

Scale can be frightening but it's worth the prize

“The popular view of pan-European FM outsourcing projects is that they are too difficult. There are too many cultural, legislative and financial differences; no FM service provider covers all of Europe; it's impossible to achieve without having all the data; it's perceived to be too expensive to get signed off; and it's therefore impossible to do in one hit.” That's according to Tony Angel, owner and managing director of award-winning FM consultancy Edifice, speaking at a British Institute of Facilities Management's International special interest group (ISIG) event earlier this month.

But Angel, who has many years' experience in delivering cross-border FM outsourcing programmes, demonstrated in the seminar *Being European: Can FM create a joined-up model?* that – with the correct planning, systems and principles – such projects can not only be successful but achieve major efficiencies and cost savings for the client organisation.

Angel, together with Helen Playle, the former manager of facilities and workplace for Colt, a multinational IT managed services provider and now Mace Macro's account director for Colt, presented a case study of the company's first generation FM outsourcing project. The project, which involved 237,000sqm of space across 70 sites and 14 European countries, was concluded in May this year. It involved reducing the supply chain from 450 organisations to just one single supplier; improving FM service standards, management information and reporting, statutory compliance and therefore brand protection; and vastly over-achieving the cost-neutral target.

“Like all projects, a multinational FM outsourcing programme requires careful planning but it is very much achievable given both a robust process and the experience to manage the issues that inevitably occur,” Angel concluded. “People talk about cultural differences between Paris and Prague, but try comparing London to Glasgow. Scale is undoubtedly frightening but it's more than worth the prize.”

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About Edifice

Edifice is an independent consultancy providing advice on the management of facilities and property in support of core business objectives. Working closely with its clients it provides solutions that are “intelligent, independent and innovative”; and – most importantly – that are appropriate to business needs. Clients include Colt, Ladbrokes, Microsoft, Oracle, O2, Cable & Wireless, Canada Life, London Fire Brigade, United Business Media, Iron Mountain and Sainsbury’s.

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