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Instant UpRight diversifies with the launch of new low-level powered access platforms

Instant UpRight, manufacturer of Instant Aluminium Tower Systems, is launching a range of low-level electric-powered access platforms into the European and Asian markets.

The company, which currently manufactures its market-leading tower systems in Ireland and China, will introduce the new line of electric machines from July, supplied from its recently opened European warehouse and distribution hub located in Venlo, Netherlands.

The initial machine range consists of five electric models and includes a push-around scissor lift, three electric scissor lifts and a mast lift, produced in conjunction with an experienced Chinese manufacturing partner. Instant UpRight will evaluate and redesign as required to suit market demand, adding its own mark to a brand name that is still held dear by many in the industry.

The range includes the 6m MX1330 push-around scissor lift; 6.4m MX1430 self-propelled electric mini scissor lift; 7.8m MX1930 self-propelled electric lift; 10m X2632 self-propelled electric scissor lift and the 12m ML3330 push-around mast lift. The MX140, MX1930 and X2632 all feature direct electric drive motors and high-quality componentry with good commonality for easy parts ordering and stocking. All the products will carry a two-year warranty as standard.

The machine line will be fully supported with parts stocked at the Venlo European hub. A technical helpdesk will operate from Venlo and Dublin further supported by the Instant UpRight distribution network.

Instant UpRight says it will focus on the European and Asian markets initially, selling to small and medium sized rental companies, end-users and dealers who are looking for an alternative choice of provider. Joe Oxley, Group Managing Director for Instant UpRight, said: “It is an exciting time at Instant UpRight as we diversify our product line. Initial interest in the new machine range has been high and we have already delivered the first few units which are out working and showing great results. The company is no stranger to the AWP market and there is still a strong brand awareness present - the return of Instant UpRight blue machines presents us with an exciting challenge which is welcomed by the whole IU team.”

The company has invested heavily to ensure that it can serve its worldwide markets.

In 2010 it opened up in China to manufacture a new range of welded aluminium tower helping to significantly increase the company’s revenues. In February this year, the company moved its Dublin plant to City West, into a new modern facility with an area of 10,000sqm dedicated to manufacturing the market-leading rib-grip, non-welded aluminium tower range, special and bespoke systems for boilers and SpandecK walkways, plus office space for administration, engineering, sales and marketing. In April this year, it opened a new European warehouse and distribution hub in Venlo, Netherlands to provide support for its European customer base.

Oxley added: “The market continues to develop, and the market for low-level access products has probably expanded tenfold in as many years, opening up opportunities that are almost limitless. This company has built its reputation for providing quality products for working safely at height for more than 70 years based on a foundation of great engineering design innovation and a loyal global distribution network - we intend to continue along this path.”

PDF of brochures with full specifications can be downloaded from the website www.instantuprightlifts.com

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JS Air Curtains fit in at 1Rebel Gym

JS Air Curtains has recently supplied two Rund air curtains to 1Rebel boutique gym in Victoria, London. Described as a “Ride studio like no other” the 1Rebel gym at Victoria fuses amazing sound systems and lighting with a full body bike workout.

With two entrances into its reception, the building was suffering from a wind-tunnel effect and wanted to eliminate the draught to maintain a comfortable internal temperature for staff and customers. The nightclub-like gym needed an air curtain system to match its vibrant contemporary style.

JS Air Curtains’ Rund air curtain was chosen by architects as its cylindrical design perfectly complements the industrialised and futuristic interior, and could be suspended with inverted goal-post like supports. The units were installed by mechanical contractors, TMI Mechanical Limited, who also provided the ceiling mounted suspension arms.

Nina Shadi, General Manager and trainer at 1Rebel UK, commented, “Since the air curtains have been installed, we’ve noticed a considerable improvement in the internal environment. We no longer experience the draughts through our wide doorways and the temperature is much more pleasant.

The Rund air curtain has rounded casing that comes in white or silver as standard but can be supplied in any RAL colour or with a brushed stainless steel finish. It can be suspended horizontally above a doorway, as it is at 1Rebel, or vertically at the sides of an entrance. When mounted horizontally, it has many different suspension options, including goal post-like arms fitted to the floor, wall or ceiling.

Low noise, centrifugal double inlet fans are driven by an external rotor motor. The powerful fans are capable of providing enough airflow to create an effective seal across doorways up to 4.2m high or 8.4m wide, when mounted vertically at each side.

