



# IN A BETTER SPACE

Following the launch of Service Works Group's latest White Paper, *How Strategic Space Management can Benefit your Business*, Tomorrow's FM brings you some of the report's key insights.

Whether corporate office space is owned or rented, effective management of that space is vital to every organisation. It allows the FM team to help the company to meet its business and operational needs; to attract and retain staff; to create and maintain its brand and culture; to achieve its sustainability objectives through reducing its carbon footprint; and to drive the strategic direction of the organisation through efficient FM.

## SPACE MANAGEMENT IS IMPORTANT

The benefits of taking a strategic approach to space management are numerous and include: improved space efficiency; reduction in vacant space; better management of office expansion and reduction; improved staff productivity; improved communication; operational cost savings; improved compliance; and better strategic planning for the future.

An organisation with well-managed space can respond quickly as situations change, adjusting to business expansion and shrinkage, efficiently managing departmental moves and changes, and ensuring the space available is also used to its optimum efficiency, saving money. A well-managed space ensures a more productive, and usually efficient, workforce.

Over the past few years, we have seen an ongoing reduction in the amount of space per person, thanks largely to the introduction of open plan and agile working, and the creation of more space for collaboration, together with advances in information and communications technology which allow people to work anywhere. This also means that they rely less on the space made available by the organisation, and more on the technology itself.

At the same time, there is much greater awareness among occupiers of the relationship between space efficiency and cost of occupation, and a desire to reduce energy use, both as a cost to the business and to improve sustainability. The economic downturn has ensured that organisations use their assets – and space is a long-term asset – more efficiently.

## WHAT IS STRATEGIC SPACE MANAGEMENT?

A major part of the issue when it comes to space management is understanding the space available. The FM team within some major organisations simply don't know how many buildings they have in their property portfolio, let alone how many floors or desks, and how many people those buildings support. Many

organisations use space management software to enable them to keep track of, and monitor, their space.

## BUT IN ORDER TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE SPACE, IT MUST BE:

- Measured in a consistent way within the organisation to ensure the FM is comparing like with like across the property portfolio;
- Categorised in a consistent and detailed way so the organisation understands how it uses the space;
- Allocated consistently and that information is recorded accurately and in real-time.

A business which manages its space poorly can face serious consequences. Too much space and the business will be paying rent, rates and bills unnecessarily, too little space and the organisation could



find its daily operations hampered and any growth impeded. Poorly-managed space can adversely affect the organisation's sustainability objectives, negatively affect people's productivity and result in an inefficient and ineffective organisation.

## SUCCESSFULLY MANAGING A MOVE

Workplaces are dynamic places, constantly responding to organisational change. Rigid, functional departments have given way to project-based, customer-facing teams. For FMs, this can mean an almost constant re-planning and allocation of office space.

The complexity of office churn can be reduced by adopting universal space planning standards, standardising furniture layouts (so that you move people, not desks) and adopting IT systems that allow people to log in to phones and servers from any location.

However, strategic space management dictates that floors or entire buildings need to be closed as the business expands or reduces, rationalises multiple locations, leases expire, and departments or teams need to move location to ensure the space is being used effectively and in line with corporate goals.

A key factor in the success of any move is having up-to-date occupancy data. Ensuring that the FM team knows there are x people in the accountancy team on x floor, will avoid surprises on the day of the move.

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Software has a key role to play throughout the move process. It can be used to assess the suitability of a new building or the feasibility of a particular move and can produce blocking and stacking plans to help to determine the most efficient 'fit' for teams or departments with the space available. Users can also carry out scenario planning across different floors and buildings, as well as run audits to see how much space is available. FMs can also set up business rules on software systems when planning a move. So, for example, if there's a requirement to have a minimum number of first

aiders or fire wardens on one floor, the software will alert you if you try to move one of them.

## BENEFITS OF MOVE MANAGEMENT

Taking a strategic approach to move management can be the difference between a meticulously-executed relocation where business downtime is almost zero and a chaotic move which has a negative impact on business productivity. By managing moves correctly, an organisation will ensure that office churn is kept to a minimum and people are not moved unnecessarily, which affects their productivity and increases FM costs. Finally, there are numerous benefits to the organisation overall in having a strategic approach to move management. With real-time, current occupancy data, an organisation can use a move to adopt a more flexible or agile working pattern, allowing employees to work flexibly by time or location.

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This article is based on a new guide from Service Works Group, 'How Strategic Space Management can Benefit your Business'. To receive your complimentary copy, email [info@swg.com](mailto:info@swg.com) or call +44 (0)20 8877 4080.