SERVICE WORKS GLOBAL
ADDNODE GROUP

ACS International Schools

Case Study

Project:

To implement a comprehensive and flexible facilities management software solution to control reactive maintenance requests across multiple state-of-the-art educational sites.

Objectives:

Manage the maintenance of the prestigious and large estate, supporting a team of in-house and external contractors.

Results:

Centralized information and accurate visibility of KPI performance, resulting in improved administration of maintenance management, enhanced service delivery and insight into future FM resource requirements.

World-class Educational Excellence

Since its formation in 1967, ACS International Schools has firmly established a reputation as an academic leader. Founded to meet the needs of both local and global families, ACS International Schools educates over 3,400 students aged between 2 and 18, from more than 70 countries across 4 campuses, 3 of which are located in Greater London, UK and one in Doha, Qatar, which opened in 2011.

Offering state-of the-art educational, arts and sports facilities, coupled with student-centred philosophy and values, ACS International Schools prides itself on the academic and personal success of its students.

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With outstanding exam results in two world renowned programmes, the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the US College Board Advanced Placement Course, many ACS graduates have gone on to study at leading universities across the globe.

Centralizing Reactive Maintenance

The responsibility for managing ACS' extensive educational facilities lies with Chris Barlow, head of facilities at ACS International Schools, and his team of just over 100 staff. Based at ACS' largest campus, in Cobham, UK, Barlow oversees both planned and preventative maintenance at all 4 schools, supported by an on-site facilities manager at each campus. With the exception of the Doha site, where ACS partners with an external FM contractor, almost all preventative maintenance work is carried out by ACS' team of in-house facilities engineers.

Since mid 2013, the management of reactive maintenance activity has been centrally controlled using QFM software from Service Works Global, which was implemented to replace a manual process, as Barlow explains, "ACS recognized the need for a computerized facilities management application, which would allow us to effectively manage our building assets and ensure the effective control of breakdown maintenance across our campuses within defined service levels. We needed a system that offered comprehensive functionality yet at the same time was intuitive for our staff to use. It was also essential that the software could be configured to meet our needs without involving large amounts of development time or additional cost."

Following a selection process during which several FM systems were evaluated, QFM was chosen and the software was implemented on time and in budget within a short timeframe of just 4 months.

Now designated staff at each campus, such as school secretaries and departmental managers can access the QFM system via the web, allowing them to quickly and easily enter details of maintenance requests. This information is processed by the facilities team, who prioritize the request and assign an activity to the most appropriate engineer. Specialist breakdown requests, such as mechanical and electrical repairs are carried out by an external FM contractor, who has direct access to QFM, enabling the contractor to receive and update jobs directly within the system, optimizing service levels and ensuring effective communication between ACS' facilities team and their third-party partner. Within the first six weeks of implementation alone, QFM managed over 1200 maintenance requests.

Training Support

Key to the successful adoption of the QFM system was the training provided for ACS staff, as Oren Gershon, facilities manager at ACS International Schools, Cobham, who was responsible for the implementation of QFM across the organisation, explains: "It was essential that QFM could fit smoothly into our business and that our staff could quickly feel confident using the system, to ensure that we reaped maximum benefit from day one." Training for key users was provided by Service Works Global at the company's dedicated training facility, with supplementary end user training delivered at each ACS campus, supported by Service Works' consultants. "The project support and training we received from Service Works was excellent." says Gershon.

> "Service Works' training consultant was highly professional and knowledgeable, and was able to effectively support our staff as they gained proficiency in using QFM."

KPI Performance

One of the primary objectives for the implementation of QFM was the need to manage KPIs (key performance indicators), which define the level of service delivery provided by the facilities department, and provide the ACS board of directors with critical insight into the performance of the facilities team. Barlow explains, "In the past there were no defined KPIs, which on occasions resulted in a lack of prioritization of tasks. Since installing QFM, we are able to operate to very strict performance criteria, to ensure that the facilities team provides an optimum level of service for students and staff."

Each maintenance request logged within QFM has a designated response and rectification time, which is driven by the severity of the incident and the location within the campus.

