

FMI

Repairing the maintenance request process

Simple strategies to relieve common frustrations in the request process.



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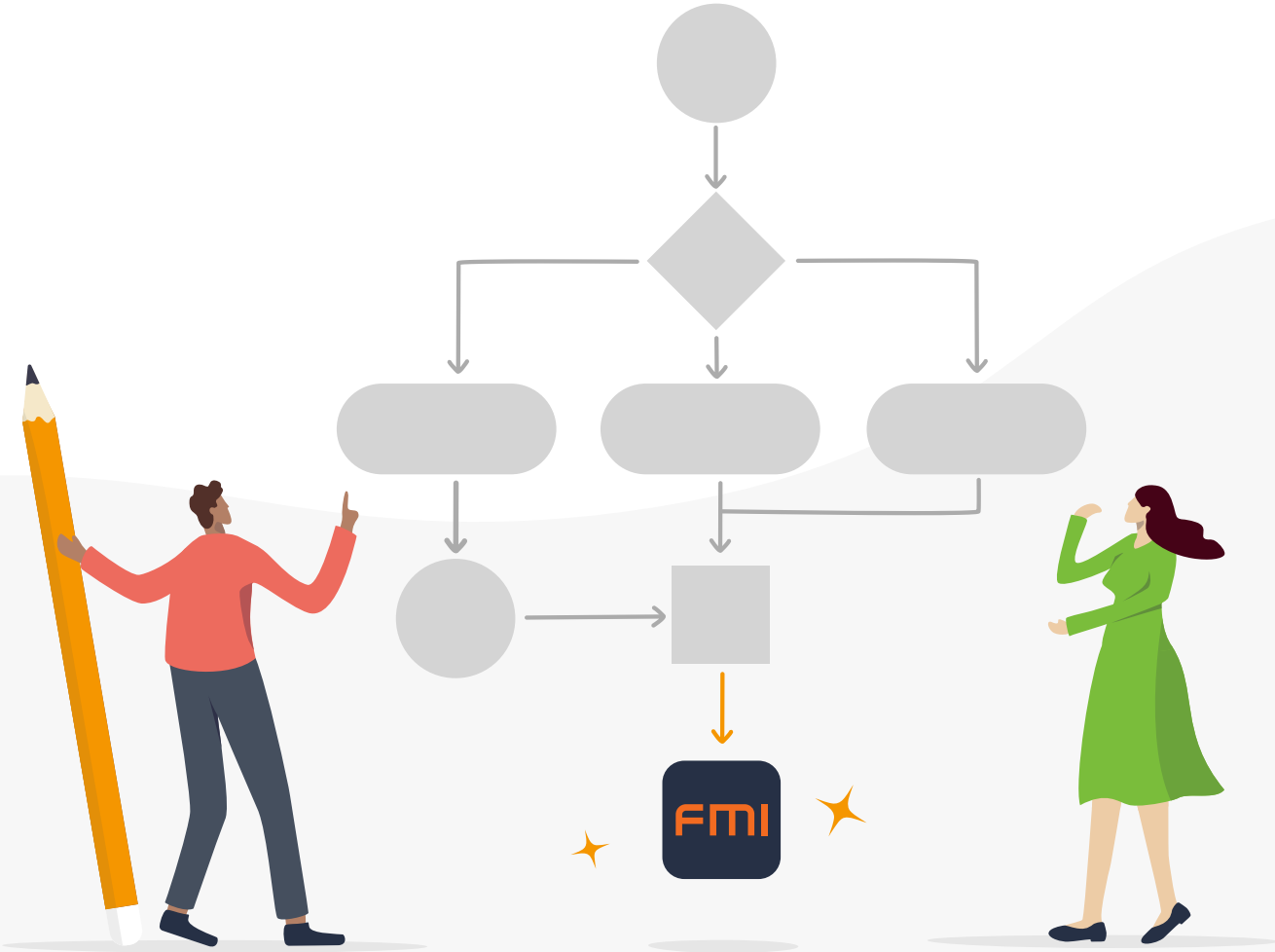
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Maintenance requests are an integral part of facilities management processes.

