changes in built-facilities or support services. FM professionals are required throughout the facilities life cycle – "first in, last out" – from conceptualising the needs of an organisation's facilities to disposing of those facilities.

Facilities management contributes to organisational performance in these areas:

- Customer and stakeholder: FM profes-



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sionals strive to create a pleasant experience through talking to customers at all levels about their workplace and service experience.

- Finance: FM professionals are tasked with achieving value-for-money delivery.
- Operational excellence: FM operations work with clients to provide workplaces that are comfortable, secure, safe and flexible to optimise efficiency and productivity.
- Innovation and learning: By continually improving ways of working and delivering services, FM supports the strategic objectives of the organisation.

What FM practitioners need

Facilities management has wide and varied functions, which differ from organisation to organisation. To succeed well in FM, practitioners need to be able to:

- Identify organisations' needs and the facilities and services that are critical in supporting the smooth operation of the business;
- Maintain and operate facilities services

at their peak performance; and

- Be proactive in improving an organisation's processes and contribute to workplace innovation.

If you have just joined the workforce or are considering transiting into facilities management as a career, you need to equip yourself with the skills and knowledge to demonstrate how FM can be a business advantage to the organisation.

Tomorrow: Becoming a successful FM professional.

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