FMI

Boost your efficiency
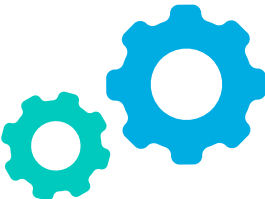
Essential time-saving tips
for facility managers

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Time saving tips for facilities managers

Facilities management is a career that keeps teams on their toes. No two days are the same, and there's a fast pace to maintain. For many organisations, business revolves around facilities, placing a huge amount of importance on the work of the FM team.

Changing expectations and requirements mean there's an ever-growing list of considerations for FM teams. For facilities managers, there often aren't enough hours in the day to meet those expectations.

Sometimes, efficiencies can hide in plain sight. It's all about working smarter, not harder.

At FMI, we speak to facilities teams across different industries every day, and have noticed some common themes when it comes to making the everyday more efficient.

In this eBook, we go over some quick wins, that you can implement within a matter of weeks to save time in the long run.

Leveraging simple technology solutions can save huge amounts of time. It might surprise you how quickly solutions can be implemented. Easy-to-use software, implemented properly, is key to creating time-saving efficiencies.

FMI Works enables facilities teams to streamline and save time with simple solutions. We believe software should make your life easier, and so focus on creating a solution that works for facilities managers and their teams.

Rethinking work requests

In facilities management, work requests make the world go round. Whether dealing with incoming requests from facility users, or processing planned maintenance works, work orders likely consume a majority of a facilities team's time.

With the amount of time work requests dominate, it makes sense that hidden within those processes are significant time saving opportunities.

Introduce a one door policy

If your team deals with large numbers of incoming work requests, the first step is to look at how those requests are received.

Generally, the more channels that facility users can use to submit requests, the harder it is to keep track of those requests. As visibility over incoming requests becomes increasingly clouded, more time is lost trying to organise, find and follow up on requests.

> By streamlining incoming work requests into one channel, you can dramatically improve the visibility over the work coming in.

Leveraging a dedicated facilities management platform is a great way to streamline incoming work requests to one platform. Not only reducing the risk that requests will be lost to flooded individual inboxes, but easily collating all received requests so the team can see them at a glance.

Bonus benefit

The one door policy is the first step in streamlining the work request process. Once this crucial step is undertaken, it creates the opportunity for further efficiencies that will save even more time. For example, by ensuring all requests are coming in the same way, it is easier to report on workloads and team output.

Empower users with templates

With facility users not necessarily engaging with the process of submitting a request regularly, it's not uncommon to receive requests devoid of key details.

This can either result in the facilities team having to go out an inspect relevant assets, or engaging in back and forth to obtain the missing details. This follow up process can result in jobs taking a disproportionately long time to resolve.

> **If the requester had known what details would be required, this problem would be significantly reduced.**

By creating templates for requests in your facilities management solution, you can empower users to submit more complete requests. This saves requesters time, by making it clear what information will be required from them, and where it should go.

Allowing users to simply snap a photo on their smartphone and fill in a simple form creates a frictionless experience on both sides of the equation.

Bonus benefit

From the perspective of the team, this speeds up the process from job request, to job completion. With less time spent on the back and forth or otherwise trying to obtain key details, you can reduce average time to completion, improving a key performance metric for the team.

Automate communications

Once a work request is submitted, requesters will be asking things like "did they get my request? Will it be worked on? What is the status of my job?"

It is natural that they'll be invested in the progress of their request, however, for the facilities team, these questions can take up more time than they should.

Simple automations for big impacts

In the absence of automation, request acknowledgement and status updates are a manual process. For teams working with high volumes of incoming requests, providing these simple communications can end up taking hours and distracting from other tasks.

> By leveraging automations within your facilities management software, these tasks can take seconds, rather than hours.

Automatic request acknowledgements help put requesters minds at ease, giving them confidence their request has gone to the right place. Within your facilities management platform, you will also be able to automate status updates to send to requesters when their job is progressed.

