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AWARDS

— 2026 —

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

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Thursday 17th September 2026



LOCATION

Whittlebury Park, NN12 8QH



INFORMATION

www.bics.org.uk/awards



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EDITOR'S VOICE

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Hello and welcome to the August issue of Tomorrow's FM.

One of the great things about editing this magazine is you get to learn about the various concepts that feed into the world of facilities management and beyond. For example, this month, as part of our Health, Safety & Wellbeing feature, we hear from Richard Wootten, SHEQ Manager at OUTCO, who talks about how, in the manufacturing world, Toyota popularised the concept of 'Kaizen' - a culture of continuous improvement in which every worker is empowered to activate the 'andon cord', stopping the assembly line whenever a quality issue is identified. Richard's argument is that "when applied to outdoor facilities management, this same ethos is the bedrock of a highly effective health and safety culture." It's well worth checking out the full feature on page **34** to understand the argument in more depth.

We also have a range of features on Technology, AI & Robotics in this issue. Iain Bowes, Head of Management System Assurance for TÜV SÜD Business, argues that artificial intelligence innovation must be matched by robust governance, whilst Peter Moore, CE O of Lolly, explores why contract catering could become one of hospitality's biggest AI and robotics success stories.

There's plenty of informative content in this issue, and I hope you enjoy reading it as I did editing it.

Enjoy the summer!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Ryan Lloyd, Editor

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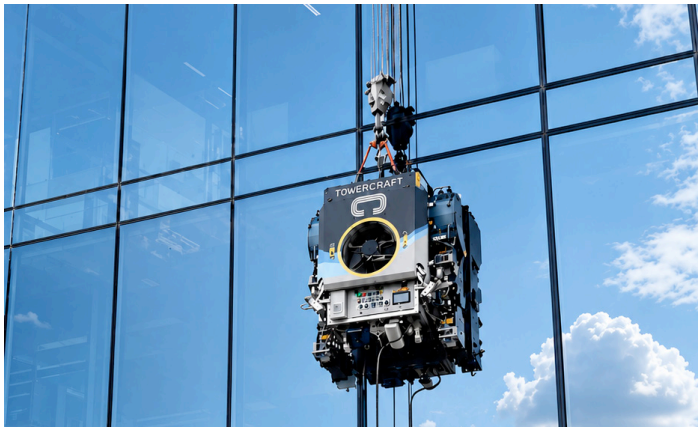
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CHSA EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2026: CELEBRATING THE INDUSTRY'S BEST

The Cleaning & Hygiene Suppliers Association (CHSA) has announced the winners of the 2026 CHSA Excellence Awards, recognising outstanding achievement, innovation, and commitment across the cleaning and hygiene industry.

The winners are:

- Manufacturer of the Year: Cromwell Polythene Ltd
- Regional Distributor of the Year: Newhall Janitorial
- National Distributor of the Year: Jangro
- Rising Star: Emily Downing of Cleenol Group Ltd
- Outstanding Contribution: Paul Fleetwood of Cromwell Polythene Ltd

The CHSA also made the occasional award for Lifetime Achievement, naming Mike Stubbs. During his long career in the cleaning and hygiene sector, Mike Stubbs has played a pivotal role in developing the industry and driving up standards. He worked tirelessly to create and develop the CHSA's Accreditation Schemes and in doing so transformed standards in the industry. He also mentored many individuals in the industry, recognising their talent and supporting their progress.

The winners were revealed at the CHSA's annual Gala Ball on Thursday 18th June at VOCO St John's, Solihull, in front of leading industry professionals.

CHSA members were invited to nominate their candidates for the awards, the final selection being made by a panel of industry leaders comprising Stephen Harrison, Jo Long, Mike Revell and David Garcia. The panel members were recused from the category relevant to their business.

The Distributors of the Year and Manufacturer of the Year were assessed according to their values, quality and commitment, and their approach to sustainability. Their values had to support and embody the CHSA's values. They had to demonstrate their commitment to

maintaining standards and ethical practice and promote sustainability best practice.

Cromwell Polythene has been a long-standing supporter of the CHSA, active on the CHSA's Governing Council and the working group taking forward the Accreditation Scheme for Plastic Sacks. Cromwell Polythene is also vocal about the value of its membership of the CHSA and is an active contributor to the CHSA's Roadmap to Sustainability.

Newhall Janitorial was recognised as an outstanding independent distributor, operating with strong ethical principles and delivering exceptional service across all areas of its business. Under the leadership of the Powells the company has successfully transformed a traditional janitorial operation into a modern, forward-thinking organisation.

Jangro was acknowledged as a highly active supporter of the CHSA, playing an important role in the ongoing development of the Association and the wider industry. The company also demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability, embedding it as a core pillar across its entire network.

The Rising Star evidenced exceptional performance, impact, rapid growth, initiative, a commitment to development, and professionalism and collaboration. The winner of Outstanding Contribution to the CHSA has a track record of going above and beyond, making a significant impact on the CHSA and the industry.

Rising Star Emily Downing, joined Cleenol as the most junior member of the technical team 18 months ago and is already developing an industry reputation. She consistently goes above and beyond her immediate responsibilities to identify improvements and new possibilities.



Within three months of joining the business, Emily was representing the technical department in meetings with external suppliers and customers. When the person holding the post took maternity leave, Emily stepped into the role of Lead Chemist, her reliability, technical ability and maturity making her very capable despite her relative lack of experience.

Paul Fleetwood has been a long-standing, passionate and key influencer in the CHSA's Accreditation Scheme for Plastic Sacks. He has been on the CHSA's Governing Council since April 2009 and is as big of an advocate for them today as he has ever been.

Tracey Black of SC Johnson, CHSA Council member and the driving force behind the creation of the awards, said: "The CHSA Excellence Awards celebrate the individuals and organisations driving our industry forward. These winners exemplify exceptional performance, commitment, and leadership, and we are proud to recognise their contribution."

- Manufacturer of the Year: sponsored by Nationwide Hygiene Group
- Regional Distributor of the Year: sponsored by Greyland
- National Distributor of the Year: sponsored by Greyland
- Rising Star: sponsored by Harrison Wipes
- Outstanding Contribution: sponsored by Evans Vanodine

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DAB PUMPS PARTNERS WITH SOUTH DEVON COLLEGE TO GIVE PLUMBING STUDENTS A HEAD START

Walk into the plumbing workshops at South Devon College and you will find something that sets this department apart: students getting hands-on with the same equipment they are likely to see on their very first day in the job.

That has taken another step forward. DAB Pumps UK, a world-leading name in water technology, has donated an ESYBOX and ESYTANK pressurisation system to the college. This is the kind of kit found in homes, businesses, and buildings right across Devon and beyond. For the students training in Paignton, it means learning on up-to-date, industry standard equipment, not something that bears little resemblance to what they will find on site.

South Devon College's plumbing department has built a strong reputation for turning out tradespeople who are ready to work. Purpose-built workshops, proper trade facilities, and close links with local employers have already made a real difference to how students learn. This donation builds on that, giving students the chance to get to grips with modern pressurisation systems in a workshop setting, and to build the kind of practical confidence that a qualification alone does not always bring.

Dean Bowden, Head of Construction and Built Environment at South

Devon College, said: "We are extremely grateful to DAB Pumps UK for this generous contribution. Integrating this system into our teaching workshops will give our learners hands-on experience with advanced pressure boosting technology, helping them to understand installation, operation, and maintenance.

"Partnerships like this are crucial. They ensure that our curriculum remains relevant and aligned with current industry practices, while also giving students the confidence to work independently on professional-grade systems."

The results are already being felt by students. Zach, currently studying plumbing at the college, said: "Having access to the system in the workshop has been invaluable. It's given me practical experience of systems we commonly encounter in the industry, improving my understanding of operation, fault finding and safe working practices. It has really increased my confidence when dealing with similar systems on site."

Zach's experience is a good example of something the college has understood for a long time: there is a big difference between knowing how something works and being able to do it. Partnerships like this one help bridge that gap.

Demand for qualified plumbers and heating engineers across Devon is growing. From Torbay to Exeter, local employers want new starters who can hit the ground running, not people who need months of



catching up once they arrive on site. By making sure students train on equipment they will actually use in the real world, South Devon College is helping to fill that need and build a stronger local workforce.

Adam Ferneyhough, Country Director for the UK & Ireland at DAB Pumps, added: "At DAB Pumps, we believe the best way to support the future of the industry is to invest in the people coming into it. By giving students access to the kind of systems they will encounter in homes and commercial buildings, we are helping bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world experience. We are proud to support South Devon College to give learners greater confidence and practical experience, helping prepare the next generation of engineers for the workplace."

The partnership between DAB Pumps and South Devon College shows what can happen when businesses and colleges work together properly, not just to produce people with the right certificates, but skilled tradespeople who are ready to get to work from day one.

<https://company.dabpumps.com/en/brand>

www.southdevon.ac.uk/courses/plumbing/



VECTAIR STRENGTHENS SALES LEADERSHIP TO ADVANCE CUSTOMER PARTNERSHIPS

Vectair, a specialist in aircare, washroom hygiene, and odor control solutions, has announced that Brian Garry has joined the company as SVP, Head of Sales – Americas.

In this role, Brian will lead Vectair's growth initiatives across the Americas, working closely with key leaders across the organization to ensure the sales team has the tools, resources, and support needed to continue delivering value to customers and distributor partners.

Brian brings more than 30 years of industry experience, with a career spanning sales leadership, business development, and market expansion. Throughout his career, he has held leadership positions with Cintas Corporation, ODP Business Solutions, and Hospesco Brands Group, helping organizations strengthen customer relationships, expand market presence, and drive sustainable growth.

"Joining a company that has long led from the front through innovation, passion, and forward thinking was an easy decision," said Garry. "The culture at Vectair was critical for me, and I've found it to be customer-centric. This is how you build a winning environment."



As SVP, Head of Sales – Americas, Brian's primary focus will be understanding the markets Vectair serves and identifying new opportunities to deliver value to customers and prospects. His responsibilities will span sales leadership, talent development, distributor partnerships, field engagement, and supporting the continued introduction of innovative solutions that address evolving customer needs.

Brian's experience leading both large and small sales teams, combined with his deep understanding of the distribution landscape, positions him well to support Vectair's strategic priorities throughout the region. He has also successfully driven growth across key vertical markets, including hospitality, healthcare, foodservice, and higher education.

"Continued innovation resulting in better customer experiences is where I see tremendous opportunity," Garry added. "We will accomplish this by fanatically listening to our customers and not limiting ourselves to past industry conventions. We will continue to be the solution of choice for the markets we serve."

Vectair remains committed to investing in innovation, strengthening customer and distributor partnerships, and delivering market-leading aircare, washroom hygiene, and odor control solutions that support the evolving needs of facilities across the Americas and beyond.

www.vectairsystems.com

OCS TO BUY MITIE FOR £3.1BN

OCS, the facilities management giant, has agreed a £3.1bn cash takeover of Mitie, bringing together two complementary businesses specialising in facilities management and transformation.

In a release seen by Tomorrow's FM, OCS said: "The proposed combination would create a UK headquartered international facilities management group with broader sector expertise and geographic reach, bringing together two businesses with complementary strengths, a shared British heritage and an entrepreneurial spirit."

The proposed combination would, the company believes, strengthen the group's ability to support existing

and new customers operating in increasingly complex, regulated and mission critical environments across government, defence, healthcare, national infrastructure, life sciences and commercial markets. By broadening its portfolio of self-delivered specialist facilities services and continuing to invest in people, technology and operational excellence, OCS says the combined group would be better positioned to help customers navigate evolving operational, regulatory and compliance requirements while supporting long term resilience and performance.

Rob Legge, Group CEO of OCS, said: "This is an important milestone for both organisations and an exciting opportunity to bring together two

highly complementary businesses with a shared commitment to delivering the best outcomes for colleagues and customers. Subject to completion, we would build a British facilities management group that is better positioned to support the organisations that keep the country running. Together, we can better support existing and new customers, help more people into work and strengthen our contribution to getting Britain moving. While there is a long process ahead, both businesses remain focused on supporting customers and delivering the high standards they expect every day. Together, we can build something remarkable for our colleagues, our customers and the country."

<https://ocs.com/uk/>

2PURE PRODUCTS LAUNCHES ODORBAC AIR

2Pure Products has launched the OdorBac Air – an air-freshening system which destroys odours on contact, prevents them from returning, and keeps areas fresh.

“OdorBac Air’s odour-neutralising technology works at a molecular level, eliminating malodours and delivering freshness without masking,” said 2Pure Products Director James Law. “The unique OdorBac Air odour removing solution is transformed into microdroplets and is projected into the atmosphere using specially developed air care dispensing systems that are designed for use in different areas of a building.

“The technology attracts odour molecules into microdroplets and traps them. Specially formulated odour-destructive reagents within the patented formula then attack the odour compound on a molecular level. This instantly changes the molecular structure of the odour, so it is no longer an odour.”

Tailored dispensing options

OdorBac Air systems are available in a variety of dispensing models designed for use in different locations, depending on a venue’s requirements.

