

Strategic Facilities Management

Can your company afford not to engage with these experts?

Andre Michau, director of Afroteq Advisory and Ronald Nothnagel, director at FM Solutions talk to GLA

Over the years, facilities management (FM) has evolved from simple maintenance into a complex multi-faceted discipline that affects space, infrastructure, people and organisations. According to www.eurofm.org, FM was recently recognised as the largest business services market in Europe. With a tangible effect on the fourth bottom line and a direct link to operations savings, the built environment and green efficiencies, it's safe to say FM deserves a lot of your attention.

Understanding FM, the role it plays, and the impact it has on business is vital for the success of any business, from the health and safety of employees right through to the technical aspects of a company's internal IT network. Making an informed decision - understanding the what, the why, the how, the when, the costs and the potential savings, is key.

Sister companies Facilities Management Solutions (FM Solutions) and Afroteq Advisory work both independently and together to provide clients with a tailored managed facility service and advisory service respectively, covering a full FM solution providing hard, soft and technical services, right through to the strategic level of aligning your FM solution to your company values and business model.

So what is an advisory service? **Andre Michau**, director of Afroteq Advisory, says, "Simply put, we are in the business of helping our clients do the right thing in the right way. It is our job to help them understand what the right things are, and to help them recognise why they need them in certain ways within the built environment."

And what is the benefit of an advisory service? That's easy – doing the right things resulting in effective, efficient, measurable expectations and achievements, and value for money as well as financial savings. And the fact that your FM solution is aligned with your strategic business goals means value is being derived for the company through FM.



Andre Michau



So how does it work? Michau says, “If a client needs cleaning services, for example, the first thing to do is determine whether in-house or outsourced services are required, and then to understand why that decision was made from a business point of view. If it makes good sense, we can proceed by helping the client determine how those services should be rendered in order to provide the most accurate work specifications for a comprehensive cost analysis and tender process. By choosing the right provider, the client is assured of receiving value for money, a service that is fit for purpose and achieves the desired service outcomes efficiently. To put it differently, we help the client understand what they want, why they want it and how they want it done, in order to properly manage the service.”

An advisory service ensures that the client makes informed decisions based on intensive workshopping aimed at understanding their specific strategic business goals and ensuring the FM model and operations align to and support those strategic goals. The client is thereafter aided in both procurement, implementation, skills transfer and training all of which is delivered through a disciplined and experienced project management framework.



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Advisory services are also necessary for change events. “Most FM professionals are in the business of maintaining existing operations and processes, and they’re good at what they do,” adds Michau, “But it takes a different mind-set to successfully manage a change event. When contracts are awarded or come to an end, when businesses relocate, or even when a particular function, say IT, moves within a building, that’s a change event, and we have the people and project management skills to deal with that to ensure there is no costly disruption, loss of service, and unacceptable loss of time.”

Afroteq also offers training to ensure that once the change event has taken place, the client is able to maintain the process or service effectively and efficiently. “We want to ensure that our clients are empowered to achieve successful management after we’ve stepped away from the project,” says Michau.

Once the project is complete and handed over, the building manager understands the new system/facility, the operation works properly, the client’s expectations are met, targets are set and measurable, and business case expectations are achieved. It’s all about value derived from realising strategic goals and achieving operational benefits.

As a business management consultancy focusing on the built environment, Afroteq has access to specialists and professionals that include quantity surveyors, engineers, architects, technical specialist, project managers, space planners and renewable energy specialists.

Their clients include private and public sector enterprises, as well as both receivers and deliverers of facility services within the built environment. Service offerings include strategic planning guidance, project and procurement management, facilitation, on-site training, contract management, supervisor and manager training in order to maximise the service received from the service provider, and acting as the principal agent during construction. Their scope includes turn-key office fit-outs, major refurbishments, and asset audits and renewal for strategic investment, as

well as mechanical, operational, hard and soft services, through to major property development management. FM Solutions, on the other hand, focuses on the facilities management side of things, providing its clients with FM professionals who understand the day-to-day operations of FM, and who have the knowledge and experience that qualifies them to deliver on the best solution for a client.

Director at FM Solutions **Ronald Nothnagel** says, “We provide managed FM solutions on an outsourced basis to our clients and also act as a support service to the Afroteq team when necessary. Our specialty is FM operations; whereas Afroteq drive and manage change in the built environment, we provide ongoing operational management and maintenance of the built environment.”

With operations level experience-based expertise, FM Solutions offers technical, business and soft service support to owners and occupants of facilities, and along with Afroteq, any advisory and project management service its clients may require. FM Solutions is therefore a more function-orientated and operations-level offering than that of Afroteq, but the two companies work synergistically to provide a holistic service to the facilities management market.

Nothnagel says, “We look at the entire FM-level structure, the policies and the processes, and determine whether they support the business strategy? We ask the key question: Do the FM operations drive functional efficiency? Is the FM environment optimised? And then we look at the different service groups in their own right and find opportunities to improve service levels.” By analysing key achievable outputs and running condition audits and facilities operational assessments, FM Solutions can then develop and implement improvements which optimise operational cost and drive efficiency and service delivery up.

A condition audit is an excellent tool that clients can employ to assess the status of their current infrastructure, look at where they should be in terms of asset standards, and then determine



Ronald Nothnagel



the work and costs required to bring infrastructure to the desired standard. “We have many FM practitioners available, from the most junior to the most senior level, and those experienced in various sectors such as commercial, industrial, medical, transport and energy (oil and gas), so we have the know-how to comment on all the different lines. This positions us to understand our client’s operational needs and help them understand how best to get there through the most appropriate FM solution and model,” explains Nothnagel.

In his experience, their clients often have a good grasp of the basics of FM and understand functionally how it should run, but they benefit from having an advisory and solutions partner to strategically position FM, and its role in the bigger organisation, for them in order to derive maximum benefit and value. As a strategic part of how a business should be run, it makes sense to get advice from someone who understands how to align business and FM strategy, and how to implement and optimise that structure on an ongoing basis.

FM Solutions can take the FM function (or any component thereof) from concept to practice in both an in-house or an outsourced model and assist with setting up the FM process, structuring it correctly and making it operational, and they can even deliver the service itself.

“Today’s work environment must be sustainable, conducive, efficient, and allow employees to be effective. This applies to business in general and to facilities specifically. It’s a very big ask,” explains Nothnagel. “We can help provide the best fully functional solution that is aligned to business strategy and strategic goals and which supports best business practice.”

Having two companies who can work together and draw on each other’s expertise and knowledge is immensely beneficial. The FM operational expertise of FM Solutions paired with Afroteq’s professional and project management skills lends itself to a holistic built environment solution. And that just makes good business sense. | **GLA**