



Fat Face

Case Study

Project:

Implement a centralised CAFM solution to support effective facilities, property and contractor management.

Objectives:

Streamline the management of reactive and planned maintenance in order to optimise operational efficiency, ensure a safe shopping environment and maintain a strong retail brand.

Results:

Better control of maintenance jobs and improved contractor performance, driven by web-based “self service” tools, resulting in significant cost and efficiency savings.

QFM Software - Supporting a Leading High Street Clothing Brand

Leading British high street clothing brand, Fat Face, has a distinctive brand with an avid following of customers who purchase its products as much for their life outside 9-5 image as for their fashion appeal. With a portfolio of 195 stores across the UK and a thriving on-line retail and catalogue business, it comes as no surprise that despite tough economic conditions, Fat Face is continuing to expand. With another 15 stores scheduled to open in the UK this year, it also operates stores in Ireland and the Channel Islands.

Upon arrival at Fat Face's UK head office in Hampshire, 'Fat Base', its 'life is out there' philosophy is unmistakable. With a Fat Face branded Volkswagen camper van on one side of reception and a mock Fat Face shop on the other, it is the type of organisation where no one wears a suit and its office canteen, the 'Fat Shack', is buzzing with music. Without doubt the organisation's working environment exudes great fun.

However staying ahead of the retail game and creating strong brand appeal is not without its challenges. For the Property department, the outdoor look and feel of each store creates demanding fit out projects for them to manage. The other challenging aspect is controlling the maintenance for a growing portfolio of outlets; ensuring consistency of brand, upholding the experience for the customer whilst adding value to the business.

In order to manage its head office accommodating 300+ people and its portfolio of stores, Fat Face has implemented a centralised help desk solution to control the organisation's Property and Facilities Management department. Up until 2006, maintenance and repairs for stores were carried out at a local level and each branch used its own service providers. As a result, there was no central record of the work being carried out at each store or visibility of committed expenditure.

Centralising Services

A decision was taken to centralise services through a help desk team at Fat Base, supported by a facilities management software application to optimise the organisation's operational efficiency. Having evaluated the market for a suitable software solution, Fat Face selected QFM software from Service Works Group, because it combined comprehensive property and facilities management functionality. "We wanted to be able to manage the property database (lease renewals, tenant / landlord responsibilities etc.) alongside of the maintenance of the stores," explains Rob Moore, the Property Manager for Fat Face. "QFM was uploaded with Fat Face's approved contractors and the software used to issue reactive and planned maintenance work. With visibility of jobs being raised and completed, QFM enables us to reconcile and manage expenditure and the information feeds directly into our finance system, so that we are confident that the cost of jobs match their estimates and that committed costs are in line with budgets," he says.

Currently the stores can view their own maintenance activity over the web; however Fat Face is also going to use QFM to enable stores to log maintenance jobs over the web and allow contractors to have access to the system (in order to log jobs and close them down) resulting in reduced paperwork and improved timeliness.



“This will enable us to manage the progress of jobs more effectively and view the jobs on the system in real time. It also means that store staff can spend their time on customer service & sales rather than doing administration,” explains Rob Moore.

“We have found that QFM facilitates improved communication and efficiency. The more information contractors have, the quicker they can turn jobs around.”

Optimising Contractor Performance

In order to ensure that the contractors perform to a high standard when working in the store, Fat Face has implemented customised QFM worksheets that incorporate a brief job satisfaction survey for the store manager to sign (happy, moderate or unhappy) before the job is closed off. This information is also reconciled against the contractor performance data that is held in QFM to ensure complete contractor satisfaction.

“QFM has helped us to put a sound structure in place to manage contractors and overview their performance,” comments Rob Moore. Fat Face currently uses around five or six contractors to deal with day to day maintenance activities and QFM provides Fat Face with the facility to assign trades to contracts, put hourly rates on the system, manage contractors and their estimates and report on contractor performance. “It helps to get rush jobs done more easily and ensures that the relevant contractor is allocated to the right store,” explains Rob Moore. “Cost is always important, but our ethos is to be passionate about our customers, so stores operating and looking their best is more critical.”

Managing Assets

With a solution to manage planned and reactive maintenance, QFM also provides Fat Face with the capability to effectively manage assets. The software identifies and analyses the elements that affect reliability, servicing and repair. It highlights the most cost effective method of maintaining an asset and evaluates the true operating cost of an asset over a period of time. This links into QFM’s Health and Safety module, so that Fat Face can ensure that they are meeting health and safety compliance regulations (i.e. fixed wiring tests, annual gas certificates etc.). They currently manage health and safety by employing health and safety experts, who inspect the stores and any relevant jobs are then logged on QFM and managed as a reactive maintenance activity.

“QFM provides us with a scalable solution that is growing with the organisation; both in terms of users and functionality. There is still a lot more valuable functionality that we plan to implement,” comments Rob Moore. For example, in the future by using QFM’s Event Director tool, we will be able to view critical real time event information through just one screen and via a coded traffic light system, see jobs that are approaching their deadline and those that are overdue. This will provide Fat Face with a portfolio view of critical operational data supporting responsive management decisions.

“QFM ensures that we keep all our property and facilities information in one place. We have instant access to historical events so that we can now make informed decisions with regards to repair or replacement for assets and accurately determine life cycle costings.”

Rob Moore concludes:

“QFM undoubtedly makes our job easier.”