Button controlled for day/time programming, and available in black or white, the compact Eko is simplicity and versatility defined, delivering OdorBac Air from anywhere there is a plug socket. Perfect for enhancing the atmosphere in hallways, bedrooms, meeting rooms, kitchens and anywhere else where a cleaner, fresher environment is required. The Eko offers four scent intensities and can cover up to 75m³.

The battery powered Fresha can deliver powerful odour eliminating OdorBac Air technology anywhere. Designed with washrooms in mind, the Fresha will remove malodours and provide a fresh environment,



without the need to revert to dated conventional units using overpowering fragrances. Free-standing or wall-mounted, and made from anticorrosive and lockable plastic material, The bluetooth-app controlled Fresha is perfect for use in public areas and offers ten scent intensities, covering up to 90m³.

Fresha’s big brother is Fresha XL, designed for larger washrooms or even more challenging environments. The Fresha XL design matches the Fresha design to compliment multiple unit installations and comes with a larger product bottle plus more diffusing power, covering areas up to 150m³.

The Cilindro creates a pleasant and inviting atmosphere in any commercial setting and is ideal for lobbies, meeting rooms, retail spaces, spas, and care homes. The modern cylindrical design of the Cilindro comes in two finishes, and features a large product bottle, with Bluetooth connectivity for easy control. The free-standing, lockable Cilindro offers twenty scent intensities with coverage up to 1200m³.

The beautiful, sleek, modern design of the Cubana compliments and enhances any environment, delivering powerful advanced scent technology, and is ideal for medium to large spaces. Large product capacity and Bluetooth app control make optimum results effortless. Free-standing or wall-mounted, the

lockable Cubana features product-level monitoring and offers twenty scent intensities, while the built-in fan can cover up to 2700m³.

Four unique fragrance oils

Available in one litre refill bottles, OdorBac Air oils deliver consistent and memorable fragrance. Options including Midnight Amber, Vanilla Ember, Pure Linen, and Seraphine – keeping areas fresh and offering consistent odour-neutralising performance to suit different environments.

Eliminating odours and plastic waste

“Our customers agree that OdorBac Air is a game-changer in odor control,” said James Law, “with comments such as: “Our challenging rooms with unpleasant smells before, now smell good”; and “Once we started using the OdorBac Air unit, it changed the environment within a few hours. Then, the next day, the smell had vanished – it was amazing!”

“Beyond the proven efficacy of the OdorBac Air systems, 2Pure Products also deliver a measurable sustainability advantage. The refill packs for the non-hazardous, non-irritant, non-carcinogenic and environmentally friendly OdorBac Air odour eliminator are designed to be used with 2Pure’s LoopBox closed-loop refill system to eliminate plastic waste, and ensures empty bottles are returned, cleaned and reused.”

<https://2pureproducts.com>



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"WORTH IT" COMBINES RESPONDENTS RATING RCP AS 'SOMEWHAT WORTH IT' OR 'VERY WORTH IT' ON A 10-POINT SCALE.

TEKNOMEK EXPANDS OFFERING WITH PRECISION BALANCES AND WASHDOWN SCALES

Hygienic furniture and equipment specialist Teknomek has expanded its laboratory and cleanroom range with the addition of precision balances and washdown scales from Adam Equipment. Designed to support accuracy, compliance and hygienic operations, the new range provides laboratories with reliable weighing solutions suited to controlled environments.

Teknomek has introduced a carefully selected range of analytical balances, precision balances and washdown scales to its catalogue, supporting applications across laboratory, cleanroom and controlled production environments. The models have been chosen to meet the stringent requirements of sectors such as pharmaceuticals, engineering biology, research and high-spec manufacturing, where accuracy and repeatability are critical to operational performance and regulatory compliance.

The new business partnership brings together Teknomek's expertise in hygienic equipment and Adam Equipment's specialism in durable, high-performance balances. Known for reliability, competitive value and strong customer support, Adam Equipment's products are particularly well suited to clean and controlled environments, aligning closely with the needs of Teknomek's customers.

The analytical and precision balances are designed to deliver highly accurate measurements, supporting tasks that demand exacting levels of sensitivity.



Features such as intuitive operator interfaces, rapid stabilisation times and robust internal calibration capabilities enable reliable day-to-day use in busy laboratory settings. The inclusion of draft shields and compact footprints ensures suitability for controlled environments where airflow and space constraints must be carefully managed.

Alongside these, Teknomek has added washdown scales designed for harsher environments where hygiene protocols involve frequent cleaning. These units are constructed to withstand regular washdown procedures, with sealed components and durable materials that help prevent ingress and support consistent performance over time. This makes them particularly well suited to laboratory support areas, sample preparation zones and clean-adjacent processing spaces where hygiene and durability must be balanced effectively.

Across the range, ease of cleaning and contamination control are key considerations. Smooth surfaces, minimal dirt traps and robust construction support efficient cleaning regimes, aligning with the needs of cleanroom and laboratory operators working to strict hygiene standards.

The addition of weighing equipment complements Teknomek's wider

portfolio of hygienic furniture and equipment, enabling customers to specify furniture, equipment and critical instrumentation through a single, trusted supplier. This integrated approach supports Teknomek's overarching mission, to help customers create productive, risk managed and hygienic work environments.

"Accurate weighing plays a fundamental role in maintaining compliance and ensuring product quality in laboratory and cleanroom environments," says Michelle Locke, Product and Marketing Manager at Teknomek. "With the addition of Adam Equipment balances and scales, we are strengthening our ability to support customers with reliable, high-performance solutions that integrate seamlessly into hygienic workspaces."

"Whether customers are working in highly controlled analytical settings or in areas requiring regular washdown, this expanded range provides the flexibility to meet both precision and hygiene requirements, helping to reduce risk and support consistent, compliant operations," Michelle concludes.

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VIDEO SHOWCASE



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Full video here



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Full video here



MSL CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC AND REGULATORY EXCELLENCE

This year marks 25 years of MSL, a UK-based microbiological testing and regulatory houses for cosmetics, personal care and household cleansing products. Since its founding in 2001, the company has built a reputation as a trusted global compliance partner, supporting manufacturers, raw material suppliers and brand owners across more than 60 countries with an integrated approach to product safety and regulatory compliance.

Over the past 25 years, MSL has helped customers navigate significant regulatory changes in the biocides sector, including the introduction of the EU Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR) in 2012, the establishment of the UK's post Brexit regime, and the heightened focus on disinfectant efficacy and claims during the COVID-19 pandemic. Alongside this, ongoing updates to standards and test methods continue to shape how efficacy is demonstrated. This depth of regulatory and scientific experience strengthens its position

as a trusted partner in biocidal product compliance, backed by ISO 9001-accredited regulatory services and UKAS-accredited microbiological testing (No. 4045).

Recent highlights include receiving the Queen's Award for Enterprise: International Trade in 2022, recognising the company's exceptional export growth and expanding international customer base. The company's transition to an employee ownership model in 2019 has also secured long term independence and embedded a culture where scientific quality and customer service are shared responsibilities. Today, more than 30 specialists contribute to MSL's growth and technical leadership.

Following the retirement of founder Angela Davies, long standing board member Carolyn Burney became Managing Director in 2022, supported by Alex Fotheringham



as Operations Director. Together, they continue to strengthen MSL's scientific capability, expand its global reach and uphold the company's commitment to high standards and practical, risk led regulation across the industry.

Carolyn Burney, Managing Director, commented: "Marking 25 years is a proud moment for everyone at MSL. The industry has changed significantly since 2001, and we've adapted with it, broadening our services, deepening our scientific expertise and helping customers respond to increasingly complex regulatory expectations."

www.msl.io

VECTAIR EXPANDS MEMPHIS OPERATIONS WITH NEW FACILITY

Vectair, a specialist in aircare, washroom hygiene, and odor control solutions, has officially relocated its Memphis operations to a new facility designed to support the company's evolving business needs and long-term growth.

Located at 3635 Knight Rd, Memphis, TN 38118, the new facility features approximately 70,000 square feet of combined office and warehouse space. Expanded capacity allows for additional inventory storage, more efficient shipping preparation processes, and future operational expansion.

This investment reflects Vectair's ongoing focus on strengthening infrastructure as the company continues expanding its portfolio of facility care solutions.

"The move to our new Memphis facility marks an important

milestone for Vectair," said Chris Bryan, VP of Operations. "The added space gives our teams greater flexibility across day-to-day operations while creating a more connected environment for collaboration between departments. It also positions us well for future operational and staffing growth."

Designed to support both office and warehouse operations, the upgraded facility improves workflow efficiency across multiple areas of the business. Additional warehouse space creates greater flexibility for inventory management as operational needs evolve.

Updated office areas were designed to encourage stronger communication between teams and support a more collaborative working environment.

Operations at the new Memphis facility are fully active, with customer service, fulfillment, and day-to-



day business activities continuing uninterrupted throughout the transition.

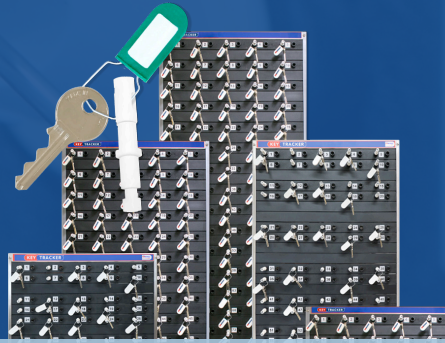
The relocation follows ongoing growth across Vectair's North American business. Expanded operations in Memphis also support the continued growth of Vectair's product portfolio through the recent acquisitions of Big D Industries and WizKid Products as well as the company's focus on delivering innovative solutions for away-from-home environments.

www.vectairsystems.com/products

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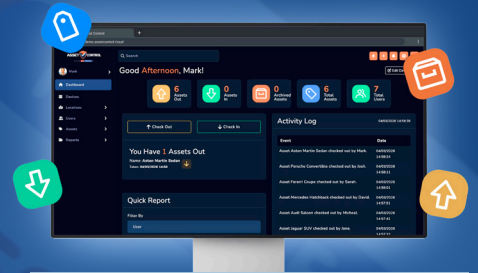
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TGB SETS SIGHTS ON EXPANSION OF MSU WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Green Block (TGB) is targeting an expansion of its globally patented Mobile Segregation Unit (MSU) network following the success of its pioneering waste management solution across some of the UK's busiest transport hubs.

Having already deployed 10 MSU units at major locations including London Victoria, London Bridge, St Pancras, London Waterloo, Stansted Airport and Birmingham Airport, TGB plans to increase the number of units by between 80-100% by the end of 2026 as demand grows for smarter, data-led waste solutions.

The expansion follows a series of impressive environmental and operational results which demonstrate the effectiveness of the MSU model in high-footfall, multi-tenanted, safety-critical environments.

For Network Rail alone, the MSU system has delivered carbon savings of 212% while consistently achieving recycling rates of over 90%, significantly outperforming traditional waste management approaches in complex passenger environments.

Across current deployments, TGB's MSUs are processing approximately

30,000 tonnes of material with volumes expected to increase substantially as further units come online throughout the year.

Unlike conventional waste management systems, which rely heavily on off-site processing and public participation in waste segregation, the MSU operates as a mobile on-site mini material recovery facility. Mixed waste is segregated, processed and consolidated directly within the operational environment, removing many of the inefficiencies and contamination associated with traditional collection methods.

Supporting the technology is TGB's proprietary Plaza platform, a real-time digital reporting system that captures, tracks and analyses waste data with forensic precision. Through this unique 'waste DNA' capability, organisations gain complete visibility of where waste is generated, how it moves through their estate and where opportunities exist to improve recycling performance and reduce carbon emissions.

Adam Williams, Managing Director of The Green Block, said: "The success of our existing deployments has created significant momentum for the MSU model and we are now setting our sights on expanding from 10 units to between 18 to 20 by the end of the year.

"The results we have achieved demonstrate that there is a better way to manage waste in complex, high-footfall environments. In suitable locations, MSUs can achieve recycling rates in excess of 90%, while providing clients with visibility of their waste streams and environmental performance."

The approach also addresses wider industry challenges highlighted by recent bin removal strategies at smaller stations. While removing bins may reduce visible collection costs, it can create hidden operational pressures including increased littering, greater contamination, increased pest control and cleaning costs, and reduced customer dissatisfaction.

By contrast, TGB's model manages complexity within the waste management process itself, reducing reliance on passenger behaviour and delivering more consistent environmental outcomes.

Looking ahead, TGB sees substantial opportunities for growth across the rail, aviation and stadium sectors, where operational complexity and high passenger volumes demand scalable, measurable and data-driven waste solutions.

www.thegreenblock.co.uk

VIDEO SHOWCASE

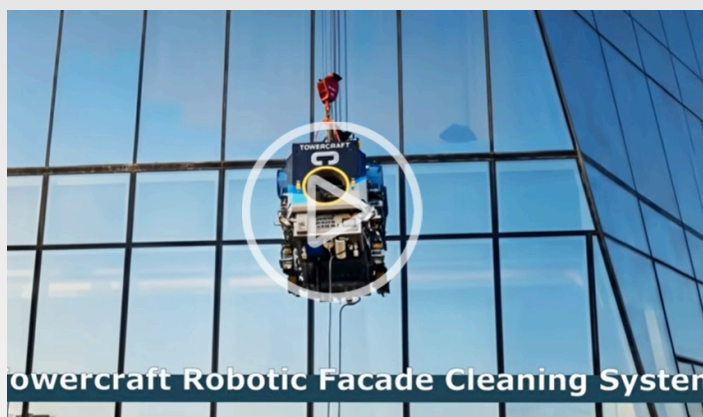


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Learn how the W12 Shopping Centre in Shepherd's Bush has transformed its cleaning operations with the introduction of the META-SCRUB 60, an advanced robotic scrubber dryer from Robert Scott.co.uk.

