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Part 1 of 2: Facility management

Strategic maintenance

Maintaining facilities well gives an organisation competitive advantage

FACILITY management in the past was formerly regarded as an overhead or maintenance function. Facilities were regarded as cost centres rather than assets to be managed carefully. As such, facility management was seldom considered a strategic planning function, critical to an organisation's competitive advantage.

Today, facility management is more than just a maintenance function. It has become a potential significant economic factor that adds value to the core business activities of organisations.

A growing trend

The facility management profession is relatively new, compared to other industries like architecture, engineering and project management. It was established and adopted in the United States in the early 1980s but is still in its infancy in Singapore.

Singapore is expecting to see vast changes in its built environment over the next 20 years as the population grows to a projected 5.5 million. To meet future housing, recreation, business and future economic needs, the facility management profession will have to meet global standards for infrastructure, processes and the work environment.

Managing facilities

Facility management is the man-

agement of built facilities and services that support the core business activities and the goals of an organisation.

Its functions mainly comprise maintenance operations, space management, workplace safety and health, real estate management and administrative services.

Maintenance work is often contracted out while internal staff members take care of facilities operations, supervise addition and alteration works, respond to breakdowns, manage space and carry out work orders from occupants.

Facility management aims to integrate the built facilities, their occupants and purposes in ways that enable the workplace to be safe, productive and efficient.

Facility management supports the non-core business activities of an organisation to enable it to focus on its core business activities.

The running costs of facilities account for a significant part of an annual expenditure, and can potentially be reduced through effective management.

In demand

Mega tourism projects such as The Marina Bay Sands and The Resorts World at Sentosa are due to be ready

within the next two years. Hotels, resorts, convention centres and all organisations who are in the business of generating revenue from their facilities, can safeguard not only their revenue, but also their profits, if these facilities are managed strategically.

For example, the operations and maintenance areas of facility management ensure that facilities operate at optimum condition to uphold their world-class image.

Facility management helps to boost occupancy rates, lowers utility costs, increases occupants' satisfaction, and maintains property values, and hence the bottomline.

Tomorrow: The role of the facility management professional

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Organisations which manage their facilities strategically can safeguard their profits.