The 1Rebel gym at Victoria is part of the 1Rebel group which has six locations across London. It offers three pay-per-session fitness concepts of either Reshape (treadmill and weights), Ride (bike / nightclub experience) or Rumble (high intensity boxing training). The new concept in boutique fitness was designed by Giles Dean and James Balfour, son of previous Fitness First owner Mike Balfour.

JS Air Curtains, the UK’s leading air curtain specialist, supply an extensive range of air curtains for all commercial and industrial applications. You can find out more by visiting the company’s website at www.jsaircurtains.com.

e-mail your news to shirley@qubeonline.co.uk
New textile diffuser panels improve interior climate

KE Fibertec

New from KE Fibertec, the specialists in textile ducts for HVAC systems, is a textile diffuser for suspended ceiling systems.

The new diffusers known as FBS panels have been developed to provide draught-free air distribution for suspended ceilings and a better alternative solution to the normal ceiling grilles which generate draughts and accumulate huge amounts of dust.

Ideal for schools, offices, healthcare and other high comfort environments the system operates at a lower pressure than that of standard ceiling diffusers thus optimising energy efficiency. Fresh air is evenly distributed across the entire surface of the panel which results in a healthy indoor environment without problems of draught.

The FBS panels are made of flame retardant textile material with impermeable panel tops so that the air is distributed into the room and not above the ceiling. The entire visible surface is used actively for air distribution. From an aesthetic point of view the textile material of the FBS panels can be specified in standard colours of white or light grey to blend with the ceiling finish or in a range of special colours to make a statement or echo another colour theme within an interior.

The new FBS panels are made in 600mm x 600mm and 600mm x 1200mm sizes for standard suspended ceilings and the plastic plenum chamber above the ceiling comes with a flexible outlet socket of 160 to 250mm diameter for connection to HVAC ducting. The plenum chamber above the ceiling requires no more room above the ceiling than the diameter of the outlet socket. There are side, end and combi outlet versions of the plenum chamber available to suit the configuration of above ceiling ducting.

Suitable either for retrofitting with existing HVAC systems or for new build projects, the new FBS panels greatly reduce the incidents of draughts or hot/cold spots in the occupied zone and thus create a much more even temperature in the room. The textile panels are extremely lightweight, are easily fitted to almost any ceiling type and are simply unzipped from the ceiling panel for machine washing at 40°C so as to remove dust and maintain airflow.

Installation and maintenance of the FBS panels is quick and easy with no tools required.

One of the first installations of the new FBS panels has been in Denmark at Larsens Efth, a forge and machine company which moved to new premises as the management wanted to improve the environment of the company and its employees, in particular regarding the indoor climate.

The FBS panels were installed in the offices, the canteen and the changing rooms and similar textile ducts were installed in the production halls to ensure efficient and draught-free air distribution.

In the administration building a total of 36 FBS panels in light grey and of 600mm x 600mm size have been installed into the suspended ceilings for a low pressure loss system meeting the latest building regulations.

The Danish company is delighted with the result of the FBS ceiling panels providing draught-free and energy-efficient ventilation.

For specifications, the FBS panels are available as BIM Objects. These are available as MagiCad components for AutoCad and Revit.

Further information on the new FBS panels is available from KE Fibertec by calling 02380 740751, by emailing info@ke-fibertec.co.uk or by visiting the company’s website at www.ke-fibertec.co.uk.

KE Fibertec is supported by Vantage PR.

Martindale’s winning tip for non-contact voltage and magnetic field detection

Martindale

Now available from Martindale Electric – one of the most trusted brands in electrical safety – is the latest NC Series of Non-Contact Testers, which enable electricians and maintenance teams to quickly and safely identify live wiring and detect magnetic fields in a range of applications. All models feature a bright LED torch at the point of measurement, together with both audible and visual indication making them ideal for all work areas. The extended clear probe tip makes it easier to identify the source of the live voltage or magnetic field through improved access and brighter indication.

Both NC2 Non-contact Voltage Detector and NC4 Dual Sensitivity Non-contact voltage detector make it simple to detect the presence of AC voltages in cabling, sockets and connectors. The sensitivity of the NC2 has been optimised for 230V single and 3 phase systems making it ideal for identifying and tracing live mains cables in trunking and connectors. The NC4 features two sensitivity ranges which can be set according to the application and is suitable for both mains and lower voltage systems down to 12V.

