

## FM CONSULTANTS AS RANGERS?

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Two conversations during the last week illustrate how little recognized our profession remains among people who could benefit from knowing. FM Consulting is positioned to show up the scope, competence, and utility of FM in integrating the contributions and functions of professions, trades, and resources essential to facilities and their stakeholders. In an organization lacking FM as practiced by holders of IFMA credentials, combining people, places, processes, and technology can be just happenstance. FM consultants as rangers? Possibly that is a fair simile.

### Conversation 1

Several times during a visit on-line with a senior healthcare professional whose work includes advising organizations in multiple sectors, the conversation went to economic and social potential effects of the novel coronavirus and COVID-19. My companion observed that transportation costs and congestion in populated areas might be reduced, as well as air quality improved long term if some habits and arrangements adopted in the present emergency continued and work-from-home became better known and accepted.

I pointed out that FM had long been involved with designers and executives, business unit and department leaders and staff in planning and managing such developments. I mentioned sophisticated technologies had come into use for space allocation in real time and that industries and organizations were seeking workplaces and developing policies to bring about and optimize space use outcomes for organizations and their stakeholders.

**Conclusion:** FM presence as a strategic and tactical resource, though instrumental, wasn't heard of or noticed. Instead, men and women caring for floors and fixing lights, along with furtive beings with tool pouches, hats pulled low, keeping to themselves - were "facilities" or "engineering." These must have a nest somewhere, in a hidden tunnel, perhaps, with a supervisor like themselves, but older and who sometimes went to meetings.

### Conversation 2

The voice call connected with another senior official - this time in education, in a public college system with multiple locations in a large metro region. I had called with an interest in providing scholarships to students in associate and certificate programs either explicitly in FM, or that might be inferred from curriculum offerings. I was also interested in apprenticeship programs. We had a long, friendly, probing conversation, characterized by interest and enthusiasm.

My companion was impressed with the competence subjects designated for FMs at progressively advanced levels, with ample possibilities for promotion and diversification. Horizontal and vertical networking throughout organizations added to the reputation of FM. ISO standards, IFMA, and more made strong impressions. Yet "maintenance" kept cropping up when our conversation went to FM curriculum.

**Conclusion:** Substantial FM related studies can be found in junior college systems, often not wholly FM programs in substance or in name. Officials and faculty get as far as "maintenance" and associated management and technologies in ever more sophisticated modern buildings.

### FM consultants

Out of interest and business necessity, FM consultants can be broadly networked and keep a lookout over wide FM fields. We're something along the line of rangers, naming and demonstrating FM wherever we go. There are still a great number of places and people that might think of FM as unjustifiable cost, administrative fluff not needed to add a storage closet, wash windows, or provide

security. Spread the word. There is much to be gained for organizations and for consultants in getting FM better known.