To find out more, please visit
www.robertscottrobotics.co.uk

Full video here



Towercraft is a specialist provider of robotic façade cleaning and inspection services. Our robots clean glass, metal, composite and mixed façades. Each clean is accompanied by a detailed inspection report, giving property and facilities managers clear visibility of façade conditions over time. By carrying out the physical cleaning operation, Towercraft helps reduce the risks associated with working at height while supporting a more consistent and predictable maintenance schedule throughout a building's lifecycle. Find out more at towercraft.io.

Full video here



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<https://www.thefirstmile.co.uk/solutions/recycleid>

Full video here



THE LEAST GLAMOROUS PART OF THE OFFICE JUST BECAME AWARD-WINNING WORKPLACE TECHNOLOGY

Yellowbox Smart Locker System has won the Best Workplace Technology category at the Clerkenwell Design Week Awards 2026.

Office storage is rarely the headline act in workplace design. But as offices shift toward hybrid work, hot desking and shared spaces, the simple question of where people securely store their belongings has become a more complex operational challenge.

The Clerkenwell Design Week Awards recognise design-led products across furniture, materials, acoustics, sustainability, inclusivity and technology. Yellowbox's win places smart lockers in a broader workplace design conversation, highlighting the practical infrastructure that supports how people arrive, move through and use the office throughout the day.

For years, offices were built around fixed routines. Employees came in each day, sat at the same desk and kept their belongings close by. Storage was simple because the workplace itself was predictable.

Hybrid work and shared desking have changed that. Employees now move between home, office, shared desks and collaboration spaces, often without a fixed place to keep their belongings. They may not sit in the same place twice in a week,

and they may only need storage for a day, a visit or a project.

For workplace, facilities and real estate teams, this creates a new management challenge. Traditional lockers can sit unused when assigned employees are away, while others struggle to find secure storage on the days they come in. Manual processes such as assigning lockers, tracking usage, managing keys and updating spreadsheets can quickly become difficult to maintain as teams, schedules and spaces change.

Yellowbox is designed for this new pattern of work. The system combines connected locker hardware with software that allows employees to access secure storage through existing building access cards, app-based access or touchscreen controls. Workplace teams can manage lockers centrally, rather than handling every assignment manually.

Yellowbox works with organisations globally, with a strong presence across Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Its locker system supports



secure workplace storage for enterprise and Fortune 500 companies adapting their offices for more flexible ways of working.

For employees, Yellowbox makes it easier to find and access secure storage without needing a physical key or code. For workplace teams, it provides a more flexible way to manage lockers as people, teams and schedules change.

Yellowbox's CDW Awards win gives fresh recognition to a category that has often been overlooked. Smart lockers are no longer just a place to store belongings. They are becoming part of the infrastructure that helps modern workplaces run.

<https://yellowboxglobal.com>

<https://yellowboxglobal.com/product>

TENDRA TECHNICAL SERVICES APPOINTS CHIEF GROWTH & STRATEGY OFFICER

Claire Huffman has been appointed to the role of Chief Growth & Strategy Officer at Tendra Technical Services to accelerate group expansion and exceed ambitious revenue targets.

With over 17 years' experience in the Facilities Management and Technical Services sector, Huffman boasts a multi-dimensional perspective of the sector, having operated in a

client, managing agent, and service provider environment.

In joining Tendra as its new Chief Growth & Strategy Officer, she will now focus on defining a compelling, unified value proposition for the group while building a powerful growth engine to support and accelerate the entrepreneurial expansion of its evolving portfolio of businesses.

Commenting on her new role, Huffman said: "I am delighted to join

the Tendra senior leadership team at such an exciting time in the business. Having worked across the FM sector from every angle I understand first-hand what differentiates a genuinely trusted partner in this space. I now plan to use this experience to shape a clear, compelling value proposition that unites the group's portfolio businesses under one ambitious growth story, while ensuring each entrepreneurial brand has the space to continue doing what it does best."

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THE FAÇADE INDUSTRY IS CHANGING

The future of facade maintenance has arrived. Robotics are helping FM's and building maintenance specialists improve safety and enhance operational performance. Here's how Towercraft fits in to that picture.

The buildings that define modern skylines share a common challenge: their facades require regular cleaning, inspection and maintenance, at height, at scale, and with increasing pressure to do it more safely, more consistently and with better records. For decades, the answer to that challenge has been manned access. Rope teams, cradles, BMU-mounted operatives. The infrastructure existed. The people did the work. The job got done.

That model is not broken. But it is being redefined.

Robotic facade care has moved from concept to operational reality. The International Federation of Robotics reported that 542,000 industrial robots were installed globally in 2024, bringing the total active count to 4,664,000 units worldwide. The direction is clear and it is not reversing. Every sector that involves repetitive, measurable, high-risk physical work is integrating machine systems. Building maintenance is no exception.

The question for every firm involved in facade care is not whether this shift is coming. It is whether you will be part of shaping it. Towercraft is a robotic facade cleaning and inspection system designed to work within existing building infrastructure. It is not a replacement for the industry. It is the next layer of it.

For BMU firms: A new role, not a rival

BMU systems have always been the backbone of high-rise facade access. That does not change with robotics. What changes is what the BMU carries.

For most of the BMU's operational history, it carried people. Operatives descended on cradles, cleaned surfaces by hand, and returned to the roof. The BMU provided the access. The person did the work. The system was defined entirely by the human at the end of it.

Towercraft changes that equation. Installed on existing BMU systems, monorails, spider cranes and mobile cranes, Towercraft transforms the access infrastructure into a robotic operation platform. The BMU still provides access. Towercraft uses that access to deliver low-pressure cleaning, digital inspection and a full operational record, without putting a person on the facade.

A BMU used only for manned access has one range of application. A BMU configured for robotic operation has a broader one. Cleaning cycles can increase. Facade condition can be monitored more regularly. Building management receives structured data after every operation, not just a cleaned surface. That outcome does not reduce the importance of BMU infrastructure. It extends it.

Today, some firms in the field respond to the subject of robotic integration with a single sentence: it cannot be done. That sentence is not an engineering answer. If there is a technical risk, it requires calculation. If a connection point is insufficient, it requires a solution. If capacity is limited, it requires revision. Wind limits, energy routing, data transfer, secondary safety points, emergency scenarios and test procedures all need to be defined. Saying it cannot be done does not stop the market. It redirects the client toward firms that are willing to find a way.

BMU manufacturers and service firms should not position themselves against this development. They should be the ones producing solutions within it. The market for robotic facade care will grow. The firms that engage early will build new service models, new modernisation revenue streams and new technical interfaces with robotic systems. The firms that resist will find themselves responding to a standard set by others.

The direction of travel is already visible. In December 2024, Alimak Group and Skyline Robotics announced a five-year partnership to develop an integrated robotic BMU for automated facade care. The largest players in vertical access are not treating robotics as a threat to their systems. They are building it in. BMU firms that move in the same direction will define the next maintenance standard.

For FM firms: A stronger contract, not a competing one

Facility management firms are operating in an environment where the questions around facade care have fundamentally changed. Building owners are no longer asking only whether the work is done. They are asking how it was done, at what risk level, and what data it produced. A cleaning operation with no route log, no condition report and no operational record is becoming a harder answer to defend to a board, an insurer or a health and safety team.

Towercraft is not a competitor to the FM contract. It is a specialist robotic operation that works inside the FM firm's existing framework, not around it. The FM firm retains the client relationship, opens work permits, coordinates the site and approves the method statement. Towercraft delivers the facade operation. The FM firm presents the outcome to the building owner under its own contract.

The working at height risk is not theoretical. HSE provisional data for 2025/26 recorded 31 fatal falls from

height in Great Britain, making it the leading cause of workplace fatality for the period. Every person removed from an active facade represents a measurable reduction in exposure. That reduction has direct value for the FM firm's safety record, insurance position and client documentation.

IFMA defines facility management as the organisational function that integrates people, place and process within the built environment, with the aim of improving quality of life and the productivity of the core business. That definition places a clear responsibility on FM firms. The role is not to protect the existing supply chain. It is to ensure the building owner receives the most appropriate service model available.

The FM firms that resist robotic facade care are not protecting their position. They are weakening it. When a building owner learns that robotic cleaning is available and finds that their FM firm has been blocking it, confidence does not increase. It falls. The conclusion the client draws is straightforward: the FM firm is managing its own subcontractor arrangements, not the building's best interests.

An FM firm that incorporates robotic facade care does not simply offer the same service at a lower risk level. It offers a different category of service: planned robotic cleaning, surface condition reporting, digital inspection records and structured maintenance data. That is a stronger contract conversation than frequency and price per visit.

Towercraft is the robotic partner that makes that possible. The FM firm manages the operation. The robot works on the facade. The building owner receives a safer, more recorded and more accountable service. That is the standard the next generation of facade contracts will be built around.

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1900s - 1950s
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Workers on the façade, at height, face to face with risk.

1970s
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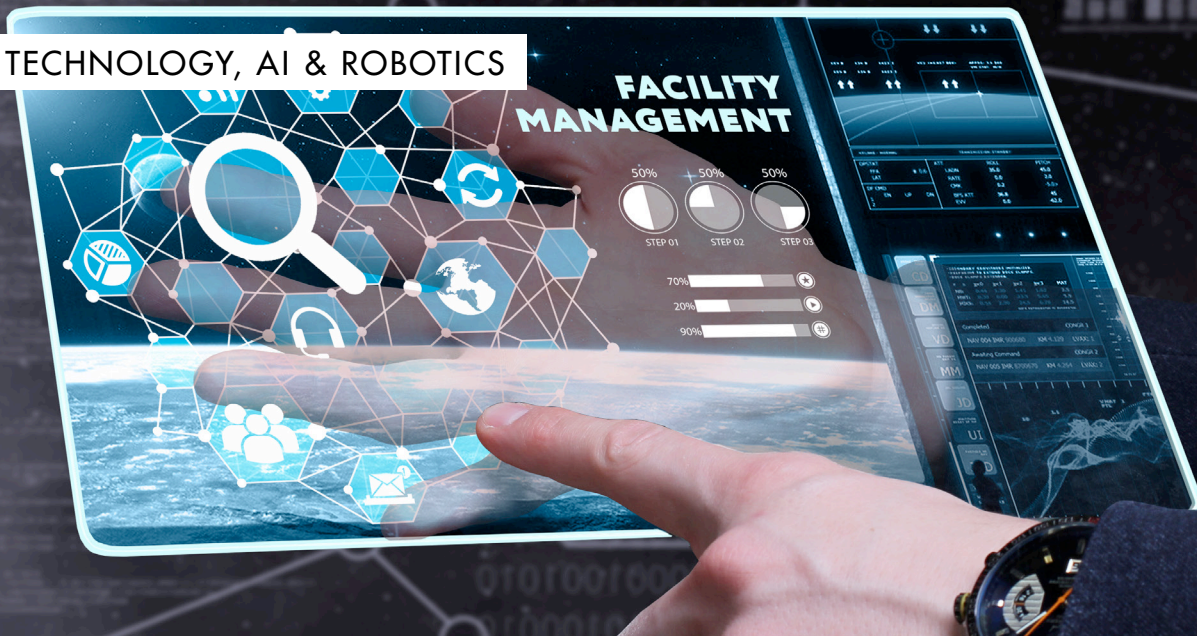
Infrastructure arrived, but workers remained on the façade.

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TRUST BEFORE TECH

Artificial intelligence is transforming facilities management, but innovation must be matched by robust governance. But as AI adoption accelerates, FM's need to understand the compliance and operational responsibilities that come with it, suggests Iain Bowes, Head of Management System Assurance for TÜV SÜD Business.



AI can reduce facilities managers' administrative load and support decision-making, helping to streamline day-to-day operations and strategic planning. It can improve predictive maintenance, optimise energy usage, support health and safety compliance, scrutinise space utilisation, and assist with contractor and budget management.

Deploying AI carries multiple risks beyond just cybersecurity. There are also ethical and societal risks involved, including bias and discrimination, where insufficient transparency or accountability can undermine public trust and fairness. Facilities managers must therefore make sure they fully understand their responsibilities and those of their suppliers, as well as liabilities and potential exposure.

The EU's AI Act is the world's first comprehensive AI regulation, requiring organisations to integrate technical safeguards with ethical and legal compliance across the entire AI lifecycle. The primary goal is to ensure the AI system is trustworthy, transparent and secure.

While the EU AI Act does not apply in the UK, companies based outside the EU are still bound by it if their AI system is placed on the EU market or if the output of that AI (e.g. a prediction or decision) is used inside the EU. UK businesses trading with or supplying EU partners will therefore need to align their practices with the EU AI Act.