For many facilities teams however, manually managing maintenance requests can be a source of significant frustration; from facilities users submitting requests missing key details, to dealing with duplicate requests and constant follow up emails.

In this eBook, we'll look at how simple, easy to implement strategies can alleviate common frustrations inherent in the request process.



The importance of maintenance requests



For many facilities teams, maintenance requests comprise the majority of work orders, and dictate the work they do every day.



Making facilities functional

Facilities users need to be able to submit requests to ensure they can effectively utilise the facilities. Whether it is reporting a malfunctioning asset or just making a request to facilitate their use of the space, your facilities users need to have an open communication channel with the facilities team.



Safer spaces

It's impossible for the facilities team to immediately identify emerging hazards across the facility, you simply can't be everywhere at once. Facilities users can be your eyes on all parts of the facilities for hazard identification.

By allowing facilities users to submit requests, you allow them to alert your team when something is amiss as soon as they notice it. This helps to ensure issues are resolved quickly, before they become dangerous.



Improving service delivery

Service delivery is at the heart of good facilities management, and facilities users are the primary "customers" of the facilities team. Maintenance requests are the primary source of interaction between facilities users and the facilities team, and so feedback on requests can provide the team with important qualitative information on service delivery.

Common challenges of manual maintenance requests

Relying on manual maintenance request processes create a number of frustrations, and challenges, for facilities teams.



Requests are overwhelming

Facilities teams can often find themselves overwhelmed and frustrated when maintenance requests come in from multiple forms and channels.

In a manual process, facilities users have multiple channels through which they can make a request to the facilities team. They might send an email, phone through, or speak directly to a member of the facilities team.

When maintenance requests can come from anywhere, they become overwhelming for the team. A barrage of requests from all directions makes it difficult to quantify and prioritise the work. This then makes the team feel as though they're facing a mountain of work with no clear path.

Facilities users fail to submit requests

Facilities users need to be able to submit requests when and where they're faced with an issue. When users have to go to reception or get to a kiosk or desktop to log into a portal to log a request, there's a good chance they'll forget to do so.

The bigger the perceived barrier to submitting a maintenance request, the more likely facilities users will simply neglect to do so. This can result in an issue gradually worsening over time, necessitating a more difficult and expensive fix down the line, or worse, someone getting injured.





Requests missing key details

While the facilities team might deal with incoming requests on a daily basis, not all facilities users will submit requests regularly. The facilities user can't know what they don't know, and this often results in key details missing from their requests.

Using manual channels for the submission of maintenance requests limits the amount of guidance that can be provided to the requester. When submitting via email, the requester is faced with a blank email, and left without guidance on what details they're expected to provide.

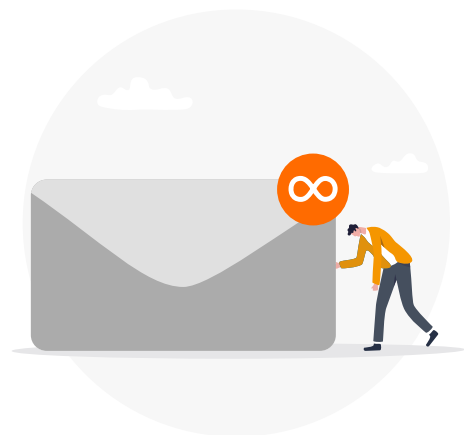
Often, this results in the facilities team having to go back to the requester to ask for additional details, or spending time physically assessing the situation themselves. This can add significant delays in progressing the request to a work order and causes frustration on both sides.

Facility users may consider their issue to be more urgent or important than it is within the context of the facilities teams priorities.

