

IFMA's VISION 20/20 – INVENTING THE FUTURE

Several months ago the International Facility Management Association, I-F-M-A, launched a visioning exercise to get ahead in its strategic planning. Though the association introduced the balanced scorecard methodology about four years earlier, it became evident that the vision component needed work. Like the balanced scorecard, it was anchored in the near and mid terms. Each IFMA scorecard reflects the classic format of three to five year horizons as proscribed by Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton of the Harvard Business School.

For the sake of leadership continuity and picking up the pace due to accelerating change, IFMA needed to lift its head and peer farther into the future—a step involving more than just moving its feet faster.

Prussian Philosopher Immanuel Kant said, “The best way to predict the future is to invent it.” However, in order to invent or shape the future, organizations representing professions first must see clearly what is happening from all perspectives; extrapolate where the center mass is heading; and then determine which routes, vehicles and drivers can get you to the forefront ahead of schedule.

Formulas for maximum impact need to be developed. Strategic plans, balanced scorecards and other planning tools need to be adjusted, sharpened, oiled, polished and made ready. Opportunities must be identified, assessed, resourced, developed and executed. These are daunting organizational tasks

that must be done centrally and holistically. Too many organizations delegate or push down this critical process—merely collecting and assembling the components. Compilation plans are neither holistic nor strategic and inevitably send the organization into divergent directions. Real progress eventually grinds to a halt.

To avoid these planning pitfalls, IFMA began with a comprehensive approach to visioning—ensuring that it would be centrally driven, broad enough in scope and completed in time to drive the strategic plan, balanced scorecard and the 2009-2010 budget.

IFMA's biyearly facility management forecasting exercise, last completed in 2007, also provided a good starting platform. That report, *Exploring the Current Trends and Future Outlook for Facility Management Professionals*, identified current trends and provided a brief outlook. It was designed to:

- Provide insights to help IFMA maintain its leadership position regarding the future of the profession;
- Identify how IFMA can help prepare members for the most relevant issues anticipated in the future;
- Understand the changes that facility management professionals will face in the years to come;
- Assess what skill sets facility management professionals will need to stay competitive; and
- Recommend what facility management professionals should do to position themselves for changing industry trends.

The number-one trend identified in the IFMA Facility Management Forecast 2007 was “Linking facility management to strategy—including workplace culture and branding.”

Additionally, IFMA recently published a white paper on strategic facility planning wherein the SFP is defined as a two-to-five year plan encompassing the entire portfolio of owned and/or leased space that sets strategic facility goals based on the organization’s strategic objectives. The four-step process first requires in-depth knowledge of the organization’s vision, mission, values and goals. Second, exploration of the range of possible futures and triggers is needed to analyze the organization’s facility needs using analytical techniques such as systematic layout planning, SWOT analysis and scenario planning. Third, once analysis is completed, plans for potential responses and periodic changes in market and organizational needs have to be developed. Fourth, take actions as planned for successful implementation of the SFP.

There were other recent IFMA publications, which also provided insights. *Investing in America*, subtitled “A Comprehensive Approach to Rebuilding America’s Infrastructure,” outlines public policy initiatives that complement efforts in Washington, D.C., to jump-start the struggling economy—particularly in the areas of investing in the nation’s aging building stock, energy efficiency measures and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The newly published *IFMA Sustainability Task Force Report* notes that in a typical office building, energy use accounts for 30 percent of operating

costs—the largest single category of controllable expenses. Many facilities could benefit from the use of green operations and maintenance strategies. Facility managers are in the position to be environmental stewards of the physical workplace, empowered to make critical upgrades of equipment, systems and practices leading to more efficiency and a better quality of life for everyone.

From the IFMA board's strategic vantage point provided by Forecast 2007, the SFP white paper, public policy initiatives, task force direction on sustainability and four successive balanced scorecards—it is evident that facility management as a discipline continues to evolve toward becoming a distinct global profession that is not only operationally vital, but strategically important to the wellbeing of companies, non-profit organizations, governments, enterprises and the public at large.

