

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: BUILDING BETTER SOLUTIONS

In just a few years IT has made the transition from being a 'desirable' to a 'mandatory' element of day-to-day FM practice. KRISTIANA GREENWOOD from leading FM software development company FM Innovations comments on IT's role in the efficiency and management of corporate infrastructure.



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Two years ago Savills Australia, a leading property services company, began a due diligence process to map out its FM solution requirements to effectively manage its property portfolio across Australia. A comprehensive analysis of existing business processes and IT infrastructure, combined with a clear business direction, enabled Savills to begin the evaluation of suitable FM software to meet its growing client base and business needs. The result was the purchase of a comprehensive, yet simple to use, property works management system, WSMindustrial – a system designed and developed in Australia by FM Innovations.

The catalyst for the change in its facilities management processes came from the evolving demands in the property environment and the need to introduce new management measures to address such issues as sustainability, and the ABGR (Australian Building Greenhouse Rating) and Green Star ratings of buildings. The introduction of the new Part 12 of the Building Regulations 2006, as well as the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007, were key contributors to the company's decision to be proactive instead of reactive to change. The implementation of one system that can address all of this in a simple, structured way resulted in a quick and easy adoption across the organisation, and consistent accurate reporting across the entire national property portfolio.

Once the decision for change had been approved, the arduous task of assessing the corporate requirements and their priority was undertaken. A rigorous evaluation process of suitable software followed, covering both functional and non-functional requirements. Functional requirements examples included workflow processes and

their automation, as well as the maintenance history and reporting. Non-functional requirements covered some critical and unique needs such as integration with the Savills Property system, the scalability and capacity management of the system, and the need for the system to be adaptable and flexible to fit in with the current business processes and existing systems.

The assessment results were comprehensive, but the key deciders on the investment in WSMindustrial were:

- the proven seamless interface with MRi
- a more flexible solution, enabling future expansion with other clip-on modules such as property/lease management, room event management, visitor management, asset management and the soon-to-be-released vehicle management.
- FM Innovations has designed the WSMindustrial software specifically for building and facilities management where other systems assessed have been principally designed for industrial/production and/or workshop applications, and then been modified to suit the building sector, and
- the partnership between the two companies was a key element to the final decision – FM Innovations has always worked very closely with its clients and its products are ever-evolving, enabling it to work with its specific client future needs as well as keep one step ahead of the general market requirements.

SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT

One of these critical evolving requirements for Savills is the ability to integrate sustainability management into the company's day-to-day property management; i.e. to manage the environmental effect of both pre-existing



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