



STEPS

TO BUILD AN EFFECTIVE
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT TEAM

INTRODUCTION

No matter how good a facilities manager you might be, it's never easy to go it alone. Facilities management, like any other line of work, is best handled with a team of capable professionals by your side. That being the case, you should learn how to empower your facilities team to be innovative, collaborative and best-in-class. This will require a variety of skills - including leadership, vision, careful planning and creativity. In this whitepaper, we'll explore the six steps that will take your team to the next level.

1. BEGIN WITH EFFECTIVE COACHING

Strong leadership is the first step toward building a strong team. If you want your group to work together effectively, that effort must begin with you, the facilities manager. By coaching your team effectively, you can guide them on the path to success.

According to a recent FMLink paper on effective coaching skills, one of the most important skills for a good coach is the willingness to put team members first. This means looking out for their interests, helping them develop their skills, crediting them for their triumphs and not chastising them too hard for their failures.

Training and development are key components of the team-building process. Your objective shouldn't just be to accomplish the facilities team's short-term goals - it should also be to help your team members improve throughout their careers. Whether it's learning a previously unfamiliar aspect of facilities management or tackling daunting new technology, a good leader shouldn't be afraid to push team members to improve.

Effective leadership includes being willing to "walk the walk" as well as "talk the talk." If facilities managers take the initiative to work harder and take on more difficult projects, that mindset will rub off on other team members. At this point, FMs can begin to delegate more tasks to their most hardworking, ambitious employees.

2. SET GOALS AND DEVISE PLANS

To succeed in facilities management, you need to have clear goals and a plan for how to achieve them. FMLink cites Richard Beckhard, a respected authority on organization development, who believes that setting goals and priorities is the first of the four main purposes of team building.

The other three are related: Second, facilities management leaders should analyze the way work is allocated and performed. Third, they should examine the norms, decision-making and communication dynamics among the group. Fourth, they should look at the relationships between group members and how they affect the completion of team goals.

Good teams are made up of unique members, all with their own different strengths and weaknesses. When looking to achieve over-arching goals, effective leaders make sure they're playing to all of their employees' strengths. Perhaps one worker's strong point is planning, while another's is organization, and another is adept with technology. An effective manager will make sure that each person plays the right role to help the team meet its objectives.

Beckhard also advises that team-building workshops, sometimes conducted by company trainers or outside consultants, can help promote greater cooperation and communication among the group. Team members can engage in trust exercises, conflict role playing sessions and interactive games in an effort to work together more proficiently. This will set them on their way toward meeting every goal.



Team-Building workshops help promote greater cooperation and communication among the group

3. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Strong collaboration requires strong communication. In order to work together, facilities management team members must be able to speak cordially to one another and make plans together.

According to the APWA Reporter, effective communication is one of the most important components of team-building. Hildo Hernandez, former general manager of Facilities Operation Services in Los Angeles, believes that communicating well can set off a positive chain reaction - the team will perform efficiently, customers will take notice and a strong reputation will build over time.

Hernandez explained that in his workplace, making a conscious effort to improve communication had a clear effect on the performance of his facilities management team.

“That action was a communication bridge that ‘saved our bacon’ in meeting our self-sufficiency and retaining our service,” Hernandez stated. “Team members communicated by exchanging ideas and feelings, and encouraging cooperation and ongoing improvements. As time passed, the team started receiving positive feedback from customers. The feedback energized us and gave us the motivation to win at all costs.”

Good communication is important not just internally, between members of the team, but also externally, with customers. By working together with the end users of their facilities, FM teams can help those patrons customize their services, empowering them to better meet their specific needs.

4. BUILD CREDIBILITY AND TRUST

Credibility and trust are both vital pieces of the puzzle, but building either one will inevitably be a long-term process. Team members won't come in trusting each other from day one, but they can build relationships over time by collaborating together more and more.

The best way to build credibility is to honor commitments. Whenever a facilities management team makes a promise - either a promise between team members, or to a customer - keeping that promise is absolutely vital. If the team can follow through consistently, it will enhance the group's reputation; if not, it can be difficult to recover from the setback.

As for trust, it's important that the team develop it for everyone equally. All members of the team, regardless of their position, age or longevity, deserve to be trusted by their teammates. Doing so will help build team unity.