The Non-contact Magnetic Field Detection capabilities of the NC1 Non-contact Solenoid/Magnetic Field Tester and NC3 Non-contact Voltage and Magnetic Field Tester can be used for checking the operation of relays and solenoid valves in a wide range of machinery. This feature saves valuable time by allowing testing without having to dismantle equipment or control panels. For the dual function NC3 a bright red LED indicates voltage and a yellow LED magnetic fields. Suitable applications for both the NC1 and NC3 include troubleshooting and servicing of control equipment in process industries, energy, transportation and pneumatic and hydraulic systems.

The pen-shaped design with clip is ideal for carrying in a pocket or tool belt so that the tester is always to hand for electricians or maintenance staff working at height or in difficult to access locations.

Available online and through electrical wholesalers all models in the new NC series are supplied with alkaline batteries and a comprehensive two-year guarantee. Non-contact voltage testers are a handy tool for detecting live voltages and troubleshooting faulty wiring and equipment but cannot be used for proving dead during safe isolation procedures. A two pole voltage indicator such as the Martindale VI13800 should be used for proving dead.

Martindale Electric offers a comprehensive range of portable appliance testers, voltage testers, proving units and locking off devices to ensure compliance with the Electricity at Work Regulations for the safe maintenance of plant and equipment and the safe operation of electrical appliances.

For more information, please contact Martindale Electric on 01923 441717 or visit: http://martindale-electric.co.uk/

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JS Air Curtains sales team expansion

JS Air Curtains has expanded its team with the appointment of Loredana Groza as its new technical sales advisor.

Loredana will be providing support and assistance in all aspects of air curtain design, specification and installation to consultants, contractors and specifiers.

Commenting on the new appointment, Kerry Jones, UK and Ireland Sales Manager said, “We are delighted to welcome Loredana to the JS Air Curtains sales team. The company has experienced considerable growth in recent years and Loredana’s appointment will help us maintain the responsive technical assistance our customers rely on.”

Bonasystems helps commuters watch their step with the launch of HSE approved pendulum testing across 11 mainland rail stations

Bonasystems, market leaders in cleaning and anti-slip products, services and consulting, has been appointed to conduct slip risk assessments using the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) approved pendulum device at 11 of Network Rail’s mainland stations including Euston, Paddington, Victoria and Liverpool Street stations.

Dr Steve Thorpe, Head of Risk at Bonasystems and Chair of the UK’s Slip Resistance Group, commented; “Working with Bonasystems will enable Network Rail to adopt a scientific approach to reducing the risk of slips at stations. The pendulum test provides a score which can then be used to check and confirm if the interventions or changes they have made have been effective. We’re committed to helping our customers prevent slips from happening in the first instance.”

The pendulum test is the method used by HSE in prosecution cases, and it is designed to replicate a pedestrian heel strike at the point when most slips occur. “In most instances we find that floors are fit for purpose, but the floors will only meet HSE standards if they are maintained properly”, explained Dr Thorpe.

Bonasystems estimates that the pendulum testing will be completed by the end of August 2020. Dr Thorpe added, “We take an individual approach with each of our clients, and our team is able to give a detailed assessment of each flooring environment plus recommend a variety of anti-slip treatments, best practice cleaning methodologies and specialist floor cleaning products. We aim to take a proactive approach to manage potential risk of future slips.”

Slips and trips are still the biggest cause of accidents in the UK. Of these major accidents 95 per cent result in broken bones. It is important for all organisations to reassess their slip management strategies. This also means that having cleaner, safer floors that are suitable for your environment can help prevent fines and protect your business, customers and employees.

Bonasystems’ cleaning products and recommended cleaning methodologies reduce the slip-risk substantially and are used by many private companies and public services to significantly reduce their risk of slips, especially in high footfall or high-risk areas. For further information about Bonasystems and its services visit the website or telephone +44+1442 927 100.

Evolution apprentice recognised in national competition to discover “The Engineers of tomorrow”

Michael Battersby, a final year apprentice with Evolution, the leading integrated Fire & Security systems business, has scooped one of the top prizes in the annual Engineers of Tomorrow (EoT) competition at London’s IFSEC 2019 exhibition and conference. EoT promotes engineering apprenticeships to young people interested in a career in the electronic fire and security sectors. The competition is designed to be fun and encourage employers to appreciate new talent as valuable assets within their organisations.

Nominated in the Fire category where he was competing against some very talented opposition from all over the UK, Michael excelled in the arena and successfully came out on top. Michael only joined Evolution earlier this year and is on a progressive learning curve within the business, dividing his time between the company’s service and the projects departments, and becoming embedded within the Evolution culture.

