

Health Check for your FM organization

5 Steps to creating a leading organization



White Paper



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WHAT IS A HEALTH CHECK?



A health check is critical to your success. It tells you whether your FM operations are as efficient and effective as possible and identifies things you can do to enable you to serve your corporation's core needs better.

This is especially the case if your FM department part of a larger organization whose core business isn't Facilities Management. Managing the facility department of a large organization puts you at a disadvantage over an organization whose sole business is facility management and a Health Check can put you on an even footing.

As the FM department of a corporation, you have less opportunity for exposure to other methods, procedures and latest practices in FM since you don't have peers in your organization to interact with and learn from. Also, your supervisors and other senior members of your organization don't have knowledge and experience in your profession they can share with you or provide guidance for. You are the sole champion and sole knowledge source for FM in your organization

WHY DO A HEALTH CHECK?

A Health Check tells you whether your organization is efficiently and effectively delivering the services and results your Corporation needs for its Core Business success.

Simply put, a Health Check is used to compare how you are doing against benchmarks that include leading practices.

A Health Check should be objective and measurable. It provides you with a non-judgmental comparison of your specific organization structure, systems, access to expertise, service delivery models, practices and procedures, systems, information and functionality.

The comparison is typically with practices used by leading organizations and gives you the information to assess whether your practices match your organizations requirements and priorities or whether other practices should be carefully assess and considered for implementation.

A key element of a Health Check is to take into account the specific needs and objectives of your organization. After all, a leading practice used by one organization may not be appropriate or suitable for your organization.

It should deliver clear, easily actionable information you can use to identify and prioritize strategies for your operational delivery of Facility or Property Management services. You can do a Health Check regardless of the size of your organization or your responsibilities and scope.

HOW CAN I DO A HEALTH CHECK?



Conducting a Health Check on your operations involves a number of different components. It's important not to simply conduct a superficial assessment that may lead you towards initiatives that don't match your company's strategic objectives. Implementing leading practices just because someone else is, or making changes because basic benchmarking indicates you should can be counter productive.

This is the main problem most Facility Managers face. To know whether you are doing the right things, you need to know what your corporation's *Core Business* requires and then compare how you deliver it with others. Comparing is not easy. It takes time and must be done carefully to avoid incorrect comparisons that lead you to conclusions that are not right for your organization.

To know whether you are doing the right things, use a three step process.

1 Do some benchmarking with available industry comparisons to get a sense of areas where you should look at closer.

2 Use a leading practices checklist (like the one provided below) which provides a short fact based review against an extensive list of practices in major groupings along with a short summary for each of the groups. Assess the high level aspects of your operations from a process and procedures perspective to identify areas where you may be lagging and should focus your attention.

3 Once you have identified areas that need your attention, do an evaluation of these items in detail to determine what you are doing. Then, compare this with other organizations, including your peers, and identify processes, procedures, techniques and systems they are using that you aren't and should adopt. Look at resources, systems and processes. When doing this evaluation, consider your organization's needs and priorities as a starting point for change.



When doing an evaluation assessment, remember that a leading practice used by one company may not be the best practice for yours. It depends on many factors including the size of your organization and your responsibilities.

The advantage of a three-step process is that the first, simpler step enables you to quickly identify areas where you should focus your attention for the best results.

ESTABLISHING CORE BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS



This isn't just what the core business of your company needs from your department, it is the priorities and importance of each service you provide or should provide. This enables you to conduct the health check with the priorities in mind.

Regardless of whether your company rents or owns its properties and regardless of your industry, it has requirements that if met, will improve its chance of success in the competitive marketplace.

The FM department supports these requirements and helps the company be successful in its core business.

You need to establish a clear understanding of your impact and importance to the organization's core business to help you evaluate and then prioritize your initiatives.