Hernandez says that at the Los Angeles County Facilities Operation Services offices, trust among team members was a key agent for team improvement.

"We embraced each other as a team and made changes with a purpose to reach a desired outcome," he explained. "Team members learned to be leaders and rely on each other because we built and maintained credibility. We took the initiative, risk and challenge necessary to develop methods, processes, practices and desired outcomes to build a championship team."



5. BUILD THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

Different teams thrive in different environments. It's dependent upon personnel - individual team members have their own preferences for what locales work best for being productive. An effective facilities manager should be able to identify the working environment that works best for the team.

First, there are the physical aspects of the environment to consider. Some teams will prefer to work in a loud, wide-open meeting room. This way, they can share their ideas openly, and everyone has the chance to speak out. Others might prefer peace and quiet so they can hear themselves think. These team members might be happier in a quiet "study room"-type environment, like on you'd see in a library. It's the manager's job to find the location that works best for the majority of the group.

On top of the physical side, there's also the intangible effect of the office environment. According to Brainstorming.uk, there's a certain type of "creative environment" that helps teams thrive. It's environment where new ideas are appreciated and listened to, and experimental methods are encouraged. Each individual team member should have the freedom to work in whatever way is most comfortable for them.

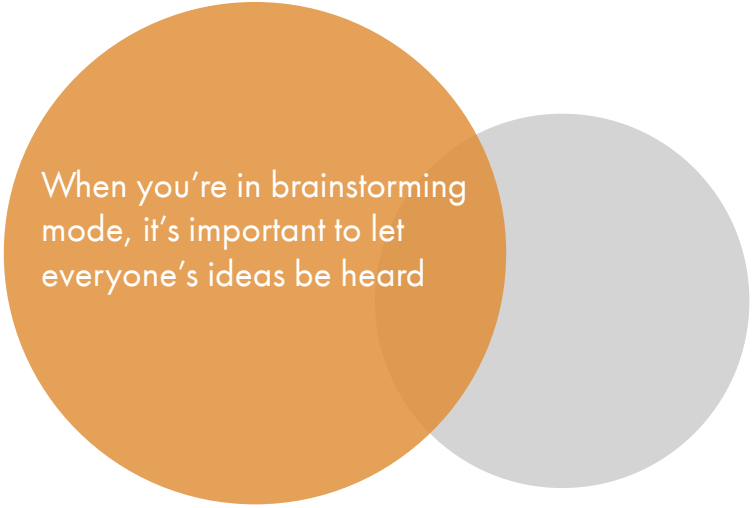
Crafting a work environment for a facilities management team can be tricky, because there's no one cookie-cutter approach that will work for every team. Managers may have to experiment a little bit to find the environment that works best for their employees.

6. INVEST TIME IN BRAINSTORMING

It's no secret that you'll need to brainstorm together a lot to find the right ideas. When you're in brainstorming mode, it's important to let everyone's ideas be heard. Even if some team members might have doubts about someone's suggestions, it's important to hear them out. In other words, the best brainstorming environment is a "no-judgment zone."

According to the Columbus Writing Examiner, it's important to stay away from judgment when gathering ideas in a group setting. Author Clarissa Wilson believes you should share as many ideas as possible to start, then whittle down to the most promising ones later on.

"If you are working in a group brainstorming session, do not judge anyone else's ideas," Wilson advised. "Judging someone else for their ideas can really mess up the group brainstorming session. If they think that someone will judge them, they will not share their own ideas. In the group brainstorming session, you want to get as many ideas flowing as possible. Let everyone share their ideas and then hone them down to the best ones."



When you're in brainstorming mode, it's important to let everyone's ideas be heard

CONCLUSION

If you're the manager of your organization's facilities, there's no doubt you have considerable skills. You wouldn't be in your position if not. But even the best facilities managers can benefit from capable help. The strongest FMs are not autocrats - they're true leaders who know how to get the best out of a team.

By adopting the above practices in team leadership - including coaching, planning, communication, credibility, trust and more - you can make sure your entire department will thrive.



1210 W Clay St.
Houston, TX 77019
Phone: 713. 526. 1029

info@iofficecorp.com

www.iofficecorp.com

ENJOYED THIS WHITE PAPER? PLEASE SHARE:

