

PRODUCTIVE REPORTING

Gary Watkins discusses the reporting mechanisms for CAFM applications and how they can be used for informed and strategic decision-making

COMPUTER AIDED FACILITIES MANAGEMENT (CAFM) is used to manage and consolidate data across all aspects of facilities management. From the helpdesk to the performance of contractors, it provides essential insight for the facilities professional into how their facilities are being run and allows benchmarking between different properties in a portfolio.

CAFM reporting has developed exponentially in the past five years in a number of ways. Gone are the days when reports only came in textual format. Instead facilities professionals can access their data in almost any way that suits them: textually or graphically, in a variety of formats, bespoke to their needs. The look and feel of reports, once standardised, is now heavily influenced and personalised by users.

Accessibility has also advanced. In the past, CAFM reports took a retrospective view of a facility or portfolio's performance and were available after the month end. But once PFI contracts were introduced into the market, that retrospective reporting was no longer enough. If a FM service provider discovered after month end that it had been hit with penalties for non-performance in certain areas, it could do little to rectify the situation. But by constantly monitoring performance with live reporting on a dashboard, the provider can adjust its service levels accordingly. This trend has started to move into the commercial market, with many large corporates demanding a similar level of performance analysis on a real-time basis.

Clients also want reporting to be easier hence there has been an increase in automated reporting with certain reports automatically being produced at certain times of a month without the need for user intervention. This can be set up to support specific reporting requirements. Others, meanwhile, can be generated at the touch of a button.

CAFM reporting is not just about analysing the performance of a FM service provider, although contractor performance and monitoring of service level agreements is an essential aspect. It gives vital understanding of the help desk performance; planned preventative maintenance and scheduled services; cost control, budgeting and forecasting; environmental monitoring such as utilities, recycling and emissions; and key performance indicators.

This type of specialised data enables facilities professionals to make informed decisions about FM strategy and direction. For example should the data show that an asset such as a boiler or chiller regularly breaks down and requires reactive maintenance visits then the FM would consider

whether he had the correct asset for this job and whether additional capital investment was justified. He would also assess the suitability of the asset's preventative maintenance regime. This could be particularly pertinent across several sites with similar assets, where the CAFM reports could compare asset performance and ascertain which assets performed the best in which environments.

CAFM reports can also help to ensure optimum staffing levels for the helpdesk and the ideal location of maintenance teams. By analysing the pattern of timing of calls to the helpdesk, the FM can ensure the correct resources are available to answer calls and then deal with the reactive maintenance query. The nature and geographic location of calls can help to ascertain whether a mobile or static maintenance team is most suitable, and if static, where they should be based to ensure that the organisation is using its facilities team most effectively.

This type of CAFM data could help to reduce maintenance call-outs thereby cutting both costs and carbon emissions. For example, the helpdesk operator receiving a reactive maintenance call for a specific site could pull off a quick report from the CAFM system on the planned preventative maintenance regime for that facility. The decision could then be taken to combine a reactive maintenance visit with a PPM visit if appropriate.

CAFM reports on an organisation's room bookings can also analyse which types of meeting facilities are most popular, what times of day and days of the week are the busiest and which departments are using the rooms the most. This would help the FM team to ensure the meeting room provision is correct and supporting the business but not wasteful. It would feed into any future plans for refurbishments or new build projects. Reports about departmental use also allows for accurate recharging. More importantly, data is also available for no-shows, a constant source of frustration for many facilities managers. The same type of reports can be down loaded for car-parking use and hot desks, again providing the FM with a detailed report on how the facility is being used and when.

Overall CAFM reports transform operational data into meaningful information which provides visibility of FM performance against KPIs, delivers all stakeholders with visibility into performance, drives process improvement, delivers financial control and long-term cost savings, supports environmental strategies and identifies trends and relationships to support future FM strategy.

● Gary Watkins is Group Managing Director of Service Works Group



Gary Watkins