These automations are easy to set up, and can save your team hours that would otherwise be committed to crafting and sending emails.

Managing stakeholder expectations

Request acknowledgement is about managing the expectation of the requester. However, if that acknowledgement is sent while the risk of the request being lost is present, it can do more harm than good.

For example, consider if requests are received to individual inboxes, and the individual has auto replies on, telling requesters they will action the request. If the person in charge of that inbox falls ill, and is away for two weeks, there will be a number of requests sitting in that inbox that other team members won't be aware of.

The requesters, having received an auto-response that their request will be actioned, believe that to be true. Meanwhile, no work is done for at least the entire time that team member is away. Upon their return, they may assume those older requests were actioned, and delete the emails.

In this scenario, expectations have not been effectively managed or met, and the auto-response has done more harm than good.

Managing assets
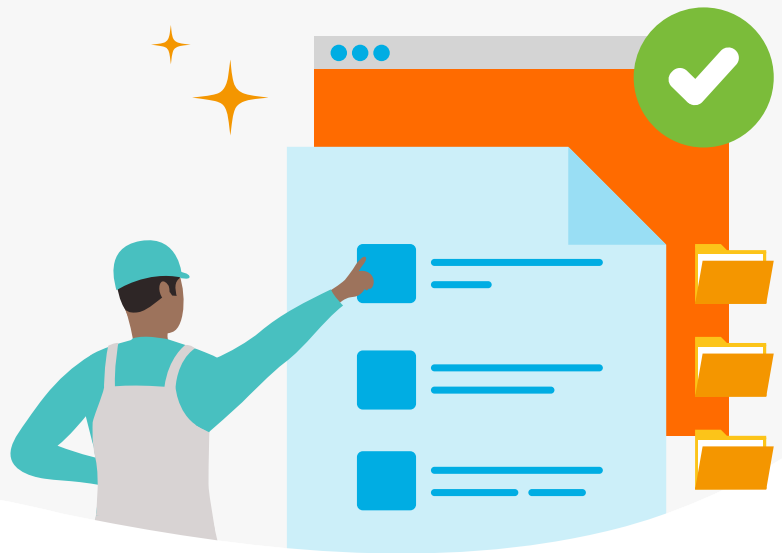
While work orders drive the team's tasks, the assets are the constant they orbit around. Keeping track of assets is a huge job, and it's easy to lose hours chasing up where an asset is, what condition it's in, and what work has been done on it.

When it comes to saving time managing assets, it's all about consolidating relevant information so it's there when you need it.

Getting the details on an asset shouldn't be like a quest for the holy grail. Teams can lose hours chasing their tails, searching for details of assets history before a decision can be made around that asset.

Systematically update asset details

Knowing what assets you have, and what condition they are in, is critical to effectively managing assets.

Collecting asset histories is a future problem, until it's not. While you might not need to access the information every day, trying to access it retrospectively can turn into an incredibly lengthy and exasperating process.

To avoid this situation, and the hours lost that come with it, the trick is to ensure the data is part of everyday processes.

By leveraging a dedicated facilities management platform to handle maintenance works, data collection is automatic. Every time a work order is created, and assigned to an asset, that work is recorded on the asset history.

What work was done, when, who did it, and what permits were required, is all available against an assets record, without having to sit down and update the record after the fact.

The next time that asset commands attention, it takes seconds to look up those crucial details like the age of the asset and how much it is costing to maintain.

These comprehensive records not only save time, but can help to support smarter decisions about asset repair, renewal and replacement which underpin your strategic asset plan.

Planned maintenance

Most facilities teams have some kind of planned maintenance schedule in place. Planned maintenance helps organisations to improve business continuity and reduces the risk of costly, time-consuming reactive fixes.

Creating, executing and updating planned maintenance schedules can take up a significant amount of time. And while the time investment is usually worth it, there are ways to reduce the time spent, by making processes more efficient.