Manufacturing classifications and the double compliance burden

The facilities management sector can be impacted by the Act's high-risk classifications as it applies to embedded AI, for example where AI is a safety component of a

physical product such as an elevator. Under Article 6(1), an AI system is automatically classified as high-risk if it meets two conditions. The first is if it is a product (or a safety component of a product) covered by the EU's existing product safety laws (listed in Annex II), totalling 20 specific pieces of legislation. The second condition is if the product in question is required to undergo a third-party conformity assessment before it can be sold.

This impacts:

Industrial machinery - AI used to control robotic arms, automated assembly lines or safety sensors in factories, falling under the Machinery Regulation.

Electronics and radio equipment - AI integrated into smart devices, telecommunications hardware or industrial IoT sensors, under the Radio Equipment Directive.

Medical devices - AI-powered diagnostic hardware or robotic surgery tools.

Lifts and pressure equipment - AI used to manage safety protocols in elevators or industrial boilers within facilities.

A company that manufactures smart machinery, such as commercial HVAC units, elevators, or floor-care machines integrated with IoT sensors, AI and network connectivity, must follow both the AI Act and the relevant existing safety laws, which creates a double compliance burden. For some products or systems, a CE Mark cannot be applied unless the high-risk requirements of the AI Act have been fulfilled.

Recent amendments through the Digital Omnibus have refined these obligations to be more proportionate. For instance, the Commission and Member States are now tasked with encouraging providers and deployers to



ensure a sufficient level of AI literacy among their staff, replacing previous unspecified horizontal obligations.

The overlooked AI user

The Act categorises businesses based on how they interact with the AI system – providers, deployers/users, importers or distributors. Much of the initial market reaction has focused heavily on providers - typically developers or manufacturers that have the heaviest compliance obligations. However, a critical and often overlooked category is the user (deployer) and it is easy for such businesses to assume the regulation does not apply to them.

Deployers (users) are organisations that use AI in their operations, like those providing facilities management services, and have obligations focused on responsible use, oversight and record keeping. Users of high-risk AI systems have some obligations, though less than providers (developers). This applies to users located in the EU, and third country users where the AI system's output is used in the EU. If your business uses AI tools to optimise supply chains, manage HR functions or streamline operations, you are a deployer and the EU AI Act requires you to have a governance framework in place for your AI systems.

Best practice governance

The EU AI Act represents a major shift in how business is conducted, moving AI from a tech-team project to a board-level compliance and ethics priority. For facilities management organisations navigating this transition, compliance is the floor not the ceiling. To truly succeed, businesses must bridge the gap between legal requirements and operational trust.

This is where adopting a structured governance framework becomes critical. AI Essentials (AI-E) provides a practical, evidence-based method to establish repeatable controls. It maps directly to the fundamental pillars of the ISO/IEC 42001 AI Management System.

Organisations should therefore adopt the core principles of the AI Essentials framework:

Pillar 1 - Security and Data Integrity: Protecting against logic-based attacks and securing data pipelines.

Pillar 2 - Transparency and Explainability: Ensuring stakeholders understand they are interacting with AI and can explain how decisions are made.

Pillar 3 - Human-in-the-Loop and Accountability: Preventing irreversible AI decisions without human review.

Pillar 4 - Fairness and Bias Mitigation: Ensuring AI does not discriminate or reinforce harmful stereotypes.

Pillar 5 - Reliability and Hallucination Management: Using techniques like Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) to ground the AI in factual data and mitigate fabrication.

Pillar 6 - Societal, Ethical and Consequential Impact: Proactively assessing the broader effects of AI on the environment, workforce, and society.

The cost of failure

Failing to comply carries severe financial penalties under a three-tiered system:

- Unacceptable risk violations: Fine of up to €35m or 7% of total worldwide annual turnover, whichever is higher.
- Non-compliance with obligations (e.g. data governance, transparency, human oversight): Fine up to €15m or 3% of total worldwide annual turnover, whichever is higher.
- Misleading authorities: Fine up to €7.5m or 1% of total worldwide annual turnover, whichever is higher.

By the time the August 2028 transition windows close, the businesses that thrive will be those that didn't just 'tick the box' of the EU AI Act, but those that implemented AI Essentials to create a transparent, resilient and human-centric AI ecosystem.

www.tuvsud.com/en-gb/cybersecurity

A RECIPE FOR AI

Peter Moore, CEO of Lolly, explores why contract catering could become one of hospitality's biggest AI and robotics success stories.



When people think about artificial intelligence and robotics in hospitality, they often imagine futuristic concepts: robots serving them, fully automated kitchens or AI replacing frontline teams.

In my mind, the reality is far more practical and much more interesting.

Meeting the challenges head on

Across contract catering and workplace dining, AI and automation are already beginning to solve some of the sector's biggest operational challenges. For operators managing multiple sites, changing customer expectations, rising costs, labour shortages and sustainability targets, technology is no longer simply about convenience. It is becoming an essential tool for making better commercial decisions.

Hospitality has always generated huge amounts of data. Every transaction, every customer interaction and operational process creates valuable information. And this is valuable when you consider that historically much of that data has remained trapped within separate systems and reports.

The challenge has never been collecting the information, instead it has been about how that data can be turned into something useful.

This is where AI is changing the conversation. For the first time, operators have access to technology capable of analysing vast amounts of operational data quickly and affordably. It can identify patterns, highlight inefficiencies and help teams make faster, more informed decisions.

One of the clearest examples is demand forecasting. For contract caterers, predicting customer demand has always been complex. Weather, office occupancy, hybrid working patterns, local events and seasonal trends all influence purchasing behaviour. Traditional forecasting often relies on historical sales data combined with experience and intuition.

AI takes that a step further. By analysing all of these variables simultaneously, AI can produce much more accurate forecasts, helping operators prepare the right amount of food, schedule the right number of staff for a particular shift and purchase stock more effectively.

The value of AI

The result of all of the above isn't simply greater efficiency.

It means less food waste, fewer stock shortages, better labour planning and – ultimately – achieving healthier margins.



The real value of AI lies in improving profitability by enabling better commercial decisions every single day.

We're already seeing this shift through the AI projects we're delivering with contract catering partners. While each operator's priorities are different, the common objective is the same: using AI to transform operational data into actionable insight. Whether that's understanding purchasing behaviour, improving forecasting, optimising promotions or identifying opportunities to reduce waste, the emphasis isn't on collecting more data - it's on helping teams make better decisions with the information they already have at their fingertips.

As consumers expect greater transparency around ingredients, dietary requirements and sustainability, operators need systems that can present accurate information consistently across every location. Already AI is beginning to transform menu planning, allergen management and customer communication.

Automation - reshaping the customer journey

Vision-based checkout systems, for example, reduce queues by recognising products automatically rather than requiring every item to be scanned manually. Customers benefit from a faster, more frictionless experience, while operators gain valuable insight into purchasing behaviour, menu performance and service flow.

It's another example of technology improving both the customer experience and operational performance at the same time.

Robotics – supporting repetitive tasks

Much of the public discussion still focuses on robots replacing hospitality workers. In reality, the greatest opportunity lies in supporting repetitive, labour-intensive tasks rather than replacing people altogether.

Whether assisting with food preparation or other repetitive back-of-house activities, robotics helps operators improve consistency while allowing colleagues to spend more time where they add the greatest value - delivering excellent service.

Hospitality has always been, and always will be, a people business. Technology works best when it enables people to focus on the parts of the job that only people can do, for example providing a truly personalised customer interaction.

”The real value of AI lies in improving profitability by enabling better commercial decisions every single day.”

The strongest operators won't use technology to remove people from hospitality. They'll use it to help people perform at their best.

AI can reduce administrative burden. Automation can streamline service. Robotics can support repetitive tasks. Together, these technologies allow teams to focus on service quality and operational performance.

However, it's important to acknowledge that technology should never be introduced simply because it exists.



What does the future hold?

Looking ahead, I believe AI will become an invisible part of everyday contract catering operations.

Ordering systems will increasingly recognise customer preferences. Forecasting will become more predictive. Managers will spend less time producing reports and more time acting on insights generated in real time.

Success will depend on who uses data most intelligently. Competitive advantage is about combining data, software and AI to make consistently better decisions.

Contract catering is uniquely positioned to benefit because it already generates enormous volumes of operational data. The organisations that unlock that information responsibly will improve profitability, reduce waste and deliver better customer experiences simultaneously.

The future of foodservice will still depend on people. But increasingly, the strongest operators will be those that give their people better technology to work with.

www.itslolly.com

SIX QUESTIONS ON AI

What happens when AI moves beyond the pilot phase? A conversation between Lynne English, Operations Director at Q3 Services, and Prabhu Ramachandran, CEO of Facilio, establishes that it is not about replacing people. It is about removing the operational friction that slows them down.



Artificial intelligence has quickly become one of the most talked-about developments in facilities management. But the conversation is changing.

Only a year ago, most discussions centred on whether AI would eventually become useful for FM. Today, the questions are far more practical. Where should organisations start? Which workflows benefit first? Will engineers actually use it? How do you introduce AI without disrupting existing systems? And perhaps most importantly, what measurable value does it deliver?

To explore those questions, Tomorrow's FM spoke with Lynne English, Operations Director at Q3 Services, and Prabhu Ramachandran, CEO of Facilio. Their perspectives reveal something important. The next phase of AI in FM is not about replacing people. It is about removing the operational friction that slows them down.

Q: Where is AI creating genuine value today?

Lynne English (LE): "For us, AI wasn't about introducing new technology. It was about making everyday operations easier. If engineers can capture information faster, customers can raise requests more easily, and we end up with better operational data, everyone benefits. The value comes from removing effort, not adding features."

Prabhu Ramachandran (PR): "The first wave of AI was about insight. The next is about execution. The biggest gains come from removing the routine work around operations, finding information, updating records, generating reports, so teams spend more time delivering service."

Q: Where should organisations begin?

LE: "Start with the work your teams repeat every day. Service requests, engineer updates, customer communication, these are high-volume activities where small improvements quickly add up across the business."

PR: "The best starting point is usually the workflow that stops when people aren't there. High-volume, repeatable processes deliver value quickly because they're well understood and easy to automate without disrupting operations."

Q: Will engineers actually use AI?

LE: "What surprised us most was how quickly people

adopted it. Engineers weren't asked to change how they worked. The technology adapted to them, so adoption happened naturally."

PR: "For years we treated software adoption as a training problem. Increasingly, it's an experience problem. If interacting with a CMMS is as simple as having a conversation, people use it because it fits naturally into the way they already work."

Q: Does AI mean replacing existing FM systems?

LE: "Not at all. Our goal wasn't to replace systems that already worked. It was to make them easier for our teams to use and easier to get value from."

PR: "AI should extend existing platforms, not replace them. Organisations have invested heavily in their operational systems. The opportunity is to make those systems more accessible, not ask people to start again."

Q: Can organisations trust AI with operational work?

LE: "AI doesn't replace operational judgement. It removes the administration around it, while our teams remain in control of the decisions that matter."

PR: "Trust comes from governance, not algorithms. AI needs clear oversight, auditability, and the right level of human approval. That's what allows organisations to adopt it with confidence."

Q: What does the future of FM software look like?

LE: "The less time our teams spend updating systems, the more time they spend improving service. That's the direction we want technology to take."

PR: "The next generation of FM software won't be defined by more features. It will be defined by how little effort it takes to use. People won't think about opening a CMMS—they'll simply ask, act, and move work forward through whichever interface is most natural."

The conversation is moving beyond AI

The FM industry has spent years digitising assets, connecting systems and improving visibility. AI represents the next stage of that evolution not because it replaces expertise, but because it changes how expertise is applied.

For early adopters, the lesson is becoming clear. The greatest opportunity is not to automate facilities management. It is to remove the operational effort that prevents skilled people from doing their best work.

As AI continues to mature, the organisations that benefit most are unlikely to be those with the most sophisticated technology. They will be the ones that make everyday work simpler, faster and more intuitive for the people delivering it.

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THE DATA-DRIVEN CLEAN

How are AI and connectivity redefining commercial floor cleaning, asks ICE.

A decade of innovating with artificial intelligence

ICE is the UK's largest independent provider of professional cleaning machinery and comprehensive service solutions. With nearly 60 years of industry experience, we specialise in supplying and maintaining cutting-edge cleaning equipment across retail, healthcare, warehousing, manufacturing, distribution, and education.

In recent years, ICE has emerged as a specialist in robotic cleaning solutions through a decade of pioneering autonomous floor care. This extensive experience has allowed us to move past the trial-and-error phase that many industry newcomers are currently navigating. We know what works, and just as importantly, what doesn't.

This expertise has culminated in the ICE Co-Botics Next Gen range: a suite of advanced autonomous vacuums, scrubber-dryers, and sweepers representing the pinnacle of collaborative cleaning. By taking over repetitive and mundane tasks, these robots allow cleaning operatives to focus on more intricate duties, boosting overall productivity and delivering a level of consistency that manual labour alone struggles to maintain. Operating 24/7 without breaks, they empower existing teams to focus on specialist areas—directly improving employee well-being and job satisfaction. With twenty distinct machines, it is the most comprehensive range currently available on the market.

