

The SPAN of FM CONSULTING and FMCC - MEMBER PERSPECTIVES



Photo by Daniel Powell on Unsplash

In this issue –

This issue continues with member viewpoints, glimpsing perspectives and circumstances around coming into and growing professionally through FM consulting. Newly elected FMCC Vice President Kathleen Lausman, principal of Shift2Lean in western Canada joins the conversation for September – October.

FMCC members number over 300 and the Council continues to grow. Why? Member locations, jobs, roles comprise who, where, and when, but not so much *why*. Please send your own in the same format as the feature if you would like to appear. Associates and Young Professionals members are welcome, as well as practicing inside or outside consultants.

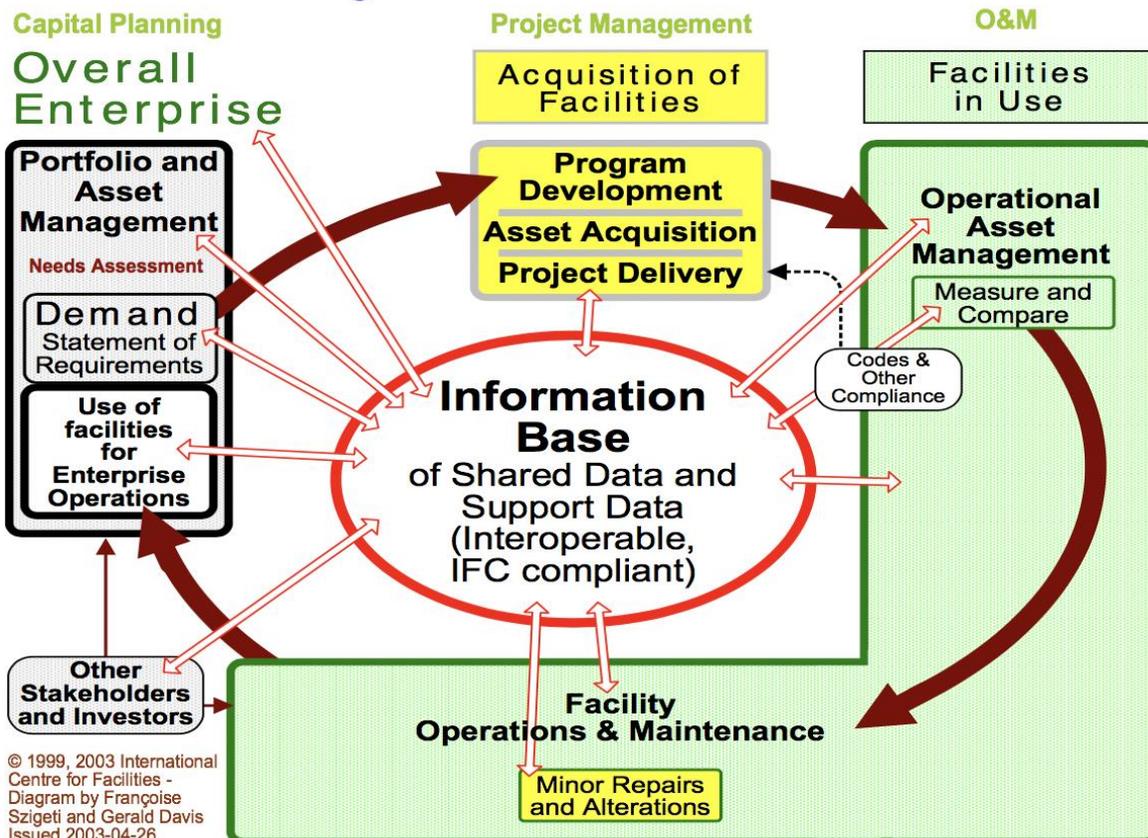
Conversation with Kathleen Lausman, MBA, BES. Principal, Shift2Lean

What brought you to FM - to FM consulting?

I have been in the Building Industry with a degree in design and business – primarily in Facility/Property Management and Project Management – for my entire career. Each sector’s building and property requirements [National Parks, Policing, K/12 Education, Technology, Furniture Manufacturing, Health Care, Government Departments’ Services, Airports, and Community Centres] presented different challenges. Accommodating workers and accommodating services to the public were common purposes but building/property types and functions varied greatly. Capital planning, life-cycle planning, O&M routines, janitorial, security and technology were all included but with different intensities, frequencies and routines.

I learned a lot. When faced with a particularly complex problem to address, I turned to the local IFMA Chapter in my city and made connections. I was able to take advantage of the brilliance of this community and had the pleasure of contracting with various expertise like Gerald Davis and Françoise Szigeti, both IFMA Fellows. They helped me and my team solve complex problems including the required messaging for organizational change.

Life Cycle of Infrastructure



When did you find yourself a consultant? Was consulting an experience, a competence... that you sought, regardless of your title and job description at the time? Or, putting the question differently, who becomes a consultant?

My first work as a consultant was part of my MBA projects. My partner and I consulted to an FM firm specializing in M.A.C. (Moves/Adds/Changes) to help them increase their client base as their main client - Nortel Networks, wound-down their business and sold off assets. Marketing is part of the skill sets required in FM, but not frequently recognized. The work of FM is essential and is often in the background quietly keeping buildings operating. But, being seen, connecting with people, having influence impacts positively on building asset functions and work environments.

I later entered the consulting world to create awareness and train organizations in getting better results on projects and service delivery. I am a continuous learner and accelerated my learning through industry associations and connections like IFMA and the Lean Design & Construction community. Having experienced work from entry-level employee to leader of teams in large organizations, I was exposed to the need for changes and improvements in the industry. Sharing this knowledge and training organizations in better process just made sense. And it's fun!

Plusses and minuses of your consulting roles, or of consulting in general?

Retrospection is a constant, ongoing practice in my consulting role. It is the essence of continuous learning. The plusses of consulting is the opportunity to meet many different people and work with many different organizations and influence the positive results.

The minuses are working with organizations that fail to carry on with the training/learning we have presented.

Preferences... long or ongoing or just brief engagements? Client team projects? Sales support? Others...?

The best results and experiences we have is with organizations committed to improvement. The training we do involves teams and a lot of gaming and collaboration. Interacting with people in their daily work challenges and helping them solve problems. We have learned that training for change works in a series of smaller engagements rather than the 'fire hose' information dump. It's the practice and improvements that yield successes.

Would you recommend FM to students and people early in their career?

FM is one of the most interesting and broad industries to be working in. There is little a Facility Manager doesn't experience in a career span. It's challenging, exciting and rewarding. It is both a technical and 'people' business, even though the focus is on buildings. But buildings are where people live and work and learn. FM'ers are problem solvers and function as the continuity from initial design and construction throughout the facility service life.

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Founded in Saskatoon, in west central Canada, Shift2Lean serves clients from coast to coast and into the northern regions. <https://www.shift2lean.ca>.