Though IFMA is a member-centric organization directly serving its customers, the association simultaneously works to magnify the importance of the facility management professional worldwide. IFMA accomplishes this through both its own initiatives and through collaboration with facility-related organizations or complementary organizations in closely related fields such as architecture, building, design and real estate.

IFMA pulled together all of its critical resources and relationships to create a story of what the world and the workplace might look like in the year 2020—and the facility professional's elevated role there. IFMA, as the preeminent association and a leader with ties to dozens of related organizations and thousands of facility practitioners around the world, serves

as an important catalyst. IFMA will transform itself in the process, by as much or more than it helps transform the profession. Everything works in harmony. The vision paints the picture of success, the strategic plan provides the roadmap, and the balanced scorecard details actions and tracks progress.

Proud to be facility management professionals

What does IFMA see in its 20/20 vision of the future? The most prominent image from the facility perspective is a profession that will reinvent itself from a perception of “business support,” to a reality of being “business critical.” For IFMA, this means a shift from mostly serving the needs of facility management professionals, to including more strategic offerings for senior business leaders. IFMA’s offerings will also be more balanced and blended in areas such as education, research and knowledge management on the one hand, and frameworks, tools and guides on the other.

The strategy: Looking back from 2020

Focusing on the life cycle optimization of total building portfolios, IFMA successfully linked the financial, social, environmental and workplace diversity bottom lines—the new “quadruple bottom line.” Not only did the association develop best-in-class workplace strategy standards in the areas of facility management, infrastructure management, technology integration and facility-related human capital development, it also advanced the profession in all major areas critical to our members’ career management. These areas included:

- Building consultative and participatory relationships with every major existing built environment-related degree and certificate program.

IFMA connected these programs with MBA curricula wherever possible to bring the facility management perspective and discipline into business schools.

- A focus on certification products and services for all levels of facility management. These allowed IFMA to expand the profession through official industry classification and respected designations.
- Leveraging the Internet to increase professional networking. This resulted in dramatic improvements in the “virtual interaction” among the global membership—as well as between the chapter/region/council/community of practice networks. All of this was done to further the quest to share best practices in facility management and improve access to facility management education.
- The Certified Facility Manager® (CFM®) and Facility Management Professional (FMP) credentials are now requested in the majority of job openings. The IFMA-developed Certified Facility Executive (CFE) and the partner-developed Facility Management Technician (FMT) designations grew in both impact and importance.
- Investments in strategic alliances, Corporate Sustaining Partnerships and technology enabled significant growth in the delivery of our products and events to all geographic markets.
- The strategic facility planning and supporting documents and templates became the premier planning tool not only for the facility management executive but, also for corporate strategic planning.
- A notable increase occurred in the number of chief facility management officers (CFMO) and senior facility executives.

- A rise in young facility executives—no longer a rarity due to the strong education and mentoring programs IFMA established.
- Non-U.S.-based global corporations and government agencies began specifically seeking our members as employees.
- Establishing strategic alliances with other facility management-related professional associations—including collaborations on major events and expanding our collective ability to provide knowledge and networking opportunities to a broader constituency.
- Connecting facility management products and service providers with practitioners—IFMA has become a valued marketing channel for these providers.
- Building a reputation worldwide for exemplary research ranging from comprehensive, in-depth studies to quick surveys on timely topics.

The result

Associates want to join IFMA for the exposure to our growing membership, technicians are interested in our training and certification; new and experienced facility managers desire our designations as an authoritative validating source of their skills and competencies; and public and private businesses demand that their buildings and workplace initiatives be managed by IFMA-certified facility professionals who turn to the association for the latest resources, education, networking and certifications. They understand that high-performance built environments play a critical role in enabling organizations to achieve a competitive advantage and know that IFMA provides comprehensive support for their members and their organizations.

