

Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
published monthly in Facilities magazine by Lexis Nexis from 2008 to 2014

Junk Mail

The dominance of email and other forms of electronic communication has led to a massive reduction in the volumes of business mail handled by the average facilities mailroom. However the same period has also seen a dramatic increase in Junk Mail of all kinds and the corporate mailbox has suffered from this as much as any domestic household.

There are four distinct kinds of Junk Mail and each causes the facilities team problems. There are the piles of unaddressed advertising leaflets and brochures that mysteriously make their way into the mail sacks, then there is direct advertising mail addressed to generic functions like Procurement, Engineering or Finance, the third group are advertising material directly addressed to company staff (who may or may not still be employed), and finally there are the many free magazines that are distributed to industry sectors in their thousands.

It is important for the facilities mailroom to have a clear policy about how each of these types of Junk Mail is to be handled. Without this the junk may be sorted, delivered to departments and passed around within departments, only to be binned, collected by cleaners, taken to the recycling segregation point and finally transported off-site. A complete waste of time and money for all concerned.

According to (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 21 billion items (550,000 tonnes) of junk mail are sent out every year in the UK. The Mailing Preference Service (MPS) is operated by the direct marketing industry and provides a free service to consumers who wish to restrict the volume of direct mail they receive.

Unfortunately there is no equivalent service available to businesses. The advice from MPS to companies is "MPS is for UK residential addresses only. If you are receiving mailings addressed to a business name (this includes sole trader, partnership, limited company or publicly limited company), you should contact the sender directly and ask to be removed from its mailing list.

If a facilities team wish to reduce the impact of this unwanted mail they can either bin it on arrival or return it to the source. In both cases asking to be removed from distribution lists is the only way to prevent the problem from recurring. Some organisations run a campaign like this once a year as volumes soon build up again.

Certain direct mail companies focus on businesses and others focus on residences; therefore, care must be taken to contacting the appropriate direct mail companies in order to reduce the flow of junk mail into the business. For some material like product catalogues or trade magazines it may be sensible to approach the named individuals or functions for a decision. It may be that one or two copies would be useful but that everyone in the department doesn't need one.

To reduce Junk Mail sent to your personal residence register with the Mailing Preference Service at www.mpsonline.org.uk