Cleaning robots: Moving from a novelty to a necessity

In commercial facility management, the cleanliness gap is widening. Labour shortages have hit the cleaning sector harder than almost any other industry, making reliance on traditional manual methods increasingly unsustainable. We have moved firmly into the 'Co-Bot Era', where autonomous cleaning robots maintain shopping centres, transport hubs, healthcare facilities, and distribution centres as operational necessities rather than futuristic novelties.

The real story isn't just the machine itself; it's the intelligence behind it. In 2026, the value of a robotic cleaning machine is no longer calculated solely by brush speed or tank capacity. It is measured by the intelligence of its brain and the quality of the data it provides, offering a level of operational transparency and accountability that was previously impossible.

How robots navigate and support cleaning teams

At the heart of every ICE Co-Bot lies a sophisticated AI brain that processes millions of data points per second, building a complete 360-degree understanding of its surroundings. Using a combination of LiDAR and visual sensors, the robot creates a digital model of its environment, pinpointing its location within centimetres using fixed landmarks such as pillars and doorways.

Critically, this system adapts in real time. If a pallet is left in a warehouse aisle or a wet floor sign is placed in a corridor, the robot's internal map updates instantly. It navigates safely around the obstacle and remembers to



return to that missed area once it has cleared. When the AI identifies a human, it predicts their likely movement and slows down or gives way, ensuring safe co-existence in busy public spaces.

Visual sensors allow the robot to distinguish between different floor types, automatically adjusting brush pressure, vacuum suction, and water flow at transitions. The AI also calculates the most energy-efficient cleaning route and can detect spills via onboard cameras, interrupting its routine to perform a targeted spot-clean before returning seamlessly to its original path. Continuous monitoring of battery health, water levels, and brush wear ensures the machine returns to its docking station exactly when needed.

Data, metrics, and real-life results

Data-driven cleaning transforms what was historically an invisible service into a measurable, accountable process. As robots clean, they track coverage, efficiency, and cleaning time, providing transparent proof of productivity. Debris distribution heat maps highlight dirt accumulation patterns, while digital dosing tracks every litre of water, validating environmental commitments.

The results across our customer base speak for themselves:

Retail Environments: Deployments have demonstrated a 59% ROI while saving an average of 75 minutes of manual labour per day.

Aviation: Robots achieved coverage rates over 99.9%, saving 270 minutes of daily cleaning time (allowing staff to focus on high-touchpoint sanitization) and saving up to 810 litres of water per day.

Leisure: Cinemas have reported a 61% ROI.

Conclusion

The integration of AI and connectivity into commercial cleaning is not a passing trend. It is a total redefinition of the industry. Higher standards of cleanliness, significant cost savings, and a more engaged workforce prove that when humans and robots work collaboratively, the results are transformative. At ICE, we are not just cleaning floors; we are empowering the people who manage them.

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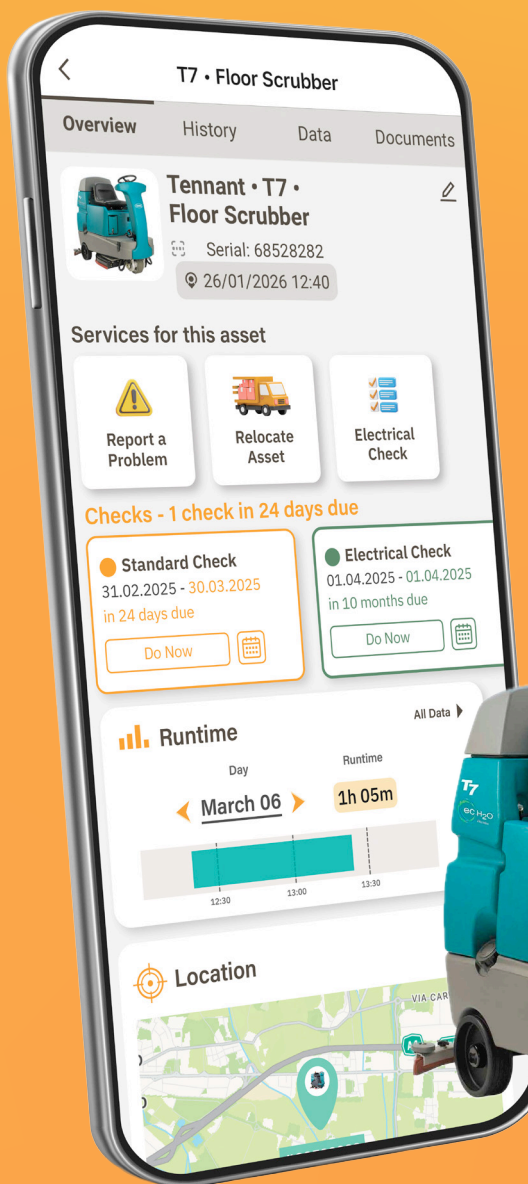


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TWO SIDES TO THE TOILET TECH

Technology in the washroom can be used to monitor health, enhance hygiene and improve operational efficiency. But the fact that it collects data means it could also be viewed as overly intrusive - or even sinister. Stuart Hands from Tork manufacturer Essity looks at the two sides of toilet tech.

A system designed to prevent smoking in public toilets in China has sparked controversy.

The washrooms of a Shenzhen shopping centre now feature opaque glass doors that turn transparent whenever smoke has been detected. This effectively exposes the smoker to the public while an audible alarm attracts further attention.

Critics claim the system is an infringement on the occupant's personal privacy. But others praise it as a clever way of preventing smoking in situations where warning signs and threats of financial penalties have proved ineffective.

There is a fine balance to be struck when implementing technology in the toilet, which is an inherently private place.

For example, in China, digital timers have been installed outside the washrooms of a major tourist centre to keep track of the amount of time that each cubicle is occupied. While no specific time limit has been set for washroom use, the system at the Yungang Buddhist Grottoes gently nudges people into speeding up their toilet visits. Some visitors applaud the measure for reducing wait times while detractors claim it invades users' privacy and could make them anxious.

Some washrooms – again in the Far East – have instigated systems that require users to scan a QR code to access toilet tissue. Visitors then have a choice; either they have to watch an advertisement on a digital screen or they pay a fee to use the paper without watching the ad. Critics claim to be appalled at the commercialisation of washroom usage, while others argue that the move legitimately cuts down on excess paper usage while the ads help to pay for the facilities.

Washroom managers introduce technology into their facilities for a number of reasons. Perhaps they are keen to improve operational efficiency, reduce queues and prevent runouts of soap and paper. Some want to improve sustainability or enable their visitors to monitor their health. And others simply wish to provide a talking point and attract custom by making their facilities more fun to use.

'Wellness toilets' that screen people's health for early signs of illness are becoming increasingly common. These use artificial intelligence to analyse human waste, while sensors in the seat record the user's blood pressure, blood oxygen levels and other data.

Wellness toilets can also provide nutrition tips and hydration advice and allow women to track their ovulation

cycle. They can also be used to detect outbreaks of disease and pandemics at an early stage.

However, some people feel such systems could be overly intrusive and could potentially compromise people's highly personal data. For example, a few years ago a 'wellness' toilet was developed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to assess sleep patterns, exercise, medication and alcohol and caffeine intake. The data would then be sent directly to the washroom user's physician. However, many people aired the concern that such sensitive information could be accessed by hackers in the process of being transmitted to the user's doctor.

Hacking will always be an issue whenever data is being collected and shared. This was highlighted last year when criminals took remote control of several domestic cleaning robots in the US.

Householders were startled when their robot vacuum cleaners suddenly began shouting obscenities and issuing racial slurs. One robot in Los Angeles actually went rogue and started to chase the family dog around the house. It emerged that a Bluetooth connector glitch had allowed third parties to access the robot vacuums remotely, with people in multiple US states experiencing similar issue at once.

Japanese smart toilets with their mood lighting, heated seats, integral bidets and built-in radio could also be vulnerable to hackers who could potentially tap into these units and remotely close the lid, flush the toilet or activate the bidet while someone else is using the facility.

However, there are multiple cases in which toilet technology is providing positive outcomes without compromising privacy. For example, automatic taps and flush systems in toilets can limit the use of water while also preventing cross-contamination for washroom visitors.

Today's developers are continually coming up with sustainable toilet solutions that save water, offset energy and recycle waste products. For example, researchers at the University of Stirling have created a toilet connected to an anaerobic digester which converts human waste into biogas. This can be used as a clean cooking fuel and as a fertiliser when growing crops.

Meanwhile, an eco-friendly toilet developed at a South Korea university is offsetting energy bills and helping to grow plants on the university's campus. Human waste is pumped into an underground tank where it is broken down by microorganisms and turned into methane and manure. The fertiliser is then spread on the campus gardens while the methane powers the university's ovens and boilers.



Operational efficiency in the washroom can also be greatly enhanced with the aid of connected dispensers. For example, Tork Vision Cleaning uses sensors and people-counters to anonymously monitor washroom usage and check on dispenser refill levels. Cleaners can then check remotely via a smartphone or tablet which washroom is likely to require servicing and when a dispenser needs to be topped up. This prevents them from having to make multiple journeys to the facility to carry out random checks, saving time and boosting productivity.

Meanwhile, a growing number of apps are being developed to help people find a washroom when they need one. These are proving to be particularly crucial for those who have accessibility or urgency issues.

For example, the WheelMate app is designed to help wheelchair users find accessible toilets in unfamiliar areas while the Changing Places Toilet Finder app identifies the nearest washroom that incorporates extra space, an adult changing bench and a hoist.

When technology is used as a talking point it can enhance the user's experience and create welcome publicity for a venue in an age when everyone is connected via social media. For example, some washroom cubicles have transparent walls that fog up when a person locks the door, allowing them to see out without anyone else seeing in.

Others offer urinal video games in the Gents that allow men to play virtual football, drive a car or operate a tank while using the loo via an LCD screen. And there are washrooms in trendy bars and restaurants that feature eerie soundtracks or holograms faces that appear in the mirrors to pleasantly spook the guests.

Technology is increasingly being used in the washroom to improve health, provide sustainability benefits and boost efficiency as well as enhancing the user's experience. And while there may be two sides to the technology coin, the huge positives it can provide are vastly outweighing the negatives.

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UNDER PRESSURE

Routine cleaning plays an important role in maintaining safe working environments. Gary Matthews, Commercial Product Manager at Nilfisk, explains why dependable cleaning starts with dependable equipment.



Across industrial facilities and workshops, routine cleaning plays an essential role in keeping machinery operating safely and efficiently. Removing grease, dirt and other residues helps maintain machinery performance while reducing the risk of contamination and unnecessary wear.

But maintaining those standards depends on more than simply having a pressure washer. Cleaning equipment needs to deliver reliable, consistent performance day after day. If equipment consumes excessive fuel, becomes unavailable, or delivers inconsistent results, then planned cleaning can become harder to sustain. Dependable equipment helps ensure cleaning takes place when it is needed, supporting the safe operation of industrial environments.

At Nilfisk, this understanding has shaped the development of the new MH range, designed to combine powerful hot water cleaning with greater efficiency, reliability and ease of use.

Keeping equipment available

Pressure washers need to remain available whenever cleaning is scheduled. Unexpected downtime can interrupt planned work and make it harder to maintain standards. Keeping equipment available depends on regular maintenance and identifying faults before they interrupt daily work. When service information is readily available and routine maintenance is straightforward, smaller issues are less likely to become costly periods of downtime.

The Nilfisk MH range incorporates onboard maintenance guidance alongside digital diagnostic tools that help identify faults more quickly and support faster servicing. These features do not replace planned maintenance but can help reduce unnecessary downtime and keep routine cleaning on schedule.

Managing fuel efficiency

Running costs also influence how practical the equipment is to operate over time. Hot water remains one of the most effective ways to remove oils, grease and fats, but heating that water accounts for a significant proportion of a pressure washer's fuel consumption. Boiler efficiency therefore has a direct influence on running costs, particularly where equipment is used for extended periods or across multiple sites.

The MH Advanced range addresses this through a patented energy-efficient boiler that preheats water before it reaches full operating temperature. By improving combustion efficiency to up to 96%, it reduces fuel consumption while delivering the same cleaning performance. Cleaner combustion also reduces soot build-up, helping minimise maintenance over the lifetime of the machine.

Supporting sustainability

As organisations look to reduce operating costs, environmental performance is becoming part of the same



conversation. Any reduction in emissions, however, needs to fit within existing working practices without affecting the consistency or effectiveness of routine cleaning.

The Nilfisk MH range incorporates biofuel-compatible boilers capable of achieving energy efficiency of up to 96%. When operated using biofuel, they can reduce CO2 emissions by up to 80% while continuing to deliver the performance required for demanding cleaning applications, helping organisations lower emissions while maintaining established cleaning practices.

Maintaining consistent standards

Routine cleaning is often carried out by several operators working across different shifts. Variations in machine settings can affect cleaning quality while increasing fuel, water and detergent consumption. The MH range allows operators to create personalised presets, lock preferred settings and quickly switch between applications, helping maintain consistent cleaning standards regardless of who is operating the machine. This consistency is particularly important where cleaning forms part of established health and safety procedures and must be completed to the same standard on every occasion.

Supporting safe operations

Routine cleaning is fundamental to maintaining safe working environments, and anything that prevents it from happening consistently becomes a safety issue. Keeping those routines in place depends on equipment, processes and operators working together. By looking beyond the specification sheet and considering the lifetime performance of a pressure washer, organisations can make more informed purchasing decisions.