Frequent follow up emails

Often, facilities users have little to no visibility over their request once it is with the facilities team. This can result in the facilities team receiving multiple follow up emails and phone calls from requesters who are chasing a status update on their job.

While the request itself is reasonable, this can quickly become overwhelming for facilities teams, with the added administration time and lost productivity.



Lack of feedback

Completion of the work order can mean the end of the process for some facilities teams. However, when this is the case, big opportunities are missed, particularly in building better relationships with facilities users.

Facilities teams often don't receive regular feedback straight off the back of requests unless the facilities user decides to complain. This can leave facilities teams feeling unappreciated and can cause friction between different stakeholder groups in the workplace. Additionally, this makes it difficult to measure performance against meaningful service-delivery KPIs.

Opportunities for improvement



Improving your maintenance request process can do far more than help to overcome the challenges you've just read about. Introducing efficiencies in this important area can unlock new opportunities for the team, and the organisation.

- ✓ Fewer requests going missing
- ✓ Simplified request process
- ✓ Reduced chance of duplicating work
- ✓ Improved confidence in the request process
- ✓ More efficient work prioritisation
- ✓ Improved feedback loop
- ✓ Easy to respond to follow up emails

Improved visibility over works

A lack of visibility over requests is the root cause of a number of different issues that facilities teams may face. Improving visibility can help to facilitate:

- Fewer requests going missing
- Reduced risk of duplicating work
- More efficient work prioritisation
- Ease of responding to request follow ups

Fewer requests going missing

Improved visibility over requests allows the team to see what requests have been received. This is in contrast to using email or other manual channels, where requests can be lost to individual inboxes or simply forgotten about before they become a work order.

Reduced risk of duplicating work

When requests are received through multiple channels, there is scope for work to be done twice, wasting money and time for the facilities team and contractors. Through improving visibility, the team can see when a request has been received, and duplicate requests can be easily managed.

More efficient work prioritisation

When using multiple channels for maintenance requests, it can be that the louder the requester, the higher the work lands in the priority list. Working within a purely reactive mindset can also result in a habit of “last in, first served” as team members respond to requests as they come in, rather than properly triaging.

When visibility is improved, facilities managers and their team can more efficiently look at what work needs to be addressed. Having this centralised view allows work to be appropriately prioritised and assigned across the team and contractors.

Easy to respond to follow up emails

Facilities teams often find themselves frustrated by spending significant amounts of time each week responding to follow up emails from requesters. Responding to these requests often takes longer than it needs to, as team members have to follow up across the team to find the request and get a status update.

With improved visibility, team members can quickly see what requests are in progress and check their status. Having quick and easy access to that information means responding to follow up emails becomes a job that can be done in seconds.

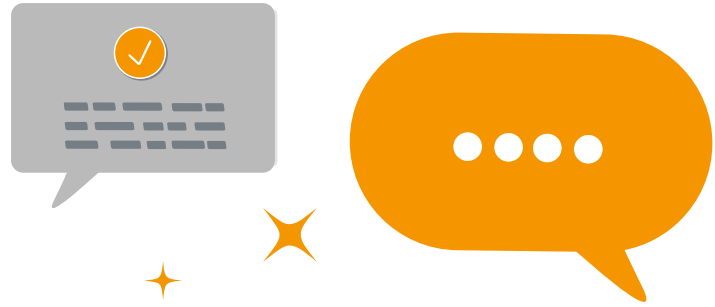
Building better relationships

The request process is the primary point of interaction between the facilities team and facilities users. The better that interaction, the more opportunity there is to build better relationships with internal stakeholders and contractors.

Rethinking the request process can help to build better relationships with facilities users by supporting:

- An easier process for logging a request
- Increased confidence that the request will be actioned
- An improved feedback loop





Simplified request process

Limiting maintenance requests to a single channel allows for visibility over incoming, open, and completed requests. With a clear view of what work is in progress it becomes possible to effectively prioritise and allocate work.

