

Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
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Partnering

Partnering within the FM supply chain is a powerful concept capable of delivering significant improvements in performance and outcomes for both parties. There are many excellent examples of genuine partnerships in the facilities world that have made immense contributions to the organisations concerned. Those desirous of change would do well to follow the example of those award-winning role models and the agenda set out by PSL, the DTI/CBI backed initiative established to promote more effective working relationships in British industry.

The PSL definition of Partnering is “a commitment between two or more parties in a collaborative relationship to create value by striving to achieve shared competitive goals and operational benefit through a spirit of mutual trust and openness.” It is important to recognize that not every relationship is a partnership but it can encompass the partnering ethos.

PSL worked closely with the British Standards Institute (BSI) to create BS 11000 the world’s first standard for Collaborative Business Relationships. The specification provides an eight-stage approach to help organisations develop and manage their own approaches to working with other organisations more effectively. It sets out a framework that enables an organisation of any size and sector to apply good practice principles to its own way of working and has wide applications for public, private and not for profit organisations on how to manage valuable business relationships within the supply chain.

The specification is based on an eight-phase model, which enables organisations to focus their efforts from concept to disengagement:

- Awareness: understanding where relationship management fits with your business objectives
- Knowledge: understanding how others have progressed and developing your approach
- Internal assessment: evaluating how your own organization is positioned to collaborate
- Partner selection: finding the right partner relationship to complement your objectives
- Working relationship: building a joint approach focused on mutual benefit
- Additional value creation: developing additional value from the relationship
- Staying together: ensuring that you measure and maintain maximum benefit
- Exit strategy: recognizing the changes both internal and external and preparing for disengagement

It may be felt that “Partnering” has become devalued following a period of overuse of the word and poor implementation of the concepts and the procurement process has constrained innovation, dialogue and flexibility. This is can be true in sectors where strict interpretation of policy guidelines has provided an easy excuse to avoid difficult conversations. However, it doesn’t have to be like that. In its paper “Effective Partnering” the OGC says “If successfully implemented partnering is an immensely powerful tool that can deliver significant improvements in value for money. It will only succeed where there is a mature approach to relationship management and it will require effort and commitment from both sides to make the relationship work. It should never be regarded as an easy option”

Copies of the BS11000 standard can be purchased at www.pslcbi.com and at www.bsi-global.com
The Office of Government Commerce has many pages of useful advice on better procurement www.ogc.gov.uk