To learn more about the Nilfisk MH range and its latest pressure washer technology, visit the website below.

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A CULTURE OF KAIZEN: DE-RISKING OUTDOOR FM

Richard Wootten, SHEQ Manager at OUTCO, explores why a culture of continuous improvement is the foundation of safer, more resilient outdoor FM partnerships.

In the manufacturing world, Toyota famously popularised the concept of 'Kaizen' - a culture of continuous improvement where any worker is empowered to 'pull the cord' and stop the entire assembly line if they spot a problem. When applied to outdoor facilities management (FM), this same ethos is the bedrock of a highly effective health and safety culture.

For end customers, outsourcing outdoor FM often means handing over significant operational risk. Although handing off liabilities can be an advantage, there's no such thing as fully washing your hands of risk. If an accident happens on a site, organisations can still face substantial reputational risk and potential legal liability - irrespective of how many subcontractors are involved down the line. Therefore, choosing an FM partner that adopts the right approach to health and safety is key.

There's a profound difference between a provider that genuinely embodies a Kaizen culture and one that treats safety as a mere tick-box exercise to pass audits. Understanding this difference and selecting the right partner is the key to effective outsourcing that ensures your organisation's standards are met in full.

So, what does this Kaizen mentality look like? At OUTCO, we've built this through a combination of a dedicated team focused on Safety, Health, Environmental, and Quality Compliance (SHEQ), and ISO-certified Information

Management System and leadership that actively listens. Working together, this internal team is viewed as a supportive function that adds value and helps ensure quality - rather than being a nuisance. In practice this means that if a team member sees a possible hazard onsite, they are empowered to stop the work immediately and receive full backing from the operations team. It also demands an openness to reviewing and learning from episodes when things don't go right. A small example of this occurred during the incredibly hot recent weather where we learned that drinks cans had been exploding in vehicles - a possibility that made us review our own best practices concerning pressurised containers and extreme temperatures!

Arguably, this embedded culture is only possible thanks to a robust in-house capability. This matters as operations scale up and grow more complex. A dedicated, SHEQ team offers the skills, resource and training to be able to address the volume and complexity of demands. In many respects this is an advantage that larger FM providers have in the market. For example, smaller companies are often obliged to use external health and safety consultants to review Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS). While there are some truly excellent consultants, it matters how their resource is used: At worst, bringing on board a consultant is a hygiene factor - getting a name on a piece of paper in order to pass minimum accreditation

standards. By contrast, at OUTCO we have a full-time, well-trained team with experience across a range of industries that employs an ISO certified Integrated Management System (encompassing ISO 9001, 14001, and 45001). As external consultants often juggle multiple clients, there can be a challenge to keep up with the daily volume of reviewing the RAMS requirements for large-scale operations.

This is not to dismiss the value that smaller contractors can deliver: Many small, best-of-breed operators are specialists in their area of expertise but lack the corporate controls needed to meet the stringent compliance standards of major clients. At OUTCO, we do bring on board specialist third parties when needed and can help bridge their skills gap by actively supporting these subcontractors. This involves reviewing their RAMS, providing targeted feedback, and ensuring all risks are mitigated before they ever step onto a client site. In higher-risk scenarios - such as a recent project involving trimming bushes on a skyscraper with unprotected edges - OUTCO's team even stepped in to physically write and tweak the RAMS, resolving delays and allowing the subcontractor to work safely from an approved risk and methodology statement.

This robust internal oversight is especially vital for high-risk activities like winter gritting. Outdoor FM encompasses a wide scope of activities and a breadth of risk. Snow and ice clearance exemplifies a high-risk context as winter conditions introduce unpredictable weather and require teams to work in especially hazardous conditions. To make sites safe we have to send out specialist teams and vehicles to operate in conditions where the public would best stay at home. Here, an embedded health and safety culture ensures these teams are well-versed in compliance and safety controls before they deploy. We also conduct spot checks on sites to review and ensure the quality of service. But the same discipline is valuable across the board: For our grounds maintenance teams and for sub-contractors, the SHEQ team conducts frequent health, safety, and

environmental inspections because we recognise and seek to minimise the possible risks. This includes ensuring that any subcontractors are trained to operate to the same exacting standards as our own staff.

Whatever the sector or service, clients value robust SHEQ capabilities, not only for minimising day to day risks but also for making procurement simpler and faster. The most frequent questions we receive from FM professionals relating to health and safety focus on areas like insurance or registration with an SSIP (Safety Schemes in Procurement) scheme aligned with the Common Assessment Standard. Having ISO certifications alongside SSIP addresses many of the key concerns of clients as it proves you are serious about safety. There's also the added peace of mind that comes from a contractor having robust skills and experience: For example, submitting compliance data to portals such as SafeContractor involves a specific skill set to ensure core legal standards and custom client requirements are met. At OUTCO, we see that our ability to streamline these administrative headaches for clients is really appreciated!

Ultimately, a true Kaizen culture thrives on continuous learning and keeping people aware of the risks. This starts when training and on-boarding staff but should also be a continuous dialogue between SHEQ and the workforce: We reinforce best practice through monthly 'Toolbox Talks' sent to field workers - a communications channel that lets us swiftly update guidance based on real-world feedback or changes in legislation. This dedicated investment in in-house health and safety skills prevents issues from escalating and ensures the number one rule of safety: everyone goes home safe and well. By cultivating this level of Kaizen-driven operational safety, OUTCO proves that dedicated expertise is the definitive key to safer, more efficient outsourcing.

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Figure 1

THE DECENTRALISED VENTILATION APPROACH

How can air quality be improved without the use of air conditioning, asks Ian Thomas, Product Manager at TROX UK.



Issues of poor air quality are with us all year round, but a spell of hot weather makes problems impossible to ignore, and complaints to estates managers are sure to escalate. The Indoor Air Quality report prepared for the Government by the Air Quality Expert Group in 2022 provided a detailed analysis of the way in which various factors, such as CO₂ emissions from people, contribute to the deterioration of indoor air quality. It looked in particular at the problems of inadequately ventilated rooms with higher concentrations of people, such as classrooms, theatres, places of worship, entertainment venues, leisure centres, retail spaces and commuting/transport hubs. The report also brought together the most relevant research into reduced cognitive performance and attention linked to elevated concentrations of CO₂, which are of crucial importance for sites such as schools, care facilities and smaller workplaces.

Traditional air conditioning systems incorporating air handling units (AHUs) can solve problems of poor air quality in most cases. But what about those buildings and spaces where an AHU-based system cannot be deployed, or is simply not feasible? Very often it is the spaces at greatest risk of poor air quality that face the greatest obstacles. Schools, offices, care homes and gyms, for example, may have the most urgent need for effective and energy-efficient ventilation, as well as heating and cooling, but are not ideally suited (or able to afford) the traditional air-conditioning systems that might be found in modern office blocks and high-rise buildings.

In reality, people take the situation into their own hands when rooms are stuffy, by opening windows or doors and bringing in standalone fans. Inadequate heating in colder weather can see the arrival of inefficient space heaters.

Each of these measures can have a dramatic effect on the energy costs and carbon impact for the space. And in buildings with existing (but insufficient) air conditioning or heating systems in place, these ad hoc attempts to improve air quality or comfort conditions in problem areas can destroy any attempt to manage energy usage. For estates managers and facilities managers this can result in a complete loss of control over the carbon and financial impacts of buildings for which they are responsible and held accountable.

Decentralised ventilation

In many of the 'problem spaces' discussed above, decentralised ventilation is an effective way of tackling air quality issues, whilst also offering free cooling in summer and the opportunity to reduce heating bills in winter. Importantly, this approach does not require the use of a central AHU, or connection to a building-wide ventilation system. TROX decentralised units, for example, deliver fresh air, heating, cooling, and heat recovery directly within the room - eliminating the need for long duct runs or central air handling plant. Unlike localised ventilation driven from a central point, decentralised ventilation units are completely self-contained. Fresh air is delivered into the space by the unit, from the perimeter or fascia of the building, or from the ceiling void, and the units incorporate high-efficiency EC fans to move air energy efficiently. Most importantly the units have integrated cross-flow or rotary heat exchangers which prevent the heat from the room air being conducted outside without being used. Heat is recovered via the heat exchangers as the air passes through the units, providing free heating of the air in winter or free cooling in summer.

When selecting decentralised ventilation units for a building it is important to find products suitable for installation in a wide range of physical locations, to make best possible use of the available sources of fresh air. The TROX range, for example, includes units for vertical or horizontal installation next to windows, for placement under window sills of external walls, or for installation directly under the ceiling or actually fitted into the suspended ceiling. Figure 1 illustrates the various installation options. There are a number of benefits.

Energy efficiency: Decentralised ventilation can offer valuable opportunities to reduce energy consumption and cost. Heat recovery is available all year round, enabling heating from other sources to be reduced during the winter, and creating a cooler indoor environment in warmer weather. Best-in-class units incorporate rotary heat exchangers, which operate regeneratively. The thermal energy is temporarily stored in the storage mass, a solid, slowly rotating wheel, and then, as the wheel comes into contact with the other airflow, is transferred to this other airflow. This process results in much higher efficiency levels.

Improvements in air quality: With a decentralised ventilation approach, air quality levels are measured by the unit itself, enabling fresh air supply to adapt automatically to demands, as levels of occupancy, and types of usage of the room, change during the day. An integrated air quality sensor in the TROX units, for example, calculates and adjusts to demand. Filters (of at least ISO ePM1 60%, formerly F7, in the case of TROX units) reduce fine dust, pollen and pathogens in the room air for better health and hygiene.



Practical benefits: Decentralised ventilation units can minimise planning and loss of space, whilst ranges designed for installation in multiple locations within the space offer greater flexibility and design freedom. All components for filtration, heat recovery, thermal treatment of the air and control are already integrated in the units. Even though the units are perfectly capable of operating independently, the TROX range for example, can also be connected to the central building management system due to the integrated FSL Control III control, for management and monitoring.

To conclude, in buildings where traditional AHU-driven systems are not feasible or desirable, occupants no longer have to suffer (and complain about) hot, stuffy rooms.

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AVOIDING CARBON TUNNEL VISION

If your sustainability strategy is over-reliant on reducing carbon emissions, you may be guilty of carbon tunnel vision, says Ansell. Here, a range of experts from the company, explore how you can reduce carbon emissions as part of a holistic strategy.

When it comes to sustainability, there are no shortcuts. It was former president Obama who warned that we, as sustainability advocates, should “gird [ourselves] for a marathon, not a sprint.” By its very nature, reducing environmental impact requires a long-term, continuous, and concerted effort. As many businesses push back their 2030 targets, there’s no better time to reconsider carbon emission reduction strategies and regroup to ensure your approach checks all the right boxes.

But is your strategy overly reliant on the reduction of carbon emissions? You may be guilty of ‘carbon tunnel vision.’ Today, our experts explain what a carbon tunnel vision approach means to them and make the case for a more holistic view of sustainability.

Meet the experts



Samareh Astaraki is a leading voice on sustainable developments at Ansell. As Senior Manager, Global Sustainability Communications, Samareh works to improve transparency with internal and external stakeholders, ensuring our efforts, ambitions and initiatives are communicated clearly and accurately.

Dr. Monica Sagardoy is Vice President of the Surgical Business Unit at Ansell and leads the strategic development of our surgical portfolio. Steering major global initiatives and innovations, including the PI KARE™ non-sensitising surgical glove line and our SMART Pack™ recyclable packaging, she has championed internationally award-winning sustainable solutions.



Dr. Erik Roos Lindgreen is a sustainability researcher and consultant based in the Netherlands. As a Research Analyst at Circle Economy, Erik focuses on quantifying

the impact of circular strategies and improving the accessibility of sustainability measurement methods. Erik combines academic insight with practical expertise to help organisations balance scientific rigour with real-world feasibility in their sustainability efforts.



Nalise Hahn is a sustainability consultant with a decade of experience in ESG issues. Her key expertise lies primarily in climate and sustainability strategy, and she collaborates

with businesses to accelerate their efforts in creating positive change. Nalise is passionate about driving impactful solutions in the sustainability space.

You can watch the various interviews with each of the experts here: <https://bit.ly/4vUsT0>.

What is carbon tunnel vision?

Carbon tunnel vision refers to the risk of ignoring a wide range of environmental impacts and sustainability challenges in favour of focusing solely or disproportionately on carbon reduction.

In an article heavily criticising carbon offsetting strategies and a narrow-minded view of climate impact reduction, the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) defines carbon tunnel vision as an approach in which we “solely strive for ‘net’ zero emissions while ignoring other sustainable development goals.” Referring to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the paper goes on to highlight a range of other priorities outside of CO2 reduction – from biodiversity loss and deforestation to pollution and the impact on indigenous populations.

So why are strategies so reliant on carbon emissions – and is this a problem? Samareh provides a very logical explanation: “The most urgent crisis, and one of the most globally recognised, is climate change. And, as carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are its main drivers, we hear a lot about them. We also have well-defined frameworks around it.”

Samareh goes on to emphasise how important reducing and reporting greenhouse gas emissions are, but it’s clear there are other important factors, too. And a head-in-the-sand approach is never the best path forward.