For facilities users, this reduces confusion and anxiety around the request process, creating confidence their request has gone to the right place and is being actioned.

The easier it is for facilities users to submit requests in-situ, the more likely they'll submit a request. Providing templates for facilities users helps to take the guesswork out of the request process, and ensures the facilities team receive improved, standardised requests.

If facilities users can simply snap a photo on their mobile phone and add it into a simple form directly from their mobile, they're more likely to submit requests as needs arise.

Improved confidence in the request process

A lack of visibility for the requester can compound the problem of email "ping pong". Unsure whether their request has been received, and without clear expectations of when to expect a resolution, requesters often feel compelled to follow up.

Improving the request process can help build the confidence of requesters by better managing their expectations.

Improved feedback loop

Often, facilities teams can feel like they only ever get feedback from requesters in the form of complaints or demands. Introducing an active feedback loop via a simple feedback questionnaire can help teams to gain critical insights into the performance of the team and contractors.

Without an active feedback loop, facilities teams are likely to only receive feedback when expectations have not been met. This perpetuates negativity through the interactions of the facilities team and facilities users.

Creating an active feedback loop is an important part of the request process, allowing facilities teams to evaluate satisfaction more accurately.

When using a manual maintenance request process, the only way for the team to gain feedback is to manually prompt requesters for feedback, usually over email. Usually, these emails are unstructured, which makes it difficult to aggregate and analyse feedback.

Repairing the maintenance request process



Improving the maintenance request process can help to alleviate frustrations and unlock new opportunities. By simplifying and streamlining the request process, you can reduce errors, and create a better experience for all involved.

The primary problem with leveraging multiple request channels is too many moving parts. This makes it difficult to introduce efficiencies and allows issues to quickly gain momentum and get out of control.

By utilising a dedicated facilities management software solution, like FMI Works, it is easy to simplify and streamline the request process.

Single channel for submissions

The first step to improving the maintenance request process is to provide requesters with a single channel for submitting requests. This not only helps to improve visibility over requests for the facilities team but reduces any confusion for the requester.

Terrific templates and mobile usability

Providing request templates takes the guesswork out of submitting a maintenance request. Rather than having to get to a desktop and be faced with a blank email, requesters can snap a photo on their phone and insert it into a simple request template.

This allows requesters to submit requests in seconds, once they have noticed something that requires the facilities teams attention.

By providing users with a simple template they can complete on a mobile device, you can improve the chances they'll remember to submit a request. For the facilities team, this helps to ensure the correct information is received with requests, reducing the need for email "ping pong".



Automated notifications

Automated notifications help to keep requesters informed of the status of their requests and builds their confidence in the facilities team by managing expectations.

In FMI, requesters can be automatically notified that their request has been submitted successfully. For the requester, this confirmation that their request has gone to the right place can be used to manage expectations from the outset.

Once their request has become a work order, further automatic notifications can be set up to provide requesters with status updates as their job progresses.

Active feedback loop

When work has been completed, requesters can be automatically notified that their job has been completed. Alongside this notification, teams have the option to include a prompt to the requester to supply feedback on their experience.

This helps facilities teams to better measure service delivery, empowering the team with qualitative feedback.

Often, teams only hear feedback in the form of a complaint, as requesters are less likely to provide feedback if the work is in line with expectations. Creating an active feedback loop for facilities teams unlocks valuable qualitative data that would be otherwise unavailable.

While at first teams might be hesitant to elicit feedback, this data often provides positive reinforcement to the team. This helps to boost team morale and demonstrates the value added to stakeholders within the business.



FMI

Ready to rethink your request process?

At FMI Works, we understand that accurate and accessible information is empowering for facilities teams. From alleviating everyday frustrations, to unlocking a new level of potential for your team, we are here to help.

Visit our website today to speak to our team of experts about how you can move on from manually managing work orders.



fmiworks.com