Sustainability

Following the recommendations of the board-sponsored task force, IFMA created a full-time staff position to direct sustainable facility practices and tie the association's efforts with those of other facility-related organizations worldwide. Accomplishments achieved by the year 2020 will include:

- Defining sustainability from the facility management perspective.
- Identifying and connecting with all organizations promoting sustainable initiatives that had a bearing on the profession, such as the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), the Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments (ASBE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/ENERGY STAR®.
- Investing in and fully supporting the success of the LEED®-Operations and Maintenance certification for existing buildings.
- Developing business-based evaluation frameworks covering both ROI analyses and “how-to” sustainability program execution guides.
- Conducting research on bridging the gap between design/construction and facility management.
- Educating with programs on standards and guidelines, dashboard and KPI development, building business cases and ROI justification, and strategic planning for sustainability driven businesses.
- Building best practice case studies.
- Promoting facility management-based sustainability programs to U.S. governmental agencies and departments. Communicating details on relevant legislation and economic federal and state rebate incentives,

as well as internationally driven initiatives to not only members but to the whole built environment community.

The cumulative effect of these anticipated accomplishments that tie facility-driven sustainable programs to corporate strategy will be an unprecedented elevation of the facility function. As a natural progression, chief facility management officers will have permanent positions in the C-suite.

Membership

It is anticipated that membership growth in IFMA and in other facility-related organizations will surpass all current expectations and likely to break through the 100,000 mark. The real strength in this number will be the fact that these 100,000 plus members are interconnected—regionally, internationally, by interest and by industry—like never before. IFMA, IFMA-partnering organizations, Global Facility Management Association (Global FM) partners and others will play key roles in making this connection.

A key to this membership growth will be community-based networks providing highly-specific, in-depth information and resources that are not available elsewhere. IFMA councils—whose purpose is to address industry- and interest-specific needs—are an example of where member-based organizations are headed. IFMA is also advancing less-formalized communities of practice that may eventually become councils or stay as they are—dynamic yet minimally structured.

Regardless, IFMA and IFMA-like organizations will continue to serve the facility management profession broadly and still provide the umbrella for subgroups to thrive. To support the growth of this structure, IFMA will create and maintain a comprehensive database of facility management practitioners and service providers around the world. This detailed profile information will enable the network to communicate with members, non-members and other stakeholders who have shared interests in specific areas. As individual interests become known, IFMA will be better able to meet these needs and serve as a catalyst for global interaction. This enhanced data mining capability will support the creation of new membership classifications that are individually tailored. Conversely, it will be easier to combine facility practitioners into group or block memberships based on who employs them, whether serving in an in-house or contracted position.

Career management

In cooperation with other facility management-related organizations, IFMA will identify, define and fortify a framework to enhance the visibility of facility professionals in the workplace. Facility practitioners will bring these IFMA-taught methods to their colleagues where they will build best-in-class facility organizational structures. The cumulative effect of restructuring engagements on a massive scale will elevate the entire profession.

At the same time, the association will document and map the route for senior facility professionals to obtain recognition and be invited into the C-suite. This includes the development of a career plan that identifies desired training, education and experiences for facility practitioners to progress from entry-level, to middle management and to senior leadership. Through these

efforts and extensive marketing targeting boardrooms, chief facility management officers will achieve C-suite stature.

Education

The 20/20 vision for education is to bring new comprehensive programs on all facets of facility management and deliver them year round in multiple formats. This includes traditional face-to-face learning, distance learning and chapter and approved provider deliveries.

The future for education includes the development of a life cycle approach to workplace-career management. This effort will introduce facility management and related workplace-related avocations earlier in the process by working at the secondary level through high school guidance counselors. IFMA will have a presence at career days to validate the viability and attractiveness of these career choices.

IFMA and the IFMA Foundation will also be working much closer with junior colleges, colleges, universities and technical schools to promote and support recognized degrees and certificate programs. Curricula in many of the four-year degree programs will also expand from the principles of facility management to include workplace strategy and core competencies needed in the C-suite.

IFMA's educational expansion will include working closer with related organizations in architecture, engineering and design in order to promote careers in the built environment.

Credentials

Current credentials offered by IFMA are the knowledge-based Facility Management Professional designation and the competency-based Certified Facility Manager designation. From here, IFMA may partner with another organization to develop a facility management technical designation for those working in that capacity. IFMA also will likely develop a capstone credential for those working in the highest and most strategic levels as senior facility executives.