> "QFM gives us the intelligence to set KPIs, to understand how we are performing,"

Barlow continues:

"At the touch of a button we can see how many maintenance jobs are outstanding at each campus and who is responsible for rectifying issues. Whilst it has sometimes been a challenge to meet the KPIs that we set, QFM allows us to identify patterns and show the volume of work that the facilities department handles. It provides accurate insight into performance and enables us to improve the efficiency of the FM team."

Details of costs incurred for reactive maintenance activity are tracked and monitored within QFM, providing ACS' facilities managers with the tools to fully manage FM budget and expenditure, as Barlow explains, "QFM allows us to see how much money we are spending in in-depth detail. This is powerful information which helps us to determine long-term FM strategy and direct resource to where it is best spent."

It has also enabled the facilities teams to target areas where large volumes of maintenance requests were being raised in order to tackle underlying issues that may have not been visible.

Apple-Based

ACS International Schools prides itself as a leading educational institution with a strong technology focus, incorporating innovative technological tools to facilitate effective study. Students have access to Apple Mac desktop computers and iPad tablet devices and many classrooms are equipped with Apple TVs, which enable teachers and students to share work on a large screen, via iPads, enabling interactive learning. All computers on every ACS campus are Apple-based; including those used by the facilities team, which provided a challenge when selecting the new FM system, as Barlow explains, "We found that many FM software applications did not operate well on Macs. As a web-based solution, QFM performs effectively on Apple iPad devices, and I would certainly recommend the system for companies that are Mac-based. In fact, we are currently running a trial of the QFM Mobile solution, by equipping our engineers with access to the system via iPads." This will allow ACS' in-house contractors to quickly update jobs on the move, via an intuitive user interface, which automatically optimizes for use on tablet devices.

Preventative Maintenance

In addition to evaluating QFM Mobile, ACS International Schools has immediate plans to further extend its usage of Service Works' software. Within the next six months, QFM will be used to manage all planned maintenance across ACS' 3 UK campuses, replacing a spreadsheet-based system. QFM will provide ACS' facilities managers with graphical tools to review, forecast and optimize planned activities including maintenance, health and safety schedules and warranty expiry dates. Asset reliability reports inherent in QFM will provide detailed analysis of equipment performance for effective maintenance planning and supporting repair or replacement decisions.

"One of the main reasons for implementing QFM was to streamline preventative maintenance," states Barlow. "Whilst we currently meet all obligations in terms of compliance, it is our goal to ensure our assets are in the best condition they can be, to enable ACS International Schools to provide first-class educational facilities."

ACS' facilities team has conducted a full asset survey of building fabric, mechanical & electrical plant, the details of which will be imported into QFM. The software will be used to manage a new PPM (planned preventative maintenance) regime, based upon SFG20 specifications for building standards and aligned with the current condition of ACS' estate. Barlow continues, "QFM already provides a significant amount of intelligence in terms of reactive maintenance. From a PPM perspective, the system will bring the assurance and auditability that we are conducting the appropriate levels of maintenance needed to effectively maintain our equipment, minimize breakdowns and ensure statutory compliance. Historical breakdown data will allow us to determine how many hours we need to allocate to planned maintenance tasks and ensure the resources we employ are fully aligned with level of maintenance we have to deliver. I am confident that QFM will enable effective PPM task scheduling and deliver levels of cost efficiency in terms of targeting resource spend than we have ever had before."

Future Focus

Following the implementation of QFM PPM functionality across the UK sites, ACS International Schools is intending to roll out the system to manage planned and reactive maintenance at its Middle East campus in Doha.

The facilities teams have also be able to pick up reactive cleaning and portering requests within QFM from the end users which enables the teams to manage the in house resources more effectively. Ongoing from this, the QFM Room Bookings module is also being evaluated to replace a paper based room management system and to centralize event planning across the campuses.

Barlow concludes, "ACS International Schools has invested significantly in facilities management in order to ensure the continued provision of outstanding education for all of our students. QFM represents a vital part of that investment and the software forms the cornerstone of our FM operation. QFM has allowed us to improve service levels to end users and importantly allows us to monitor our own performance in order to support cost-effective decision making and drive future FM strategy."