**Managing and Interpreting FM Data Made Easy**

The wheels of the FM industry are driven by data. A comprehensive skillset is required by the facilities management team to carry out the work, but without having a handle on the significant amount of information around the building, its contents and resources, FMs cannot perform at a high level. Recent [research conducted by Service Works](http://www.swg.com/blog/fm-software-survey-summary-how-is-technology-affecting-fm/) and i-FM.net across the UK facilities management industry revealed that almost half of respondents (42%) felt that managing and interpreting data was one of the most important challenges facing FMS in 2016. Furthermore, 80% of CAFM (Computer-Aided Facilities Management) software users stated that the main benefit was the enhanced reporting it offered. So how does a CAFM system drive forward an FM team?

**Data vs Information**

Many facilities managers use Excel to keep records of their buildings, assets, equipment and work requests. On the surface, Excel is an easy to use, low cost and accessible solution, but for the purposes of FM, it has many limitations. Records stored like this are just data until they are processed to become useful information. Only then can a facilities manager gain insight and make informed decisions. Calculations can be conducted in Excel, but without safeguards in place to protect the data from accidental change, deletion or error, the results produced can be unreliable and unauditable.

Using a CAFM system to manage data is a two part process. Firstly, with a system such as [Service Works’ QFM](http://www.swg.com/products/qfm/), the user is presented with an intuitive, easy to use screen, customised to the business’ requirements. Essentially this means that they only see fields specific to their task, streamlining the process and saving time. The interface can also limit the type of information entered to prevent errors, for example through intelligent drop-down menus, and it also prevents access to the main FM database in order to maintain data integrity and security.

These measures help ensure that the data captured is error free from the outset, which is then transformed into meaningful information by the powerful reporting capabilities of a CAFM system.

 **Powerful, flexible reporting**

While Excel is a familiar tool for many, manipulating the data in meaningful ways can still be a chore. Creating basic pie charts and graphs using the wizard is straightforward, but only provides a surface level of information. CAFM software allows you to drill down deeper into the data, using a set of over 400 standard templates for real-time performance monitoring, trend analysis and KPI / SLA management. QFM facilities, space and asset management software comes equipped with a comprehensive array of dashboard, text based and graphical reports to ensure that vital business information is readily available to key staff. Service Works has also created the option for integration with Excel, providing a live link to QFM. This means that an Excel workbook of templates and user-defined reports always reflect an accurate snapshot of the business, without needing to download new data or recreate new graphs.

With immediate access to accurate information in a user-friendly format, a clear insight can be gained on which to base managerial decisions. As well as informing business strategy and direction, the information can be used to identify cost-savings (cost-effective maintenance schedules, streamlined stock control and job costings) and time savings (better resource management, efficient work scheduling and automated reporting and distribution ) to name a few.

For more information about how a CAFM system can benefit your organisation, call us on 020 8877 4080 or request our complimentary white paper, [*Excel to FM Software: Making the Transition*](http://www.swg.com/white-paper/excel-to-fm-software-making-the-transition/).