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Outsourcing Facility Services: Is It Delivering For You?

By Tony Piucci

If you outsource, you probably hoped it would free you to focus on other tasks as well as long-term, strategic planning. So, perhaps you are wondering why you're still involved in many of the daily tasks related to the facility services you've outsourced? Even if you've gone the whole nine yards by outsourcing all services related to running your facility (e.g., janitorial, recycling, electrical, HVAC/mechanical, energy, engineering, parking, landscaping), you could still have nagging, time-consuming problems.

Typical Outsourcing Scenarios and Their Shortcomings

Individual services: Choosing to use several providers for individual services provides the advantage of having experts handling these tasks. But you're still faced with other services needing attention. Plus, you could potentially spend all your time managing several outsourcing contracts: many bills to pay, multiple contacts, diversity and risk issues to handle, etc. It would be easier on you to contract with a vendor capable of taking two or more services off your hands. Or, aim to have one contract and one point of contact for multiple services.

Integrated Facility Management (IFM) or Facility Management (FM): Normally, this means you'd have a contract with one facility management provider that uses a network of subcontractors to perform facility services. An intrinsic difficulty with this approach is the control of the subcontractors. IFM or FM can present the façade that facility problems are resolved, but in reality, there may be a hodgepodge of several providers with dissimilar values, work standards, and cultures different from yours. Plus, the facility management firm is adding fees on top of the subcontractors' rates, and you're paying that "middle man" premium.

This results in inefficient deployment of human resources and a lack of teamwork. The subcontractors handle only their own tasks, working in silos. The facility management company may not have systems capable of consolidating reports, making it hard for you to manage quality and other issues.

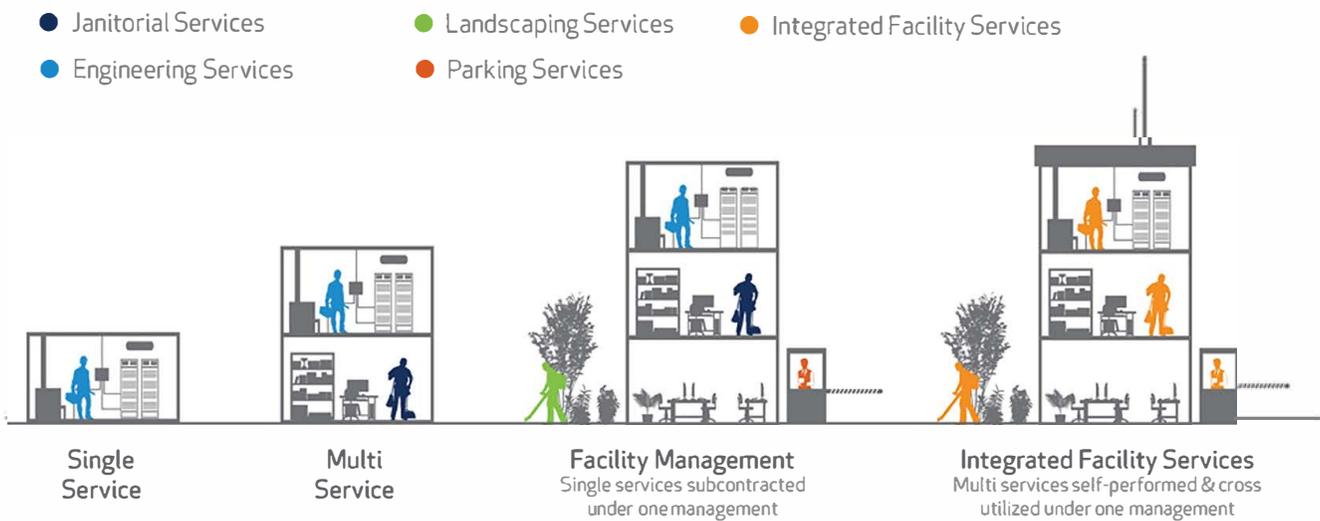
Integrated Facility Services: Another Outsourcing Option

Integrated Facility Services (IFS) by a provider that self-performs: In this scenario, gone are those many subcontractors, and instead facility services are handled consistently by one company with its own experienced employees. With this holistic approach, you can count on your IFS partner to create efficiencies and to enforce standards that you've agreed to. You know who's working on your site(s), and

you can keep updated through a “dashboard” of reports. There is one contract to manage, and one primary contact.

With IFS, more of your dollars go toward quality labor. Without add-on fees for subcontractors, fewer of your maintenance costs go to overhead. In the IFS model, the provider manages its own people, minimizing labor costs, which can account for nearly three-quarters of the cost of facilities services delivery.

Quality improves too, because the practice of marking up low-bid subcontractors is over. Without increasing your budget, the IFS company can place better qualified employees at your site, cross-trained to ensure consistency and efficiencies—no matter what job they are performing. In this way, the value of human resources is optimized. Communication is improved, as is productivity and attitude. Reduced turnover results. The facility’s occupants can count on seeing the same faces.



Ensure Service Consistency While Realizing Maximum Value

How can you be sure your property is being looked after in a consistent and cost-efficient manner? A facility’s value, appeal, and proper operation depend on it. If you’ve outsourced services and you’re still dealing with more than you bargained for, it’s probably time to look at a new approach. The right IFS provider can offer high quality, reliable services, even if you oversee facilities across the globe. The new, but proven IFS model is designed to keep properties clean, compliant, energy efficient, safe, and running like clockwork.



Piucci, senior vice president at [ABM](#), is a 25 year veteran of the facility management industry and oversees international business development. The team seeks out Integrated Facility Services opportunities for new and existing clients in the corporate, industrial and commercial real estate markets. ABM specializes in delivering innovative facility solutions, state-of-the-art technology, and best in class facility maintenance practices.