Improve visibility

Planned maintenance is about making sure jobs that need to be done repeatedly, and on a specific schedule. The key to ensuring planned maintenance is executed as required is knowing what needs to happen, and when.

For this to happen, there needs to be a focus on visibility of the required jobs. Setting reminders in calendars, or relying on the responsible individual "just knowing" results in too much time being lost, chasing up jobs in spreadsheets, and retrospectively searching for information.

Centralising planned maintenance into a dedicated platform helps to improve visibility, with the whole team able to see what's required. Having good visibility and understanding of the work process results in reduced risk of wasting time, particularly in the absence of whoever normally performs the task.

Assign planned maintenance jobs

After creating a maintenance schedule and communicating it to the entire FM team, the next step is to delegate the work. Whether it's to the team, internal trades or other contractors, this requires work orders to be created and allocated.

With a dedicated FM solution, these work orders for planned maintenance can be automatically created, on the required schedule and frequency.

Rather than spending time putting together repeated reactive work orders, a dedicated solution handles the reminder, and the work order creation. Once these automated scheduled work orders are created, they are assigned automatically to required recipients.

Efficient contractor management

Managing contract agreements and contractors is an essential, but time-consuming part of facilities managers weeks. Contractors will be required to perform a variety of tasks on any given day, and sometimes you might be concurrently dealing with several providers or trades.

Often, certain systems will have service contracts involved, meaning only certain, approved, providers can perform any work on those assets.

The groundwork to get these contractors in to do the work is incredibly important for compliance and safety.

The right documentation, every time

Anytime a contractor sets foot on site, there are several checks that need to be conducted. Contractors must have appropriate insurance, accreditations, licences, permits, and have performed any necessary inductions.

All of this results in a lot of documentation to wade through. Teams can lose hours to a back-and-forth with the contractor, chasing up required documentation. Once that documentation is acquired, it then needs to be appropriately stored and linked to relevant work orders, assets, and contracts.

This process can be simplified and condensed into a few minutes, if leveraging a dedicated facilities management platform.

Dedicated FM solutions empower contractors to upload relevant documentation themselves—directly into their own dedicated portal. Recording all relevant details and expiry dates against their profile within the solution, ensuring a comprehensive, accurate record.

By enabling contractors to easily access required information through their portal, this helps eliminate the need for back and forth communication and chasing up missing documentation. This not only saves significant time for the facilities team but also reduces the scope for errors by eliminating the need to double-handle documentation, and thereby reduces the risk of non-compliance.

Double checking the details

Ensuring contractors hold appropriate licences, insurance, permits etc. isn't a one-and-done task. Every time they're scheduled to perform work, the expiry dates on these need to be checked.

This task might not take hours, but it is one where a time-saving is possible. Once the relevant details are in the system, it will automatically check expiry dates when work is assigned to a contractor or trade.

If the licence expiry date has passed, or is not recorded, work won't be able to be assigned until the details are rectified.

Reframe reporting

Reporting is a huge part of effective facilities management. Often, facilities teams are beholden to a number of different stakeholders, each requiring different information.

Reporting within the facilities team is about making sure everyone is equipped with the information they need to do their jobs. From making sure everyone knows what they're doing, to ensuring every team member can answer customer queries and knows which contractors are doing what, when.

Often, reports are also required for the contractors, to offer a level of visibility that encourages accountability.

Finally, there is reporting back to the business. This might be cross departmental, but more often is reporting up the line. Stakeholders want to be able to see the value the FM team brings, identify where further investment is required, and achieve a level of comfort around risk prevention.

Reporting is often considered a time-consuming task, but if the data is both accurate and accessible, it can be completed in a fraction of the usual time. In a specialized FM solution, this process can be automated, and reports can be automatically generated and emailed to the appropriate recipients.

Focus on accessibility

Reporting is about collating relevant information and communicating that in a meaningful way to relevant stakeholders. Bringing this information together is the first part of the challenge. More often than not, facilities managers are left to rely on searching for information stored in siloed repositories.