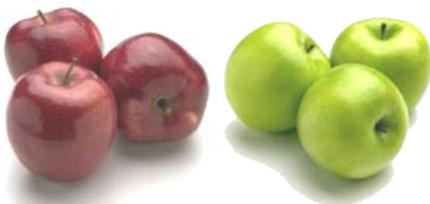
BENCHMARKING

bench·mark - bench-märk
(noun)

1. something that serves as a standard by which others may be measured or judged
2. a standardized problem or test that serves as a basis for evaluation or comparison

Benchmarking is the most fundamental form of comparison. It is a great starting point but should be used carefully and followed up with other techniques to understand why you are underperforming and to identify what changes you need to make.

Accurate comparison is not as easy as it seems, and using averages provided in published benchmarks can result in wrong decisions. You don't want to compare apples to oranges for sure, but you also don't want to compare a Golden Delicious with a Macintosh.



**Not all Apples are the same
when benchmarking.**

For any detailed benchmarking exercise, you need to assess each component and compare things that are the same. You may even need to make adjustments to ensure an equal comparison. The similarity of comparisons is important, since there are many factors at play

The comparisons you arrive at from benchmarking available information are the starting point for your Health Check evaluation.

Benchmarking can be a critical part to starting your assessment, however there are many traps you can fall prey to if you aren't careful.

Our **Intelligent Benchmarking** White Paper is available from [Strategic Advisor.ca](http://StrategicAdvisor.ca).





CHECKLIST ASSESSMENT

Conduct a quick checklist assessment to identify areas where you should focus your attention. This checklist identifies areas where your current practices match best practices and identifies where gaps exist in your current organization or operational models.

This checklist includes leading practices from some of the largest FM and PM organizations.

Practice	Expectation	
Asset Management	You regularly review property condition using formal process/checklists. You integrate the results from this and your maintenance management system into your capital and maintenance plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communications	You use newsletters, emails, meetings, etc. in a planned and controlled way to communicate and receive communication from occupants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer Service	You have policies and procedures in place to deal with customer / occupant communications and issues. You measure satisfaction results, develop corrective action plans and implement them. You have telephone and internet based coverage 24/7 for emergencies and requests.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Management	You have written plans for dealing with emergencies and issues, including disasters, accidents and business recovery.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy Management	You actively manage energy through formal plans and initiatives, including communications, projects, studies, project standards, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Management	You have written plans that address all environmental issues such as CFC's, hazardous waste, spills, fluorescent tubes, etc. to reduce impacts.	<input type="checkbox"/>
General Management	You develop annual plans to address issues, set initiatives and targets, including facility plans, asset and capital plans, staff training, communications, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lease Management	You have formal processes and resources to scrutinize lease charges from landlords and property tax.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance Management	You have a computerized system that tracks assets, plans preventive maintenance, tracks corrective maintenance and demand work orders and provides reporting for management, compliance and performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Occupancy Management	You have systems to track, analyze and report usage to provide management and strategic information for cost containment and planning to drive behaviors and reduce total cost of ownership/occupancy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance Management	You have quantifiable measurements of key deliverables and processes for suppliers and in-house staff . You have a formal process and measurement framework that drives improvements.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality Assurance	You have a formal quality assurance process in place that ensure consistent processes and procedures, results are monitored and compliance audits performed. Mechanisms are in place for continuous improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff Development	You annually review, recommend and implement training for your team to stay current and develop your staff. You participate in associations and subscribe to related publications to stay current in the industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standards	You have standards to minimize costs and ensure consistency for space layouts, furniture, fit-up and capital or base-building projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVALUATION



The next step is a full evaluation of the key areas identified in the checklist, however just because you checked-off a checklist item, it doesn't mean it shouldn't still be evaluated – this simply gives you some direction on priorities.

The existing issues and corporate priorities should also influence which areas you evaluate.

Start your evaluation with areas that involve both your corporate priorities and the areas where the checklist identifies gaps.

The review must include an assessment of current organization, staffing, procedures, policies, systems and support structure based on your organization's needs and current leading practices.

This involves on-site interviews with staff, customers/occupants and senior management in addition to a review of documents, processes, procedures and systems used to deliver services.

Use industry best practices as a baseline, however the analysis must reflect the realities your organization faces and practices that are relevant and achievable for your organization.

