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Editor's Note

Strategic and Tactical Approaches to Efficiency and Productivity

No matter what type of facility they maintain, building service contractors and facility managers are always looking to reduce their costs. There are strategic and tactical ways to do so, and with the help of professional organizations and manufacturers who understand their business, it can be done.

Facility management should be part of a business's overall strategy, but many have difficulty finding the time or resources to devote to developing a strategic facility plan. To help the International Facility Management Association has released a white paper that details the strategic facility planning process, its requirements and benefits.

"Strategic Facility Planning: A White Paper," outlines the key principles of strategic facility planning and details all stages of the process, including understanding, analyzing, planning and acting.

The purpose of the plan is to develop a flexible plan based on the specific and unique considerations of the individual organization. A four-step process provides the general format to accomplish this mission.

Understanding: Thoroughly understand the organization's mission, vision, values and goals. Many organizations follow a balanced scorecard of four key measurements: financial performance; customer knowledge; internal business processes; and learning and growth.

Analyzing: Use analytical techniques, such as SWOT analysis, SCAN, SLP or scenario planning, to explore the range of possible futures and the triggers used to analyze an organization's facility needs.

Planning: Develop plans that meet the long-range needs of the organization. At minimum, the SFP should be reviewed annually and further updated periodically as conditions require.

Acting: Take actions as planned and implement the SFP. Feedback from actions taken can be incorporated into the next plan and/or project to provide continuous improvement to future SFPs. The cyclical nature of constant planning for the changing future and adopting plans along the way are normal events. These changes and updates must be managed to achieve them.

Once a strategy is identified and implemented, there are tactical measures that can be taken to cut costs when it comes to cleaning tools, equipment, and methods. Michael Schaffer, president of Tornado Industries, manufacturer of floor cleaning equipment, offers the following tactics to increase productivity:



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- Use low-moisture cleaning equipment to cut costs on chemicals and reduce environmental waste;
- Select machines and equipment that increase worker productivity;
- Purchase cleaning chemicals and supplies in large quantities to take advantage of volume discounts;
- Use auto-dispensing systems to better regulate chemical usage;
- Use 30-inch wide vacuum cleaners for large open spaces to vacuum as much as 10,000 square feet per hour;
- Arrange cleaning routes so that facilities are serviced by geographic areas;
- Select "Green" cleaning equipment, which is often of better quality than conventional machines—lasting longer and helping to reduce overall cost of ownership;
- Evaluate different cleaning systems, such as specialist cleaning, day cleaning or skip cleaning, which may prove faster than conventional cleaning systems;
- Be flexible. Work with your customers during this time of economic stress to build future customer loyalty and solidify the business relationship. Sounds like good advice.

Thanks and good luck.

Chris Sanford

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