

Green regulations will boost UAE property jobs

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The implementation of Dewa's Green Building regulations will reduce utility bills and may even create managerial, technical, and general jobs in the UAE facilities management sector at little or no extra cost to the building owners.

That's the view of Mick Dalton, General Manager at Abu Dhabi-based Marafeq Facilities Management, who is chairing the two-day Property & FM conference taking place alongside FM Expo, the Middle East's leading facilities management event.

'I believe FM will need better management to ensure sustainability goals are met, more technical staff to implement the next phase of green changes at existing buildings, and as many general staff to carry out routine maintenance tasks such as monitoring electricity consumption and optimising water usage,'

said Dalton, who is also past chairman of the British Institute of Facilities Management.

Dalton was commenting on fears that the regulations will result in job cuts as property owners attempt to cut costs to pay for the additional up front and extra ongoing expenses to maintain a green building. Dewa's regulations include the installation of low energy light bulbs, solar panels, energy saving modules for air conditioning units, low flow taps and dual flush water systems.

'Savings on utility bills alone can more than cover the installation and maintenance costs over a period of time and in that sense they are self financing. Indeed I believe it is essential that FM experts are consulted at the building design stage to increase the lifecycle of the building and present a better return on investment for the building owner,' stated Dalton.

'All too often the knee-jerk reaction to additional expenses in the past has been simply to put up service fees. This is not an option any more, with rental and purchase prices for commercial and residential buildings falling, competition for potential tenants is fierce and it's a price sensitive market,' he added.

Highlighting the importance of taking a long term perspective, Louisa Theobald, Group Exhibitions Director of Streamline Marketing Group, organisers of FM Expo and the Property & FM Conference, explained that life-cycle facilities management costs could be more than five times those of initial building costs.

'It's essential that the FM sector control its own costs, continuously improve its performance, enhance its practices and value-add. It's only by doing so that the facilities management industry will live up to its promises of becoming a sector estimated to be worth \$704 billion over the next 25 years,' she commented.

Sustainability, human resources, and cost issues will all be highlighted at this year's Property & FM conference, which runs in parallel with FM Expo on 24-28 May 2009. The exhibition is taking place at the Dubai International Exhibition and Convention Centre, while the conference is running at the Al Murooj Rotana Hotel, Dubai. Adding value in a cost-cutting climate is also in focus, as is risk assessment and management, best procurement practices

and the growing need to be able to offer an integrated FM offering. 3 days of practical workshops complement the 2 day conference.

The FM Conference has attracted an enviable line-up of local, regional and international speakers such as Stan Mitchell, CEO, Key Facilities Management International, UK and Founding Chairman Global Facility Management Association; Dilip Khatwani, CEO, Reliance Facilities Management and Dr. Sadek Owainati, Founder, Emirates Green Building Council, UAE.

Platinum sponsor for the FM Expo 2009 event is Etisalat Facilities Management, which is also supporting the conference.

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