After your evaluation, develop an action plan for change, including business cases to implement changes or new systems. The initiatives must be prioritized to ensure successful implementation.

KNOWLEDGE IS KING

Your assessment must include a careful assessment of your own operations within the context of industry practices.

The first place to learn about initiatives and leading practices is from other members of the facility management community, either by direct interaction and networking or through involvement on associations. By talking with other FM's to discuss your issues and learn what others do, you will be able to clearly identify what you can do to improve your operations.

Other industry experiences can also help you develop business cases to convince your organization to support you and approve changes like implement new systems, policies, staffing changes and more to make your organization more effective.

Knowledge is also available in trade magazines. By keeping on top of the issues and reading about initiatives and solutions implemented by other, usually leaders in the industry, you can make an objective assessment of your own operation.

You have a wide variety of magazines available, covering all areas of facility and property management, including leasing, project management, interior design, relocations, cleaning, maintenance and more. Some require a subscription while others are free for qualified professionals. Get them and share with your staff.

Conferences and seminars are another means to gain information. Quite often the courses or seminars are short and won't be filled with a great deal of detail but they are a great starting point. Often you can get some time to speak with the seminar leader to learn more.

Effective networking can also provide the knowledge you need. Associations provide this networking as long as you take advantage of them and initiate contact with your peers. There are global associations that cover the entire range of facility and property management organization covering general FM or specialties such as health care, recreational facilities, commercial buildings and more.

We maintain links to industry magazines and associations at: www.strategicadvisor.ca

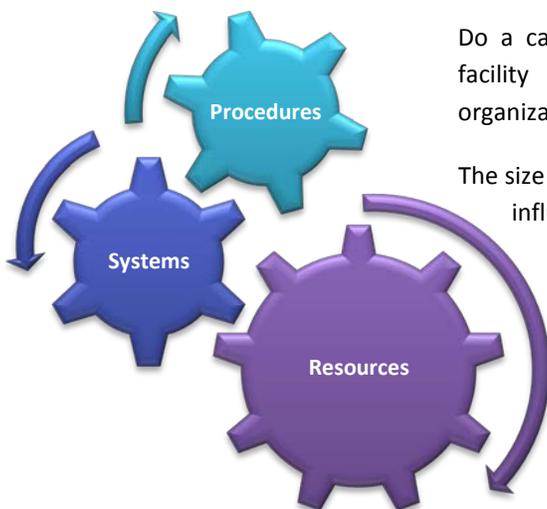
WHAT AREAS SHOULD I LOOK AT?

Doing a Health Check involves looking at each of the main functional areas, but for each of those, you need to review the three main components that impact efficient and effective operations:

- PROCEDURES
- SYSTEMS
- RESOURCES

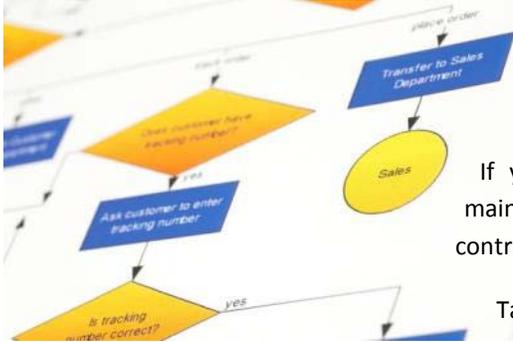
Do a careful analysis of whether the responsibilities you have in your facility management department are the correct ones for your organization.

The size of your organization and what other departments exist will greatly influence the kind of thing that your organization should be doing. Your assessment should include who supports you, who you interface with and the hierarchy within your organization. How well they support your requirements should be assessed to identify areas where change may be needed from others within your organization to support your success.



PROCEDURES TIE EVERYTHING TOGETHER

Processes and procedures aren't simply your facility management functions; they should include support elements such as your HR processes, communications, quality assurance and other aspects that support your success, so be sure to carefully evaluate how these support your success, and in turn how you support your company's success.



If you are maintained buildings your procedures also include your maintenance and lifecycle replacement processes, whether in-house or contracted out.