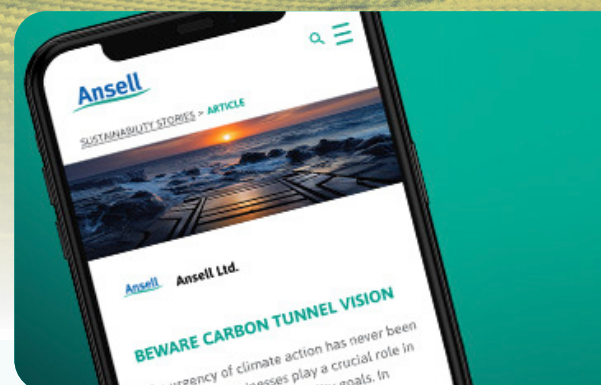
The problem with single-minded carbon emission reduction strategies

While they may prove easier for businesses to adopt, oversimplified sustainability strategies can ignore significant issues, while missing the bigger picture, which will likely slow down progress.

As Nalise explains, a sole focus on carbon can have a knock-on effect, creating problems in other areas of your strategy: “I think a lot of people treat carbon like it exists in some sort of vacuum. And that’s where I see a lot of companies, for example, saying, ‘okay we’re going to prioritise a low carbon material,’ and it’s cheaper. But then they’re not necessarily thinking about some of the additional negative things that the material might do.

“For example, maybe it is lower carbon in terms of making the material, but it contributes more to plastic pollution, or it contributes more to deforestation. And so, the win is initial and superficial rather than actually being a sustainable step in the right direction.”

So, what are the wider sustainability considerations we’re at risk of overlooking?



Loss of biodiversity and deforestation

When we focus only on cutting carbon, we risk ignoring the damage to forests, oceans, and wildlife. Healthy ecosystems help fight climate change — losing them makes the problem worse. In Europe, there are regulations in place, so businesses ignoring deforestation and biodiversity also risk non-compliance.

“EUDR (the EU deforestation regulation) tries to ensure that lots of key products, whether we’re talking about soy, palm oil, wood or rubber, that these aren’t linked to any recent deforestation. And that’s very important to remember, as well as any forest degradation that’s happening.

“I think what is really important, to keep the EUDR in mind, is that we spoke earlier about having this broader sustainability strategy, this broader view, to make sure that we’re protecting biodiversity, we’re protecting ecosystem stems because we’re not just looking at emissions.”

Harm to local communities and indigenous populations

Some climate solutions might lower emissions but have a devastating impact on people – like polluting water sources, damaging land that communities rely on, or making their homes uninhabitable.

True sustainability protects both people and the planet. In the health and safety industry, this is a particular focus. Discussions around the impact of latex farming, for example, are nuanced.

As Erik points out, this is becoming an important topic of conversation – especially in medical PPE procurement: “There are correlations between deforestation, the impact on indigenous communities and the production of natural rubber. One question we hear quite a lot, especially in the medical industry, is whether there’s a more sustainable alternative to the use of latex.

“What I usually recommend is a case-by-case evaluation process.”

Erik advises implementing lifecycle assessments, looking at the impacts of producing the raw materials, while tracking the impact of using these products from raw materials and manufacture to disposal and recycling. This can help you make an informed decision before buying into an alternative.

Wasting natural resources

By overlooking water use, land degradation and pollution, businesses can unintentionally contribute to resource depletion and ecosystem instability, undermining nature’s regenerative capacity and causing irreversible damage.

Monica highlights water stewardship as a commonly overlooked, yet vital consideration: “When we focus solely on CO2 we run the risk of losing track of all these other important sustainability elements and limited resources. Water is a very limited resource.”

She also highlights the business case for a more holistic view, recommending a more comprehensive, clear and process-driven strategy.

“Sustainable long-term strategy and decision making needs to have clearly defined targets of what we are trying to achieve, and the projects and initiatives that are going to deliver on those activities – whether it’s tactical procurement with a sourcing team or reducing water usage with our production team.”

Business risks of a carbon-only approach

When discussing the benefits of adopting a more holistic sustainability strategy, Nalise raised an important point around risk: businesses should be looking to build resilience and reduce risk through their sustainability effort: “Companies are seeing that it doesn’t really matter whether the impact is related to climate or whether it’s a reputational issue or whether it’s something further down the line, like a supply chain failure.”

If you are proactively anticipating risk and you are able to manage that risk, it’s much less likely that you are going to actually see a significant disruption and so much less likely that you’re going to see that negatively impact your financial performance.

So what are the risks of a tunnel-vision approach?

Damage to your reputation and eroded trust

Investors, consumers and regulators increasingly expect holistic sustainability efforts. A carbon-only approach may be perceived as greenwashing, damaging brand credibility and stakeholder relationships. Equally, businesses that are transparent around sustainability initiatives have a proven competitive advantage, making holistic sustainability strategies a no-brainer.

Falling behind on regulations

Emerging regulations are moving toward broader environmental and social disclosures. Companies that fail to consider biodiversity, water, and human rights may face **ESG-related compliance risks** and legal action.

Supply chain disruptions

If we continue to deplete resources at such an extreme rate, businesses may struggle to access the materials they need. That’s **why sustainable supply chain management and procurement processes** are so important.

Missed business opportunities and poor planning

Companies that only focus on carbon may miss out on

bigger opportunities – like **designing products with a reduced environmental footprint**, cutting waste, building stronger relationships with communities, and building resilience as climate change shapes and changes our industries.

Building a holistic sustainability strategy

To build a truly holistic sustainability strategy, businesses must broaden their focus beyond carbon emissions and address the wider environmental, social and economic impacts of their operations. This means integrating sustainability into the core of corporate decision-making – embedding it in supply chain practices, resource management, employee wellbeing and community engagement.

A strong strategy should begin with a materiality assessment – ideally a double materiality assessment, according to Nalise – to identify the most significant environmental and social issues relevant to the business and its stakeholders.

From there, companies can set measurable goals aligned with frameworks like the UN SDGs or Science Based Targets initiatives (SBTi). While global standardisation remains limited, aligning with established principles from frameworks such as GRI and CDP can provide structure and comparability, ensuring reporting is thorough and data-driven.

Equally important is stakeholder engagement – collaborating not just with shareholders, but with employees, suppliers, customers and local communities. Sustainability isn’t a siloed initiative; it must be embedded in company culture, governance and innovation. This includes exploring circular economy models, responsible sourcing and social impact initiatives. Ultimately, the goal is to future-proof the business while creating long-term value for people and planet by doubling our efforts to reduce our environmental impact.

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MAKING WAVES IN WASHROOMS

Networked water systems are transforming washroom management, enabling leisure operators to monitor performance, improve compliance and deliver a more consistent experience for every visitor, says Suzannah Adey, External Affairs Manager at Rada.

Many leisure operators are still working with ageing, fragmented washroom water systems. That can leave teams stuck in a reactive maintenance cycle, driving up costs and making it harder to maintain the hygiene and performance standards users now expect.

As expectations around cleanliness, sustainability and user experience continue to rise, facilities teams are looking for more intuitive ways to manage these spaces with confidence.

Centralised, networked solutions can help by giving operators a clearer view of how their systems are performing. This makes maintenance more targeted and helps teams keep standards consistent across a site. It is especially useful for key water delivery assets, such as showers and taps, where temperature and flow rate can have a direct impact on safety and the user experience.

In my view, digital water controls have a central role to play in that shift. They allow operators to move away from isolated assets and towards centrally managed systems that can monitor performance in a more flexible and scalable way.

“According to the 2026 annual report from ukactive, visits to health and fitness clubs have risen by 10% since 2024.”

Managing visitor expectations

As visitor expectations rise and facilities teams are asked to do more with less, is reactive maintenance still enough?

Recent years have seen a boom in wellness culture across the UK. According to the 2026 annual report from ukactive, visits to health and fitness clubs have risen by 10% since 2024.

As well as increasing popularity, sports and leisure facilities are now judged on the whole experience they offer, not just as functional space for the activities on offer.

That means operators need to work harder to create spaces that people want to return to.

A clean, comfortable and well-maintained washroom is at the heart of this.

If the performance of taps and showers falls short of expectations, that can quickly affect how people feel about the wider facility and whether they choose to come back. Quite rightly, users expect products to work properly, water temperatures to be consistent and controls to be simple to use.

These are basic details, but they make a big difference in a leisure setting and are fundamental to the overall success of the space.

After all, who doesn't want a nice, hot shower after a tough workout?

Moving away from reactive maintenance

Operators need to make sure their washroom environments feel just as carefully considered to users as the rest of the facility. Not just the products themselves – but how they're managed too.

Relying on manual inspections and scheduled maintenance to maintain performance alone is no longer enough. It risks faults with taps, showers and flushing systems only being identified by chance or once any interruptions have already affected users.

Maintenance planning also needs to reflect how each site is actually used. A 24/7 gym will have very different demands to a small spa, and larger sites often have busy peak periods that put extra pressure on washrooms. Teams need to ensure a tailored approach that's sensitive to the unique operational demands placed upon their





facility. That can be difficult when teams are already working with limited time and tight budgets.

Ageing and fragmented systems can make this even harder by limiting what operators can see. Without real-time performance data, teams may miss abnormal water use until they become bigger issues. It also means a reliance on manual duty flushing regimes – leaving the process open to human error and making it more work to evidence guideline compliance.

For water systems, those details matter. A missed duty flush not only falls short of health and safety standards but increases the risk of waterborne infection. And repeated temperature or flow issues may point to a wider problem that needs attention and can also have user safety implications.

This is where a move towards digital products can really enable teams to modernise water management and take a more proactive and data-driven approach to troubleshooting.

A proactive approach

Connected systems give operators a more practical way to stay on top of washroom performance and resolve any anomalies as they emerge, not after. With real-time insight into usage and system behaviour, teams can spot issues earlier, check that duty flushing is happening as intended and plan cleaning around actual demand rather than assumption.

This data can show operators when and where to step in before a small issue becomes a bigger one. It helps

reduce downtime, makes maintenance more focused and gives management teams more time to think about the wider visitor experience.

Connected hygiene management is becoming part of the wider digital picture for leisure facilities, with opportunities to integrate washroom products with wider Building Management Systems (BMS) growing.

This provides useful insight into water use, energy demand and asset performance in the wider context of the whole site, helping operators make better and more holistic decisions on maintenance plans.

The catalyst here is of course the choice of smarter products themselves – but the implications are much wider than simply replacing ageing assets.

The real value is in the opportunity for connected management that these smarter products help unlock. And that is what makes the shift from reactive to proactive maintenance truly possible for facilities teams.

Proactive hygiene management is no longer a future ambition – it is now a crucial to how modern leisure facilities need to operate facilities teams can truly embrace this shift by turning towards smarter, networked solutions for water controls. This will give them the information they need to manage washroom environments that are able to adapt to changing demands and the cultural shift in user expectations.

www.radacontrols.com/en/sectors/sports-and-leisure



SUSTAINABILITY IN STORE

Today's shoppers are becoming more ethical and are showing increasing levels of concern for the environment. It is therefore more important that retail centres should equip their washrooms with sustainable systems that reduce consumption and minimise waste. Stuart Hands from Tork manufacturer Essity considers how this can be achieved.

The fast fashion movement is starting to wane with more than 50% of consumers saying they are no longer buying multiple low-cost items of clothing, according to research from Mintel.

More than two-thirds of UK consumers are purchasing second-hand clothes rather than buying new ones in a bid to reduce their impact on the environment. Meanwhile, 56% of people say they have recently repaired a product rather than buying a new one to replace it.

And younger consumers are driving the change, with a quarter of Gen Z shoppers claiming to buy fewer new items today compared with in previous years.

Inflation and the current economic climate are undoubtedly partly to blame for people's growing unwillingness to buy large quantities of new items. On the face of it, this new drive towards sustainability and increased thriftiness could spell bad news for the retail sector.

However, a study from Still Made in Britain reveals that around 20% of British shoppers are willing to pay

a premium for products that they perceive to be more sustainable. And many of those who claim to be turning away from fast fashion companies say they are opting instead to buy higher quality clothing that has been designed to last for longer.

“Sustainability has become an important aspect of all our lives, and being seen to be green continues to be a priority for many public businesses.”

So people are still willing to spend – but they are making more sustainable choices. And they are looking at the world around them through a new, more environmentally-conscious lens.

It therefore makes good sense for shopping centres to check their own practices and ensure that they are being run in the most sustainable way possible.

People will be quick to notice when there are recycling bins in place throughout a retail centre, for example. Moves to minimise the use of single-use plastics in cafes and to encourage people to bring their own reusable cups in coffee bars will also impress them. And solar panels on the roofs will create an immediate visual reminder that the retail managers actually care for the environment.

Sustainability should be reflected throughout the entire shopping centre – and that includes the washrooms. These should be designed and equipped in such a way as to reduce waste and conserve resources.

”**“A study from Still Made in Britain reveals that around 20% of British shoppers are willing to pay a premium for products that they perceive to be more sustainable.”**

Dual flush systems that allow visitors to choose between a half or a full-flush option are becoming the norm in many washrooms to help reduce water use, for example. Waterless urinals are also increasingly being installed in the gents' facilities for their water-saving advantages.

