

***A Closer Look:***

# 2010 Facilities Management Forecast

*An upswing in the construction industry will make 2010 a strong year for facility managers. Here are five trends you should watch in order to remain relevant, come recession or recovery.*



In 2009, few things were as ubiquitous as the economy, which was omnipresent in conversations, news reports and even on Internet search engines. And if you believe the latter—Google reported in December that the most popular economic search term of 2009 was “crisis”—the news wasn’t at all good.

In 2010, the economy’s influence promises to persist—especially in the facilities management profession. “The big thing that’s driving facilities right now is the economy,” says Christopher Canale, vice president of operations for GPX Realty Partners, a Philadelphia-

based real estate investment and advisory firm. “That was true in 2009, and it’s still going to be true in 2010.”

Although the economy continues to be a hot topic, its impact promises to be more positive for facilities managers (FMs) in 2010 than it was in 2009, thanks in large part to the construction industry, which appears poised for a modest recovery, according to McGraw-Hill Construction. In its *2010 Construction Outlook*, it predicts that the level of construction starts this year will increase by 11 percent to \$466.2 billion following three straight years of

decline that brought total construction activity down 39 percent from its mid-decade peak. For FMs, this indicates an upward trend in infrastructure investments.

“Things are turning around and becoming more positive for the industry,” Canale says. “The downturn happened very quickly, however, and it’s going to take a little more time for the market to fully recover.”

Whether 2010 brings more recession or a long-awaited recovery, staying on top of industry trends can help FMs prove their relevance and improve their performance. “For me and everybody, money’s tight,” says Mike Day, Building Owners and Managers Institute (BOMI) International instructor and director of facilities at Howard Hughes Medical Institute in Ashburn, Va. “But when people are cutting back on expenses, there are always things they can do that will help them come out of the chute successful at the other end.”

To help your facility emerge successfully “at the other end” of the economic downturn, consider the following top five facility management trends of 2010:

### 1. TOP-DOWN ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Sustainability was a major focus in 2009 as businesses jumped on the green business bandwagon. It’s nothing new for FMs. “Facility managers were well aware and practiced sustainability for many years, even if they didn’t call it that,” says Shari Epstein,

energy consumption, monitor energy savings, set energy benchmarks and report on the ROI of energy investments.

To help facilities achieve their long-term energy targets, FMs can expect more support this year for technologies such as passive infrared sensors, solar voltaic lighting and windmills; installations like green roofs; and process improvements like quarterly preventive maintenance on mechanical systems that once were checked annually.

### 2. BEYOND CAD

For many years, computer-aided design (CAD) has been an industry standard for FMs who use CAD drawings of their facilities to analyze data in pursuit of improved structures and systems. However, many critics argue that CAD drawings—traditionally two-dimensional—enable bad design. Enter a new industry standard: building information modeling (BIM). While FMs have been slow to adopt it, according to Epstein, BIM already has proven itself a valuable tool to architects and engineers. The reasons they like it—BIM uses three-dimensional, real-time drawings to increase productivity in design and construction, utilizing more variables to create a more complete building picture—are the same reasons FMs will finally begin to use it. The inability for current building owners to use the information is one of the barriers of adoption.



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director of research for the International Facility Management Association (IFMA). “When corporate America latched on several years ago, however, it became more of a top-down than bottom-up initiative.”

Thanks to the promise of reduced overhead and the threat of government regulation, FMs should expect top-down sustainability mandates to continue in 2010, particularly in the area of energy efficiency, where energy management is becoming a major focus that’s driving more FMs to track

### 3. WIRELESS WINS BIG

While BIM technology is emerging, wireless technology already is here, according to Canale, who expects FMs to continue deploying wireless amenities like VoIP in their facilities in order to attract high-tech tenants that want to be able to easily reconfigure their offices.

Wireless technology will continue to benefit not only tenants, but also FMs, who will continue to adopt digital tools, such as infrared thermometers and laser levels,

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and implement new wireless systems, such as back office ticketing systems that interface with a facility manager's PDA, allowing him or her to remotely receive and assign maintenance tickets.

This year also will be the year for the iPhone app. "A lot of FM software doesn't run on iPhones," Day says. "But there's huge demand for it. Apps for work orders or equipment logs would be extremely useful. So would an app that lets you scan a barcode and see who has a certain part in stock. I expect utility companies eventually will get on the bandwagon with apps for smart phones, too; instead of sending you an e-mail, they'll use apps to give you real-time data."

#### 4. INTEGRATION REIGNS SUPREME

Traditionally, more technology has meant more systems to use and more software to learn. This year, FMs can expect the Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) that they use for maintenance tasks to be replaced by a holistic Integrated Workplace Management System (IWMS) that integrates maintenance and space management functions with corporate real estate, project management and employee services functions.

Integration is an especially important concept in security. In the wake of incidents like last year's Fort

Hood Texas shooting, FMs should expect an increased focus on security consolidation and automation so that different security components—cameras, scanners, motion devices, etc.—can work in concert to the benefit of responders, who will be able to more effectively identify and respond to threats.

In pursuit of integrated security, FMs should expect wireless navigation devices to become popular tools and mass e-mail alerts to become a more common practice. "Because of what happened in Texas recently, mass e-mailing will be big," Day says. "There are programs now where you can hit one key and e-mail everyone in your facility in the event of a lockdown. Wayfinders are becoming a big deal, too; you put monitors at strategic locations that guide people in your building to safe areas."

#### 5. REAL CREATIVE REAL ESTATE

Because expectations remain low for the commercial real estate market this year, real estate management will be a major priority for many FMs, who may find themselves moving tenants around within their facilities in pursuit of reduced overhead. "Right now, there's a greater amount of space per person due to higher vacancy rates," Epstein says. "Some people are working in ghost towns, and when you've got real estate that's underutilized, it makes sense to condense people into one area, curtail utilities in closed areas and reduce overhead." 