



TRANSFORMATION OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THROUGH CAFM

How integrated CaFM has the potential to set new industry standards and elevate the value provided to clients

With changing market demands, CaFM needs to evolve in order to overcome the challenges of the region's FM industry.

Built Environment ME magazine hosted an engaging roundtable event powered by Ramco Systems, at the St. Regis Hotel, Dubai, on 13 September 2023, bringing together industry experts to discuss the 'Transformation of Facilities Management and Customer Experience through CaFM.

Ramco Systems is a leading ERP solutions company providing end-to-end enterprise solutions that empower and transform organisations. Ramco VirtualWorks, their enterprise application and delivery platform is a key differentiator providing a great user experience.

The roundtable deep dived into the evolving needs of organisations and how technology can ensure data-driven decision-making across the FM ecosystem. It emphasised how modern CaFM can lead the future of facilities management with cloud and AI-led technologies.

The roundtable commenced with a fireside chat that set the tone of the discussion. Stuart Harrison, CEO, Emrill Services, and Tony Martin, CEO, Al Bonian FM examined how client expectations have evolved with changing market needs.

"Clients know exactly what they are paying for and their expectations from the FM service providers are really high," commented Harrison.

The discussion progressed towards identifying the challenges in the region's FM industry and how CaFM can help enhance the user experience.

"How much data a CaFM system can capture, analyse and interpret depends on the software resource and the client needs. Some basic things we require from a CaFM system is reliability, interactivity and resource optimisation, which help in meeting KPIs," commented Jiji Francis, Senior Director Operations UAE, Berkeley Services.

The group agreed that though CaFM is evolving, there needs to be a partnering from the client on digital transformation. Further, the gathering agreed on the need to educate clients to take a long-term view on using technology-led solutions.

"We need to make the clients aware of the need to look at the larger picture of how technology can bring in change, and to educate clients as well as understand their mindsets regarding digital transformation. FM is not a cost centre anymore, it is a business enabler," remarked Attanu Guha Thakurta, Executive Director, Concordia DMCC.

"In the GCC, we have a multi-talented workforce from across the world so the expectations in this market are huge from what they have seen across the world. However, there is a gap between what the procurement teams are interested in, especially in respect of pricing, and the needs of the end user," he added.

Facilities management service providers are increasingly moving towards a well-integrated IT landscape, in which systems such as Building Management Systems (BMS), CaFM, ERP and Time & Attendance software are connected in real-time.

"There is a need to understand the CaFM capabilities we have and how they can be made better. The future of FM lies in integrating CaFM with IoT and BMS, connectivity to the organisation's



assets and to the cloud,” said Tarek Al Assil, Executive Director - Commercial, IFM Facilities Management.

The group further shed light on existing CaFM systems to understand better how these systems can evolve to deliver a better experience to the end user.

Samar Salih, Sr General Manager - FMPro Technology Solutions acknowledged that data -driven scientific investigation is the best solution to help resolve FM challenges.

The polls conducted during the discussion probed further on the top challenges such as data-driven decision-making, lack of operational visibility or revenue leakage faced by the industry as well as the top challenges addressed by their existing CaFM system.

The participants were asked about the one CaFM initiative that they think will shape the future of FM.

"We have data in silos right now. The future of CaFM lies in the various systems communicating with each other to provide insights that help take action on what needs to be done rather

than just providing an abundance of data," observed Mohamed Hafilur Rahman, Executive Director, Green Global.

“As an FM company, it is our responsibility to understand our abilities and if we are able to fulfill the needs specified in client contracts by using CaFM,” commented Engr Mohammad Abdulkarim Khamis, General Manager, Emirates National Facilities Management.

Prashanth Vasu, President & Head - Ramco ERP Software, Ramco Systems, said, "This roundtable exemplifies the power of cooperation and collective wisdom within the facilities management industry. Our association with Media Fusion has helped us extend a platform for the industry leaders, to deliberate on the way forward for digital transformation, to get the most from CaFM software."

The FM experts who participated in the roundtable were able to share pragmatic viewpoints into the region’s FM industry and agreed that they need a united front to resolve the unique challenges they face. The group arrived at the consensus that modern CaFM systems need to integrate the various components involved in order to provide actionable insights and deliver a superior user experience.

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