Centralising data is the first major step towards improving accessibility. By ensuring all information is stored in one place, hours can be saved in negating the need to search various sources.

> **Reporting information should be digitised, and stored in a dedicated system to make relevant information readily accessible.**

Centralising records into a cloud-based platform takes accessibility to another level. This allows team members to access relevant information from anywhere, and on any internet connected device.

Use visual formats

When it comes to communicating complicated information out, the power of visual aids cannot be understated. By presenting information in a visual dashboard, you can better engage stakeholders, by allowing complex information to be comprehended quickly.

Visually representing information can also help to communicate within the team. Dashboarding jobs allow team members to quickly and easily see what they have on, and the status of open jobs and overdue work.

Within facilities management platforms, there is usually the capability to put data quickly and easily into a visual format. By leveraging these visual formats, there's less time lost in explaining information to stakeholders, and more time available for meaningful discussions.

Automate where possible

Within your dedicated facilities management platform, you'll likely have some ability to automate regular reporting. Setting up reports will take a time investment in the short term but pays dividends in the form of time-savings in perpetuity.

These time savings can mean that you and your team are not only spending less time on reporting, but gaining better insights into facilities operations.

Rather than spending time hunting down information, translating it and then distributing— reports can be set up to automatically pull in data from a centralised repository, formatted and sent to relevant stakeholders.

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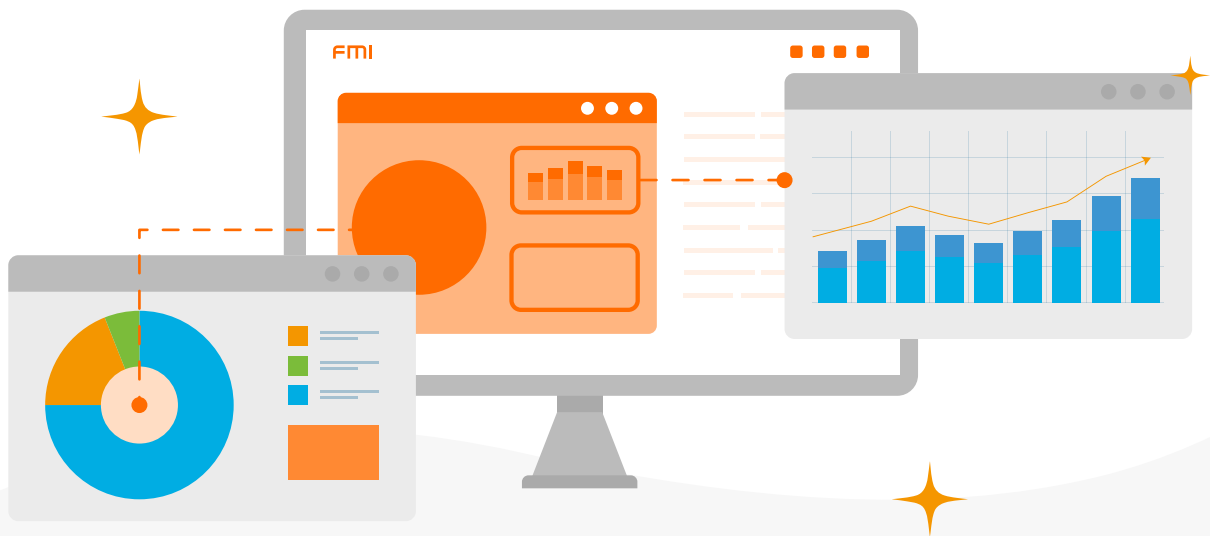
How to get started

The FMI team are experts in facilities management, with a focus on process, and making sure solutions are fit for purpose.

To learn more about how our practical but powerful software can support your organisation, speak to one of our experts today.

To access our other resources, or to learn more about us and our solutions, visit our website.

fmiworks.com