

Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
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Relationship Management

Anyone who has been in a meaningful long-term relationship knows that they have their ups and downs and that sustained effort is required to maintain it over time. Relationships in facilities management are no different whether it be between the Facility Manager and their internal stakeholders or between a facilities service provider and their clients.

BS11000, the standard for collaborative business relationships, recommends the creation of a Relationship Management Plan (RMP). This can be used both as a baseline process and adapted as necessary for individual strategic relationships or for individual collaborative initiatives. A good RMP should capture the links between existing operating practices or integrate the approaches within existing processes such as customer–relationship management, project management, contract management and supplier–relationship management.

The RMP should evolve over the lifetime of a relationship, providing an important record of the pre-contract situation as well as creating a working platform for Relationship Management through the life of the relationship, ensuring that it is effectively communicated at all levels and integrated into business-as-usual for all involved.

For successful Relationship Management, it is important that a senior person takes ownership of the development and implementation of the relationship management process with defined responsibility and authority for ensuring that the policies, processes, culture and behaviours required are established, implemented and maintained.

A good RMP will contain information on the background to the relationship, immediate and long-term objectives, roles and responsibilities, meeting structures and governance arrangements, as well as documenting measurement protocols and dispute resolution arrangements.

Some relationships require less formal arrangements but the same rigour needs to be applied to Relationship Management principles to avoid casual neglect turning into complacency, misunderstanding and negativity. The effectiveness of a business relationship can change a great deal over time due to internal or external influences, changes in personnel, changing perceptions and the quality and volume of outputs delivered by the relationship compared with those expected.

For these reasons, even the most informal of meeting schedules must be maintained even if it seems there is nothing pressing to discuss. It is often in less pressured conversations that some of the more valuable discussions take place as new ideas and changing environments are shared.

Some informal benchmark or more formal measurement protocol such as the FM Relationship Appraisal Tool developed by FM Guru will provide a useful touchstone to assess the maturity of the relationship and the effectiveness of the Relationship Management process.

BS11000 is published by the British Standards Institute and is available from their website www.bsigroup.com