ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT (FM) IN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT FOR HEALTH CARE SECTORS

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Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to explore and try to understand the current key issues, challenges, and barriers of facilities management (FM) development in Malaysian healthcare sector and its framework to solve the issues happened in healthcare sector. The paper triangulates both secondary and primary sources of data. Primary data were generated from 24 participants attended the workshop and divided groups with a strategic mix of participants come from diverse backgrounds in the FM profession, representing the universities, hospital, FM practitioners’ consultants to facilitate cross fertilization of information. These primary sources were complemented with relevant secondary documents from the organisations investigated. In this research, it was found that there are five issues of categorised with its challenges which are people, process, place, financial and technology. A way forward, a framework on the strategic approach of FM services in healthcare sector been introduced for healthcare sector in Malaysia. It is not the intention of this report to cover all aspects of FM within the scope of healthcare sector but it is as a simple explanation and represents part of key issues and challenges a way forward to better understand derived from the experience of frontline in healthcare industry.

Keywords: Malaysia, Facilities Management, Business, Healthcare

1. Introduction

According to Pillay (2002), the development of FM in Malaysia started in the second half of 1990s. The government has played a major role in the development of FM in Malaysia. In 1996, the government has privatised the non-critical support services in the government hospitals to three FM companies. It was indeed the biggest FM contract by the government at that time. It also marked the starting of the new era of FM in Malaysia. In February 2001, during the opening of the Kuala Lumpur 21 Convention and Exposition, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia in referencing to the state of FM in Malaysia emphasised that:

Unless Malaysians change their mentality to become more aware of the need to provide good services and improve the upkeep of buildings, we will forever be a third world country with first world infrastructure (Prime Minister of Malaysia, 2001).

From the above statement, Malaysia needs to put great focus and emphasis on the development of FM particularly in public health sector. This workshop is held to assist in gaining information and discussing the current key challenges or barriers of facilities management development in Malaysian hospital and its framework to solve the issues happened in government hospital particularly.

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2. Key Issues and Challenges FM in Health Care Sector

Facilities Management is the management of multi-disciplinary activities to ensure continuous functionality of the built environment by linking and integrating people, places, process and technology (Construction Industry Development Board, 2010). On the research data derived from the frontline FM practitioners and healthcare staff, the key issues and challenges faced in healthcare sector encapsulated in people, process, place, technology and financial categories with it’s respectively challenges. Table 1, below shows briefly based on five principles which are people, process, financial and technology.

Table 1. Current states and issues encapsulated in people, process, place, and technology and financial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PEOPLE</td>
<td>a) Overlapping of functions between technical and non technical in FM (hard and soft)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b) Aligning strategic decision at top management to align with FM requirement in the hospital</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c) Succession plan to replace retiring or outgoing staff as part of the career development exercises in the hospital</td>
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<td>d) Recognition and accreditation of FM training and competency program/module for hospital</td>
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<td>e) People/public is less concern on the health, safety and environment issues in their work place.</td>
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<td>f) Miss conception of FM for not providing value for money services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>g) Improper schedule maintenance i.e. Run to failure attitude (breakdown maintenance)</td>
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<td>h) Benefit of FM is translated as value for money and difficult to quantify</td>
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<td>i) Management pay least attention on FM services because it is noncore function in hospital</td>
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<td>j) Lack of understanding on FM functions</td>
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<td>k) Preference on specific equipment by some Medical Officers (MO)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>l) Lack of competency on personnel to meet challenging and complex situation in performing specific task in hospital</td>
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<td>PROCESS</td>
<td>a) Lack of knowledge management skill among leadership, among peers, team building i.e more courses programme need to be established.</td>
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<td>b) Insufficient reference on Asset and Facilities Manual (AFM)</td>
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<td>c) FM is perceived as a support services and is non dynamic to the organisation</td>
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<td>d) No strategic and transformation planning in FM</td>
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<td>e) Lack of standard, statutory and mandatory requirement to implement FM function</td>
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<td>f) FM is positioned at lower level which is non strategic and not at the same par with corporate level</td>
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<td>g) FM function and process is perform on ad hoc and operational basis</td>
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<td>h) FM is not integrated with core function in hospital</td>
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<td></td>
<td>i) Different in FM policy when new management take over</td>
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<td></td>
<td>j) Selection of criteria for outsourcing FM services are not clearly defined</td>
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<td></td>
<td>k) Obliged to select lowest bidders for FM activities.</td>
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The need to have a strategic function in the health care services is pertinent. Malaysia health care sector is lag behind in terms of professionalism and competency. FM is always perceived as a support services and none dynamic in organisation. Currently FM in Malaysia is more focusing on maintenance management rather than strategic core business that would incorporate business value in their organisation. By identified the key issues and challenges FM in health care sector is a briefly described critical success factor framework shows in Figure 1.

