

In The KNOW

Understanding the issues that cause maintenance or remodel confusion, unbudgeted expenses, time overruns and, in general, cast a shadow over the maintenance function.

BY DAVE KNOCHE

Now that the economy appears to be stabilizing, companies have taken up a more optimistic approach to facility maintenance and refreshes. There seems to be more conversation around refreshes and scheduled maintenance. This is in stark contrast to the “if it’s not a health safety issue, we are not doing a thing” position. Optimism is good news to those needing to breathe again. But as things move forward, there appear to be many approaches for scheduled maintenance or refreshes. Is it a calendar event for certain items needed or not? Is it predicated on lease renewal intent? Maybe it depends on location profitability and ROI for costs to be incurred. Of course, it may depend on the forthcoming aesthetic design change that is right around the corner. Let’s wait to see what it looks like, you might say.

Donald Rumsfeld, former Secretary of Defense, is known for the following statement, “There are things we know, there are things we don’t know, and there are things we don’t know we don’t know.” It’s a rather cerebral statement, unless you give it some type of context. At the head office, “we know” a location needs attention for a specific reason. “We know we don’t know” the extent of the wear and tear the space has experienced. The fear is that there are things we “don’t know we don’t know.” These issues are what cause maintenance or

remodel confusion, unbudgeted expenses, time overruns and, in general, cast a shadow over the maintenance function.

It is not uncommon for there to be only a general idea of what is coming in the pipeline. One thing is certain: There is a need for field survey data, or at a minimum, verification of the field data already on hand. A simple set of pictures and a checklist of must-know questions can be invaluable upfront as good preparation. The fly in the ointment is that this information isn’t gathered easily. The store or branch doesn’t have the expertise or sensitivity to provide what is needed. Staff time and travel expense aren’t available. On those occasions when site pictures are provided, they are commonly phone camera quality or there are 150 images in a 40MB zip file.

So what is to be done? There is an increasing trend for national service companies to provide survey information beyond the trade activity they perform. National painting, flooring, merchandising and other trade companies need to visit the site to gather information relative to their potential scope of work. While they are on site, why not have them gather the additional information needed? There are apps now available that prescribe what is to be looked at for what information, and capture a corresponding image (sized and formatted) for each item that can be forwarded before they leave the site.

Can electrical panel information be captured by a painter? Indeed, if the instruction is specific to what is needed. Can a flooring installer gather the restroom ADA status? Can an electrician take a picture of each elevation to show what décor or fixturing is there? Why not have the trade person who is on site walk the space with the location manager to gather all the site-specific issues that have not been communicated to facilities? Is there a cost for these services? If a survey is needed for their scope of work, the travel cost has been borne. The only additional cost is time. How much can you survey in 2 hours inside and outside? Most maintenance or refresh initiatives center around a paint, flooring or electrical component. Why not get out in front of what is coming by getting the field data for use when the initiative commences? This information will greatly decrease the “don’t know you don’t know” risk and cost while increasing the on-time, on-budget outcome of projects. **RFB**



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