The Added Value of FM - Updates from the RNG group

Per Anker Jensen and Theo van der Voordt

INTRODUCTION

The research group on “The Added Value of FM” was established in 2009 on the initiative of Per Anker Jensen, Technical University of Denmark, who was chairman of EuroFM’s Research Network Group in 2007-2008. He also became chairman of the new group and now leads the group together with Theo van der Voordt, Delft University of Technology. The group from the beginning included researchers from Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Switzerland and UK. The general background for establishing this collaborative research group was that the perception and application of FM during the last decades gradually has shifted from primarily steering on cost reduction towards managing facilities as a strategic resource to add value to the organisation and its stakeholders and to contribute to its overall performance.

The current group builds on earlier work in a NordicFM work group on the topic “Highlight the Added Values for Core Business Provided by FM”. The NordicFM group consisted of practitioners from Denmark, Norway and Sweden and was chaired by Ole Emil Malmstrøm, who was board member of EuroFM and former chairman of the Danish Facilities Management Association and the NordicFM network. Per Anker Jensen participated as the only researcher in the group and worked alongside on a research project called “Facilities Management Best Practice in the Nordic Countries”. Based on the combination of these two activities he developed the conceptual framework FM Value Map (Jensen et al. 2008; Jensen, 2010), which was a basis for the new EuroFM research group. Ole Emil Malmstrøm participated as a practitioner in this research group. The close interaction between research and practice has been an essential aspect of the development of knowledge on the added value of FM.

The research group started with a workshop in May 2009 and it has over the years met in a number of other workshops in different European countries. The first joint work in the group was to conduct a literature review on the added value of FM and related issues. This was done by combining research from three disciplines: FM, Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) and Business to Business (B2B) Marketing. This resulted in the conference paper: “The Added Value of FM: Different Research Perspectives” (Jensen et al., 2010) for EFMC 2010 in Madrid, where the group presented the work at a plenary session followed by a panel debate with practitioners. The literature review was later developed into the journal paper: “In Search for the Added Value of FM: What we know and what we need to learn” (Jensen et al., 2012b) published in Facilities, where it achieved a Highly Commended Paper Award.

The first book

At a workshop with 18 participants during EFMC 2010 the research group decided to write a book together. This was accomplished within two years, and the book: “The Added Value of Facilities Management – Concepts, Findings and Perspectives” (Jensen et al., 2012a) was
launched at EFMC 2012 in Copenhagen. The editors were Per Anker Jensen, Theo van der Voordt, and Christian Coenen, ZHAW - Zürich University of Applied Science. The book includes contributions by 18 authors and is divided in four parts. The first part, Introduction, includes a presentation of the three disciplines, FM, CREM and B2B marketing, as well as the making of the FM Value Map. The second part concerns theory and methodology. The third part includes empirical studies and the fourth part concludes with learning and perspectives. At EFMC 2012 the book was presented by the authors at a plenary session and reviewed by a panel with Leif Møllebjerg, LEGO, Geir Hansen, NTNU, Trondheim, and Peter Prischl, Reality Consult GmbH, Vienna. All participants in the conference were offered a free copy of the book.

The research group also established a sub-group in 2010 chaired by Christian Coenen, ZHAW with a particular focus on the value chain in FM. They created a framework called FM Value Network focusing on stakeholder management and relationship value in FM. The framework was developed into a case study protocol, which was used in a case study of the Learning Café in the Library at the University of Glasgow (Alexander, 2011). The sub-group wrote a joint chapter in the added value book called “FM as a Value Network: Exploring Relationships amongst Key FM Stakeholders” and later on the journal article “Facility Management Value Dimensions from a Demand Perspective” (Coenen et al., 2013), published in Journal of Facilities Management.

**Contributions to EFMC 2013-2014**

During the European Facility Management Conference EFMC 2013 in Prague there were both a paper session at the research symposium and a workshop on the added value of FM. The topic of the workshop was: “How to manage and measure different value dimensions?”. It was chaired by the three editors of the book from 2012. The participants were asked at the beginning of the workshop to fill in a short questionnaire about their perception of the concept of “Added Value of FM”. The results confirmed that the concept of Added Value is interpreted in many ways and linked to a huge variety of different topics. Prioritization of different types of added value showed to be highly subjective and depends on the participant’s position, experience and personal beliefs. Most prioritized values included the contribution of FM and CREM to the quality of life, the productivity of the core business, user satisfaction and sustainability. The participants found it difficult to mention concrete measures how to add value, partly due to different interpretations of the term “measures” as “interventions” and “ways to measure”. The answers ranged from concrete measures such as evaluate happiness, satisfaction and work support, create energy savings in building retrofitting, and take care of shuttle busses and parking facilities for bikes, to abstract measures such as steering on economics, efficiency and effectiveness, or ‘good price & value for the client’.

This inspired us to investigate the perception and application of the added value of FM among practitioners further. Therefore, we conducted 10 interviews with experienced practitioners - 5 from Denmark and 5 from the Netherlands - based on a common interview guide. The results were published in a conference paper for EFMC 2014 in Berlin (Van der Voordt and Jensen, 2014a) and presented during a paper session on the added value of FM at the research symposium. A shorter and more popular version of this article was published in an Australian FM Magazine (Van der Voordt and Jensen, 2014b).
Plans for new books

In the beginning of 2014 we decided to work towards publishing a second book on the added value of FM with a more practical focus than the first book mentioned above. The plans for this new publication were presented at the session during EFMC 2014 and a meeting with interested conference participants and potential contributors were arranged after the session. The basic idea is to develop a simple and common model for the added value of FM and CREM and to demonstrate how a set of value parameters can be managed and measured. The working title of the book is “Facilities Management and Corporate Real Estate Management as Value Drivers: How to Manage and Measure Added Value”. Over the summer we have invited a number of potential authors of chapters on specific value parameters. Most of them have now accepted the invitation. We have also made a proposal to the publisher Routledge for publishing the book. They have asked three different - and to us anonymous - reviewers and they all have given very positive reviews of the book proposal.

Alongside we are working on a contribution about the Added Value work to another new book with the title “Evident-based Facilities Management”. This book is edited by Keith Alexander and is planned to be published by Routledge as the first book in a series on Advancing Knowledge in FM. This book will be launched at EFMC 2015 in Glasgow. At the time of writing this article, our work on both of the two new books is in good progress. The new book on added value is planned to be published in 2016 – hopefully to be launched at EFMC 2016!

The book can be ordered in print and as e-book at http://www.polyteknisk.dk/home/Facilities_management
References

Per Anker Jensen is Professor and head of Centre for Facilities Management, Technical University of Denmark.

Theo van der Voordt is associate professor in Corporate Real Estate Management, Delft University of Technology, and senior researcher at the Center for People and Buildings, Delft, Netherlands.