Take a look at everything, ranging from your work order process to your procurement process, moves, adds & changes, maintenance, environmental, safety and security, capital planning and more.

Your procedures need to cover the fundamental requirements, track and maintain information you can use to make decisions on, and provide suitable guidance while enabling staff and contractors to deliver in a flexible way.

Just having them isn't enough. They need to be used and most importantly, they need to be useful and add value rather than simply providing a rigid yet not so useful process to get things done.

SYSTEMS SUPPORT YOUR PROCEDURES



The systems you use support your procedures and enable your resources to be effective and efficient. They should also provide you with the information you need to make decisions that improve your results and support your company's core business.

It's important to recognize that not every organization requires a full systems approach with full scale integrated or enterprise systems. Your solution needs to be scaled to your size and needs. If you manage a large portfolio, a full system may be required. If you manage a small portfolio, smaller systems, web based applications or even databases or spreadsheets may provide some of your requirements.

Don't stress integration too much when evaluating your systems. Integration for integration sake can be a drain on your success. Focus on what needs to integrate, consider volumes, determine whether you need consistency or sharing of data and if so, why and how often – live, daily or as-needed?

Data itself isn't useful. You need information that gives you knowledge to make decisions. Systems should provide management information on

which you can make those decisions and either make changes in your organization or implement new initiatives. If your current systems don't give you good decision making information, this is a key area to focus on.

You also need to be able to support your procedures and the key activities you provide to your company so they can be successful.

Take a look at your systems and identify critical areas and then assess whether you have what you need. Look at what should be integrated and what doesn't need to be integrated. Assess what is available to meet your particular needs and scale and develop the business cases to implement.

RESOURCES MAKE THE SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES WORK

We're talking mostly about human resources, but other resources such as communications technology should be considered.



For human resources, do you have the right number of staff doing the right tasks and are they trained in the things you need to do?

A good example is project management, which requires a very specific set of skills and knowledge, but it also requires a certain kind of person who is well suited to the principles. The wrong fit, combined with poor processes and systems, has a negative impact on success and should be fixed.

Assess what your team spends their time doing. While you don't need to do a detailed time in motion study, do a broad based assessment of their functions and the time they spend doing tasks, managing contractors, doing admin work, meetings and even traveling. You can use a questionnaire format that has them estimate their time spent on key functions.

The next thing to look at is the job descriptions and whether they still match your needs and whether they match what your staff are actually doing. Then, look at the resumes and background of the individuals you have doing that work and see whether they match. You can also interview the staff to see their interests and their observations about the work. This is your opportunity to identify areas where training is required or shifts in responsibilities would suit individual's interests and capabilities better so they can do a better job.

TAKE ACTION



An FM Health Check is just a start. You need to follow-up the results of your FM Health Check with action to implement changes.

Use the results from your FM Health Check to develop a strategic plan. Break it into manageable parts and either implement the necessary changes or if necessary, develop compelling business cases to sell your changes within the organization.

Making changes takes effort. Plans aren't worth anything unless you implement them, so be proactive and push for changes and take action. With change, you will get results, get attention and get ahead.

5 STEPS FOR BETTER HEALTH - SUMMARY

In summary, there are 5 key steps to You can assess and improve your FM organization's effectiveness and success by following these steps:

- 1. Core Business:** identify how you contribute to your company's core business and use this knowledge in your assessment
- 2. Benchmarking:** use this to identify areas to focus on. Even if you exceed the averages, you need to assess them unless you are the leader.
- 3. Checklist Assessment:** start with a quick checklist to identify areas where you don't have leading practices and use this information along with the core business and benchmarking results to focus your assessment efforts.
- 4. Evaluation:** do an evaluation of the processes, systems and resources involved in the areas which you identified as priorities. The results should include recommendations on things that need improvement.
- 5. Take action:** don't wait, develop a strategy and business case, sell the changes to your senior management and implement for better results.

We Answer Your Questions

If you have a question or want to share your experiences, we'd like to hear from you. Email us at michel@strategicadvisor.ca

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