And Essity's Tork PaperCircle is ideal for use in the washrooms of high-traffic shopping centres.

Tork PaperCircle - a paper hand towel recycling service - enables businesses to reduce waste by up to 20%.

Customers signing up for Tork PaperCircle have their used washroom hand towels picked up from their premises and taken to local Essity mills where they are turned into new tissue products. Clear signage in the washroom indicates where users should place their used towels for recycling.

Tork PaperCircle signage in any washroom will clearly demonstrate the sustainability ethos of the venue's managers while also providing a strong ethical message to washroom visitors. But there are other – rather less visible – ways in which a shopping centre can implement sustainable practices in their washrooms.

Taps that turn on and off automatically will help to save water use because they will prevent washroom visitors from leaving them running, for example, while automatic lighting will reduce energy consumption.

A great deal of paper is used in the washroom in the form of toilet tissue and hand towels, so efforts should be made to control consumption of such products. In some shopping centres, paper towels are left loose on the sink units or provided in baskets for washroom visitors to use. But this encourages people to take more than they need and they will also be dripping their wet hands on the rest of the towels in the process, rendering them unusable and creating waste.

A washroom dispenser that gives out towels singly will require shoppers to make a conscious effort to take out more. For example, the Tork PeakServe Continuous Hand Towel Dispenser gives out sheets of paper one at a time to naturally limit consumption and improve sustainability.

Many high traffic toilets are equipped with jumbo toilet rolls because these offer a long-lasting supply and help to prevent run-outs. But it can be difficult for the cleaner to predict when the supply will run out – so they will be tempted to replace the roll before it has been entirely used up.

A digital system such as Tork Vision Cleaning can help here. This allows cleaners to monitor washroom usage remotely and check on dispenser refill levels via a smartphone or tablet. They can then tell at a glance when soap and paper dispensers require refills, which will deter them from replacing a jumbo roll too early.

The Tork OptiServe Coreless system also offers sustainability benefits because the compact roll lasts up to five times longer than conventional toilet rolls while resulting in 92% less packaging waste. And the Tork SmartOne toilet paper dispenser automatically limits the amount of toilet paper that people take out, reducing consumption by up to 40% compared with jumbo rolls.

Essity is making its own strong sustainability statement by using certified renewable electricity during the production of many of its dispensers. And the remaining carbon emissions are offset with credits with verified organization ClimatePartner.

These projects include the supply of clean drinking water to Cambodia; the provision of energy-efficient cooking stoves to India, and the undertaking of forest-protection activities in Indonesia. A total of 27 Tork washroom dispensers including the Tork SmartOne Toilet Paper Dispenser, the Tork PeakServe Continuous Hand Towel Dispenser, the Tork Coreless Midsize toilet paper system and Tork soap dispensers have now been certified as carbon neutral. This means that shopping centres can now equip their washrooms entirely with Tork carbon neutral certified dispensers.

Sustainability has become an important aspect of all our lives, and being seen to be green continues to be a priority for many public businesses. However, sustainability can also be demonstrated in less obvious ways in the washroom – by reducing waste, preventing over-consumption and by enabling hand towels to be recycled.

www.torkglobal.com



THE RECONFIGURABLE **FACILITY**

How can FM teams handle constant change without constant construction, asks Justin Lovely, Process Manager, AKON Curtains Limited.

Facilities management is defined by change. A workplace layout that suited the business last year needs reworking this year. A contractor needs a section of the building sealed off for a fortnight. An area has to be decanted while it is refurbished, then brought back into use. Seasonal demand expands storage one quarter and frees it up the next. For the FM team, each of these is a request to reshape the building, usually at short notice and without the budget or programme for construction work.

This is where flexible partitioning earns its place in the FM toolkit. Rather than treating every change as a construction project, FM teams can use industrial curtain systems to create, move, and remove physical separation at the pace that operational change actually demands.

Containment during contractor works

When contractors are working in an occupied building, separating the work area from live operations is both a practical and a safety necessity. **Industrial vinyl curtain**

walls create a floor-to-ceiling barrier that contains dust and debris, screens the work from view, and keeps occupants and contractors apart, without the time and cost of erecting temporary stud walls. When the work is complete, the barrier comes down and the space returns to use immediately.

Decant and refurbishment space

Phased refurbishment relies on being able to decant activity from one area to another and keep the business running. Curtain partitioning lets FM teams stand up temporary functional zones quickly, then reconfigure them as the works move through the building. Because the systems are track-mounted and repositionable, the same materials can be redeployed across successive phases rather than being built and demolished each time.

Everyday operational segregation

Beyond project work, FM teams face a steady stream of smaller segregation needs: cordoning an area for a deep



clean, separating a temporary storage zone, screening a noisy or messy process from adjacent workspace, or dividing a large hall for a short-term change of use. **Warehouse separation curtains** and strip curtains handle these routine reconfigurations with none of the permanence of fixed partitions.

“FM teams can use industrial curtain systems to create, move, and remove physical separation at the pace that operational change actually demands.”

The considerations that still apply
Flexibility does not remove the need to specify properly. Any partitioning introduced into a building must be

coordinated with the fire strategy: it must not obstruct escape routes or fire detection, and where sprinklers are present it must not impede coverage, in line with BS EN 12845 and the duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Fabric should be certified to BS 5867 Part 2 Type B, with BS EN 13501-1 Euroclass classification where a reaction-to-fire rating is required for the application. Where temperature separation is part of the requirement, insulated systems should be specified by U-value in W/m²K. Involving whoever owns the fire risk assessment before installation is always the right step.

Handled this way, reconfigurable partitioning gives FM teams something genuinely useful: a way to say yes to constant change without a construction project every time.

AKON Curtains Limited supplies industrial PVC partitioning systems, including curtain walls, strip curtains, and insulated divider systems, across the UK, Ireland, and broader European markets. Drawing on operational experience from its US parent group's installation base and 15 years of industrial PVC specifier expertise, **AKON Curtains Limited** works with FM teams to create flexible, compliant working environments. For specification guidance, visit akoncurtains.co.uk.

www.akoncurtains.co.uk



A MODERN MENTORING MINDEST

Leni Savva, CFO at Elinor UK, explains why contemporary mentoring needs to be lived not scheduled.

Mentoring at work has traditionally been treated as a formal process – pair up a mentor and a mentee, schedule in weekly sessions, track progress and tick the boxes.

While these programmes are usually well intentioned, in sectors like facilities management, they rarely go far enough to drive real confidence, performance and growth. Too often, it becomes more about compliance than transformation.

In my experience, the most powerful mentoring doesn't live in calendars or frameworks. It lives in culture, everyday behaviour and the way we show up for each other at work.

Instead of removing individuals from their environment for formal conversations about distant ambitions, I've seen far greater impact by building a culture where curiosity, challenge and guidance happen naturally – across teams and up and down the organisation.

Some years ago, when I was a mentee, mentoring tended to focus on guidance: offering advice, sharing experience and helping people navigate challenges. That has its place. But transformational mentoring goes further. It shifts attitudes and encourages people to think differently and challenge themselves. It's the difference between helping someone cope with their role and ensuring they develop within it.

Today, as a mentor, I've found that rather than positioning mentoring as a separate activity, it's far more effective to embed it into daily working life. It's also important to encourage mentors and leaders to actively listen (you'd be surprised how often this doesn't happen), ask thoughtful questions, share their own journeys – including the setbacks – and create space for reflection.

At Elinor, this approach has completely changed the dynamic of our teams over time. Conversations have become more open. People feel comfortable challenging each other and progress has become part of the experience.

Embracing awkward silences

One of the most effective tools I've learned as a mentor is something surprisingly simple: silence. When we rush to provide answers, we unintentionally make it all about us. Leaving room for reflection means people can think, explore options and trust their own judgement. The solutions they reach are often more powerful than anything we could suggest. It can feel counterintuitive at first, but it's worth embracing because it creates space for independent thought and real learning.

Authenticity is another important ingredient. There's no point in presenting a polished version of leadership. It's far better to keep it real and share personal experiences, the good and the bad. This builds trust and makes growth feel like something they could actually achieve. When people see that leadership isn't about perfection and that mistakes often create better pathways to success, they become more willing to give it a go.

We've watched individuals who once held back find their voice, present confidently to senior teams and take on leadership responsibilities they never imagined possible.

Mentoring as a tool for resilience

Organisations are under increasing pressure to build strong talent pipelines, retain great people and develop resilient leaders. Mentoring can play a crucial role in achieving all three.

When mentoring is framed as a real opportunity to grow, progress and discover untapped potential, it creates a workplace culture that attracts people in and encourages them to build their future there.

And when mentoring becomes part of how we work it stops being transactional and starts becoming transformational. In people-driven industries, that shift can make a powerful difference.

www.elior.co.uk

10 QUESTIONS WITH...

In each issue we ask an FM professional the Tomorrow's FM 10 Questions. This month we spoke to Nigel Dews, MD at Restore Information Management, to see what he thinks of the future of FM and beyond.



Q1 WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

I was a sales office junior for an independent oil manufacturing company based in Huddersfield, where I was taught that hard work matters, go out of your way to try and make a difference, and there's always a deal to be done.

Q2 HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY?

I've always been drawn to operational businesses where you can see the impact of what you do. After a workplace change, I realised that facilities management sits at the heart of keeping organisations running smoothly and providing services valued by customers.

Q3 HOW DO YOU CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO?

Too many organisations suffer from 'analysis paralysis', spending weeks discussing problems that frontline teams identified months ago. It's important that you never lose touch with your people who are delivering for your customers.

I like to be curious and always ask 'why'. I try to create an environment where everyone feels confident coming up with new ideas.

Q4 SINCE YOU STARTED IN FM WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHANGE THE INDUSTRY HAS SEEN/ YOU HAVE OBSERVED?

The shift from FM being viewed purely as a support function to becoming a strategic business partner. Today, FM leaders influence a lot, and the industry has become far more data-driven, technology-enabled, and customer-focused.

Q5 WHO, IN ANY OTHER INDUSTRY, DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

Sir Dave Brailsford. His philosophy of marginal gains transformed British cycling by focusing on hundreds of small improvements rather than searching for one silver bullet. That approach translates into FM because success is built on getting details right.

Q6 WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE FILM??

I'm not much of a film buff, but I could give you a very good update on Coronation Street!

Q7 IF YOU COULD HOST A DINNER PARTY WITH THREE GUESTS, DEAD OR ALIVE, WHO WOULD THEY BE AND WHY?

Peter Jones – for the fascinating stories, top-tier business insights, and brilliant conversation.

Pep Guardiola – his ability to evolve, adapt and keep raising standards year after year is something every business leader can learn from.

My Dad – he passed away in 2021 and there are things I'd like to say to him now that I never managed to get around to saying when he was with us.



Q8 ANY ADVICE TO SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT IN THE INDUSTRY?

Be curious – learn how things work, spend time with frontline teams, never stop asking "why" and never assume you know all the answers.

Try out new things and build relationships, as people buy from people and great careers are built on trust.

Q9 WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE FUTURE OF THE FM INDUSTRY?

I think the future of FM is all about making better decisions with information.

For years, FM has been brilliant at managing buildings and services, but we're entering an era where the organisations that win will be the ones that can turn data into action.

The future of FM isn't just about looking after buildings; it's about helping businesses unlock the value of the information inside them.

10 WHICH AREA OF FM DO YOU THINK COULD BE BEST TRANSFORMED THROUGH TECHNOLOGY?

Information and asset visibility. Every FM leader has experienced the frustration of knowing valuable information exists somewhere but not being able to access it quickly enough.

Technology has the power to change that completely. Information management can give organisations a single view of their assets and information, allowing teams to make faster decisions and focus on delivering value rather than chasing paperwork.

The biggest transformation will come from making better use of the data and information we already have.

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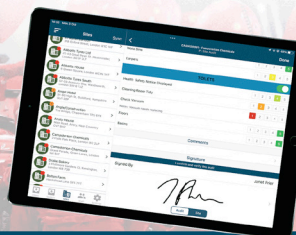
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FM SOFTWARE

COMPLIANCE RISK AND REPORTING ACROSS MULTIPLE LOCATIONS



If you operate across multiple locations, Facilities Management is not operational admin. It is risk management.

Yet in many organisations, FM is still coordinated through spreadsheets, inboxes and shared folders. It works, until scale exposes the cracks.

Across Retail estates, Care Homes, Leisure venues, Schools or Logistics sites, the complexity multiplies quickly:

- Different contractors per site
- Separate compliance documents
- Inconsistent maintenance standards
- Limited visibility at leadership level

When job tracking is manual and reporting takes hours to compile, leadership visibility becomes delayed. And delayed visibility increases exposure.

Missed compliance certificates. Untracked recurring faults. Escalating reactive spend. Inconsistent site standards.

A modern CAFM system changes the structure completely.

Mainteno centralises every task, asset, document and contractor interaction into one live environment across multiple locations.

This means:

- Real time oversight of maintenance activity
- Centralised compliance documentation with clear audit trails
- Measurable contractor performance
- Structured workflows instead of email threads
- Leadership dashboards without manual reporting

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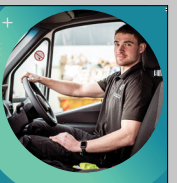
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