

Is it time to upgrade your technical maintenance?

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Traditionally, property maintenance includes outdoor area maintenance, cleaning, property maintenance and technical maintenance. Of these, technical maintenance has remained substantially unchanged for the past 30 years. How should things be and what developments should take place in the maintenance of real estate? What could be resolved differently? Here are a few suggestions:



Automation

Automation is the most obvious part of the area that should be utilised more. Many clients are already utilising remote access and control.

Building security technology

Most buildings have access control and security cameras. They can help to generate a considerable amount of data on matters such as footfall in shopping centres. This information can be processed directly for the property owner's revenue stream.

On-call and standby

Will physical on-call technical maintenance be required in the future? It might be more efficient to install a couple of technical solutions that enable acute correction or response to take place remotely and actual actions to be taken during office hours. Remote monitoring means that there is emergency help even without a physical on-call service.

Smartphones

The use of smartphones should be pushed even further. RFID tags have been utilised for wireless data reading and collection for decades. By utilising them, a huge amount of physical information could be collected. The application could reveal the indoor air quality in real time. For system administrators, it could give reasons: whether the technology is not working or whether it is poorly controlled. Real-time data would raise user satisfaction with facilities and increase comfort in working environments.

Cooling

Will your office space continue to cool, even after 3pm, or could it be allowed to reach higher temperatures in the evening? Again, this can be solved by means of automation and remote management.

For an increasing number of properties, cooling takes the biggest bite of the property's annual electricity consumption. What, then, is essential cooling? Should the office be cooled even after 3pm, when the building starts to empty out or would it be allowed to get warmer in the evening? Conventional data-based cooling using temperature sensors invariably lags behind in reaction times. Instead, cooling could be controlled in part according to the number of people. This information could be obtained from access control and camera surveillance. The data is there – it just needs to be integrated with other systems.

The importance of the design phase

When buildings are designed, we should consider new ways of operating and look at the bigger picture. Could, say, the back-up power required for heating be obtained from on-site solar power generation? Geothermal energy generation would work even if there was an energy blackout. Technical building systems should be designed differently in order to better manage the different parts of the building. During construction, solutions like these do not raise the cost by anywhere near as much as on-call maintenance for 30 years.

There are a lot of things still to do, but for many there are already opportunities. In technical maintenance, the emphasis should be on partnering and on new trials, not on who does things with the old formula and lowest costs.

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