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Critical Success Factor in FM Healthcare Sector

PEOPLE
- Continuous Training
- Competency
- Leadership Support
- FM Profession/
  
PROCESS
- Restructuring
- Integrated
- Consolidation
- Process Coordination
- Service Quality
- Regulation

PLACE
- Space Management
- Infrastructure
- Sustainable

TECHNOLOGY
- Integrated System
- Data Management

FINANCIAL
- Value for Money
- Life Cycle Analysis

Figure 1: Critical Success Factor Framework in FM Healthcare sector

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3. Roles of Business Opportunities FM Services in Hospital

There are four main factors that could be factors in eyeing the business opportunities namely user needs, financial and market segment, out sourcing or in sourcing and also supplier. A lot of potentials business when deal with FM services right from the food services, green initiatives, parking areas, laundry and even store management. All factors were actually giving abundance opportunities for FM providers to get business with it. However, there might be also required outsourcing to the FM providers for example landscaping works, clinical waste, pest control and also food services. The detail of business opportunities are elaborated in the Figure 2 below;

Figure 2: Roles of Business Opportunities FM Services in Hospital
4. A Way Forward: Framework on the Strategic Approach FM Services in Health Sector

The meeting point between hard and soft services will then be identified as a common scope of FM. For instance the common activities involved are IT, pest control, security, fleet management, and landscaping and space rental. The members have agreed that FM should be integrated and coordinated thus it will transform into holistic approach as shown in Figure 3;

![Integrated FM diagram](image)

Figure 3: Integrated FM diagram

4.1. Strategic Management Level

The FM function can be put under a department by merging administration and engineering under one roof. However, how does it can be strategic and need strong support from the corporate level to make FM more functional and viable to the organisation. At present FM in Malaysia running much on operational and tactical down to the line compared on the strategic way. To make it realise, the communication strategy must be coherent with the decision makers input so that FM could really helping organisation and management more understand and value of FM as a core business. The members also raised the services rendered by FM and asset management (AM) in Malaysia context. Whereby on AM, it looking on the whole life cycle cost while in FM it does not look into the matter. FM cannot be at level of core business as yet, because it involves tactical level. To be a strategic, it will become more incline to asset management (e.g.; FM run its business on tactical and operational) even though AM encapsulated in FM. Asset and services
cannot be separated and it bring services and also involve financial instrument and cost implication.

5.0 Conclusion

To be a strategic FM, FM should consolidate itself as a core services at par with other core businesses in hospital, the issues and challenges need to be solved. The hospital need to have FM department stand on its own. Its function and roles of FM will be more efficient, focus, value for money and to be value added to the service quality for the hospital. FM department should be headed by FM manager who are competent enough with skills and experiences so that people especially from the leadership of hospital more convincing to put extra budget on FM. In business opportunities, FM has a lot of potential of generating money from the FM services. FM should be no longer perceived by people and especially by higher management as a maintenance works with little budget allocated for. FM should stands on its own to make it more reputable and capable same with other department in hospital. Transformation planning has to begin within hospital so that the people know better the roles and function of FM in hospital. The issues and challenges faced by health sectors in Malaysia can be resolved amicably.

6.0 References

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