

FM Consulting, ISO, and The Sustainability Element

What follows is a part of a dialog with business consultant, teacher, and FMCC Treasurer Daniel Goldstein (DG) that took place in late October. Daniel finds sustainability, explicit and implicit, worthwhile in the interests of FM clients and consultants as a quality consideration. The widely familiar and accessible formats of ISO provide context. Excerpts -

ED - What would a framework for advancing sustainability look like?

DG - I believe the framework of ISO could be a very good starting point as Quality is a big driver in business, products, and services. (*The ISO 9000 series appeared decades ago and continues as the base standard for policy for quality - Ed.*) Other drivers could be the elimination of waste and the improvements in efficiency. These are good drivers as they imply the improvement will result in elevated Quality and directly suggests that costs of production are likely lower – thus improving the prospects on the financial bottom line.

ED - Possibly a value that encapsulates Profit, People, Planet in sustainability? Sustainability is a larger, more sophisticated, idea than maintainability, or managing over the life cycle, but should it come to mind at once as for FM decisions?

DG - The driver here is that the leadership has now put in place practices that improve the way an organization does business. This is particularly noted in the practices you allude to in your response regarding FM decisions. This comes from training and an overall inculcation of values that shape the way managers and employees evaluate various business scenarios, operational scenarios, or buy/lease scenarios. Leadership has to create an environment that builds these values into the organizational culture. Certainly, this is not something that could be accomplished overnight, and I am fairly certain I can't completely address this phenomenon within this email. However, it does speak to the point that leaders must lead demonstratively about the behaviors they wish to see reflected throughout the organization.

ED - What do you see as a sustainability framework and its use? What can we come up with that is powerful, addressed to FMs and their clients?

DG - I believe this starts with a candid discussion with the client. Often times, consultants have the unique ability to introduce notions and thoughts that were/are oblivious to the client. This is a good thing because that is what consultants are hired to do – help shape solutions and challenge the various operating paradigms. That all said – the client needs to identify his/her goals. The consultant can then frame those goals in a sustainable framework. For instance, the client could say I want a more efficient operation with the intent to migrate to a more technologically smart building. The consultant can ask...ok, what does that look like? The consultant has to probe on a granular level to ensure that there is clarity of what is being requested, what is being pursued, and how it can be accomplished. Obviously if the building systems are at the end of the useful life cycle, the consultant must highlight this...perhaps by painting an as-is scenario (e.g. performance, costs, breakdowns, repairs, retrofits, and the like) and comparing it to a proposed state where the systems are smart, efficient, clean, and generates significant Return on Investment (ROI) in terms of costs, reduced man hours, more robust performance, and more economical terms of operation.

ISO 9000 Series: Quality

ISO 14000 Series: Environmental management

ISO 41000 Series: Facility Management

ISO 55000 Series: Asset Management