Mentoring

Recognizing the power of its members sharing knowledge and experience, IFMA will establish a sustainable mentor program with distinct guidelines and practices. This program will cover all formal educational stages—from secondary school, through undergraduate and graduate study. This outreach effort will connect experienced facility practitioners with those engaged in the educational process and leverage the strong geographic presence and depth of IFMA chapters. This IFMA-driven orchestration keeps an open line of communication between the association and future graduates. IFMA’s emerging leaders and young professional programs will be cornerstones of this effort.

Research

IFMA research will be significantly increased in breadth, capacity and strategic importance in order to maximize the impact of facility management. Benchmarking and standards-oriented research will continue, but more internal research will be conducted to support the development of IFMA programs. External research will also be conducted to support the

business community and partners. In addition, IFMA will utilize its own portal's search engine optimization for disseminating this critical information far and wide. Despite the expansion, IFMA research will continue to be seen as an unbiased source of information related to the workplace. Most importantly, it will prove the positive effects of good facility management operations on the strategic direction and financial success of organizations that embrace it.

Knowledge management

As facility management continues to evolve strategically, the importance of managing its growing body of knowledge will be accentuated. IFMA may create—on its own or in collaboration—one or more dynamic knowledge portals that will continually segment, organize and make information available in an intuitive manner. This monumental “Wikipedia-like” project will provide a much-needed platform to attract the best of what subject matter experts, researchers, academicians and others have to contribute.

Another possibility will be for IFMA to create a “living laboratory,” or perhaps “laboratories,” to showcase best practices in facility management and align academic research with real-world scenarios. It is anticipated that IFMA Corporate Sustaining Partners will play integral roles in making such in-depth workplace examination possible.

World Workplace Conference & Expo

Each autumn the world's largest gathering of facility management professionals occurs at IFMA's World Workplace Conference and Expo. Future prospects for this event are as bright as ever and IFMA will continue

to evolve this conference in scope and experience to maintain its premier position. Look for more organizations, publications, partners, participants and exhibitors in the year 2020. Moreover, World Workplace no longer will be limited by physical space and a three-day time frame. IFMA will leverage technologies to enable virtual participation from all over the globe and allow participants to revisit the experience throughout the year. Benefits of participation will be continuous from one year to the next.

Worldwide facility management community participation

We live in a world more interlinked than ever before. To best support its members and the profession, IFMA will continuously look for and pursue strategic alliances and partnerships that support the association's vision, mission and objectives. As a trusted partner, IFMA leads—but does not exclusively own—the advancement of facility management globally. At IFMA's headquarters, international presence and impact are part of the balanced scorecard for each functional area.

IFMA's international involvement will be pervasive and include:

- A focus on global strategy that is locally implemented;
- Participation in setting international facility management standards;
- Evolving facility credentials to allow a single global standard in professional recognition;
- Hosting joint meetings at global congresses to strengthen and enhance collaborative relationships with a focus on gaining increased government recognition of facility management as a career field; and

- Continuing to be a driving force within Global FM.

Government

In the area of public affairs, IFMA will expand its contacts and influence with governments worldwide to be regarded as an “honest broker of facility management and workplace information.” This will be achieved through a careful and methodic expansion of IFMA’s successful efforts conducted in Washington, D.C., for the past 10 years. In the United States, the facility management function touches more stimulus package components than any other function. Consequently, we anticipate IFMA members sitting on a growing number of strategic global, national, regional and local committees.

Technology

Leveraging technology will enable IFMA to maximize its capabilities and reach facility management professionals 24/7 and well beyond the association’s current core of members in North America. There will be complete integration of all internally-facing and externally-facing information systems. Stakeholders can expect enhanced portals and some kind of comprehensive knowledge management capability. IFMA already is well on its way toward establishing a strong presence on social media sites and in the use of Web conferencing and online learning. The net effect of this technological leap will be a disproportionately larger impact on the facility management profession for the amount of resources expended.

Summary

Rapid change and the global economic downturn are providing the facility management profession with an opportunity to step to the forefront.

Initiatives in IFMA's vision 20/20 are designed to help shape the future—not just react to it. I see facility management as a sought-after profession with a clear path to executive levels of leadership as new generations enter the workforce.