

A survey and whitepaper sponsored by HSS, the national supplier of tool and equipment hire, in association with the Facilities Management Association (FMA), has discovered that almost one third of Facilities Managers are spending almost a day a week on the management of their equipment. Launched today, the whitepaper based on the survey results, written by leading FM consultant and journalist, Martin Pickard, known to many as “The FM Guru” can be viewed online at www.hss.com/outsource

The survey, conducted amongst a sample of 330 Facilities Management (FM) professionals, working both in-house and for outsource specialists, found that:

- almost 30% of managers spent between 10% - 20% of their time on equipment matters.
- 81% report that margins fell in 2010
- 48% anticipate that the Public Sector Spending Review will have a negative impact on their business
- 40% report that equipment problems are responsible for service related issues in more than one out of five cases
- the economic environment is impacting on capital decisions with more than half of the survey respondents admitting to keeping kit beyond its useful life, with a quarter admitting losing productivity as a result of the age of their kit.

Other issues raised from this “groundbreaking” survey include 31.6% of respondents being worried about prosecution for non-compliance with health and safety legislation and a quarter reported that they could not prove their compliance with regulations. In terms of training, 90% reported their operatives had been trained to use the equipment but only 70% thought they could prove it through paperwork.

“The majority of FMs do see benefits in outsourcing with less than a quarter buying all of their own equipment,” writes Martin Pickard. “Despite this, equipment is still consuming a lot of management resource and equipment related issues are far too common. Equipment is being kept beyond its useful life as a result of the recession by those who have retained ownership while those that have outsourced have less exposure to the problems that creates.”

It is apparent from the whitepaper that for equipment outsourcers to be successful they have to demonstrate the ability to add value through specialist knowledge and technical innovation. Martin Pickard adds that solution driven commercial products are increasingly required by equipment users and that the most prudent facilities managers are those engaging successfully with leading equipment providers to develop new strategies in support of corporate objectives.

HSS works with many facilities management companies to deliver bespoke managed equipment plans through its "Outsource" service. HSS Outsource allows FM's to benefit from a move from fixed to variable costs, the minimisation of capital investment, equipment innovation and guaranteed compliance.

"The solution provides all the benefits of ownership with none of the responsibility," says Chris Davies, HSS CEO. "It also provides a 24 hour helpdesk, advanced planned preventative maintenance regime, and the most rigorous reactive service delivered via our national network and maintenance staff. Most importantly however, Outsource provides an opportunity for facilities managers to only pay for what is in use, managing their costs efficiently in line with customer needs in challenging times."

Martin Pickard concludes: "Emerging from a recession is a critical time for companies and it is at this time more than ever that management need to concentrate on their core business and proposition. Fixed costs and capital investment are unpopular with businesses under pressure. What could be more convenient than guaranteed availability of whatever kit you need, wherever you are and replaced with new or fully maintained equipment when you need it?"

The FM Whitepaper contains a wealth of information gained from the survey divided into five sections: Industry Outlook, Management of Equipment, Equipment Innovation and Replacement, Compliance and Training. You can view the complete white paper, ***Facilities management and facilities equipment***, written by Martin Pickard (FBIFM) on the HSS website at www.hss.com/outsource