Richard Lambert, Managing Director of Evolution, says he is delighted to see Michael’s skills being recognised on the national stage; “Michael has been a popular member of the business since he joined our talented engineering team, and we are delighted to see just how far he has come in such a comparatively short space of time.

“To compete against the best in the country and come out as a winner is worthy of the highest praise.”

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**Centiel extends PremiumTower™ range**

Centiel, leading UPS manufacturer, has announced the extension of its PremiumTower™ range. PremiumTower is a three-phase, online double-conversion UPS, designed to maximise efficiency and minimise footprint and is now available in a range of sizes from: 10-250 kW. PremiumTower provides an excellent solution for small and medium data centres, comms rooms, IT networks and any mission-critical application which demands high availability and unbeatable energy efficiency.

Gerardo Lecuona, co-founder, and global sales director, CENTIEL, confirms: “PremiumTower is another high-quality solution from the same R&D team that brought the industry CumulusPower™, CENTIEL’s class-leading modular UPS system. PremiumTower has the same Swiss build quality and innovative technology seen in CumulusPower but comes in a lower cost, stand-alone version ideally suited to applications where minimizing Total Cost of Ownership is a significant factor.

“When floor space is a premium, there is now no need to compromise on performance,” continues Lecuona. “PremiumTower provides up to 415 kW per square meter of energy, while delivering efficient and uncompromised availability. The standalone cabinet can be placed against the wall as only front access is needed for services, saving space and making maintenance straightforward.

“PremiumTower can be paralleled to provide either additional power capacity or redundancy,” continues Lecuona. “In addition, its best-in-class, on-line operating efficiency of 96.6% in double conversion mode minimizes running costs and reduces the Total Cost of Ownership.

“Internal batteries are available for 10-60kW versions, reducing the footprint to ensure it can fit into even the smallest comms room. Flexibility in the number of battery blocks (20 to 50 x 12V blocks), allows system designers to optimise costs versus autonomy time without power derating and enables the upgrade of the UPS without changing the battery installation.

“Advanced monitoring through Ethernet adaptors, dry contacts, and serial ports allows for remote real-time control and early detection of alarms for fast reaction in case of power outages or reduced battery autonomy. PremiumTower is capable of up to 120% continuous overload ensuring load protection even on marginally rated supplies.”

Lecuona concludes: “As a trusted manufacturer of quality UPS solutions, we are now delighted to introduce the full range of PremiumTower to our valued client base across the globe. This extension to the product range also offers additional flexibility and ensures that systems can be right-sized to suit any business-critical application.”

For further information please see:  www.centiel.com

**Delta Security installs integrated security solution at Grasmere Primary**

Delta Security, a specialist in automated, high-security solutions, has installed an integrated access control and IP-based HD CCTV system into Grasmere Primary School to enhance security for students and streamline access for teachers and visitors.

Local to Delta Security, the Hackney-based school had been relying on security systems and processes that were not integrated, and large numbers of keys were required for the safe management of the school.

Nick Mallender, Head Teacher at Grasmere Primary School, says after joining two years ago he saw there were efficiencies and improvements to be made: “The organisation of the keys and systems gave our site manager additional work and avoidable stress.”

Nick approached Delta Security after having worked with them in a previous role: “In addition to my experience, speaking with other head teachers it was clear that Delta Security has a reputation for providing the gold standard of security to schools in the area.”

Delta Security specified a Salto access control system that enables school officials to print colour-photograph ID cards that also work as access control cards. Each access card is programmed according to the employee or visitor’s access authorisation and ID cards can be deleted at the touch of a button should they be lost or stolen.

Working hand in hand with the access control ID card system is an IP-based HD CCTV system that provides visual confirmation of who has accessed the site and when.

“It has transformed security on the site,” says Nick. “In addition to knowing who on site is meant to be there, we can also protect our confidential documents by restricting access to their location. The CCTV is also much more comprehensive, giving us access to high-quality footage when required.”

Delta Security pre-issued ID cards to employees before works began at the end of the school holidays. Essential to Nick was ensuring the chosen system was user-friendly:

“When implementing change that affects all staff and visitors it is vital that everyone feels comfortable with how it all works. Dave Mundy, Delta’s Managing Director, gave comprehensive training and I’m confident that everyone can take ownership of the new system.”

Grasmere Primary School is home to approximately 240 students. It prides itself on being highly inclusive for children with medical and special educational needs, and has a commitment to local community, the arts and innovative teaching methods.

“We now feel we have brought our security system in line with the innovative culture of our school,” concludes Nick. “I would not hesitate in recommending Delta Security to other schools. Both Dave his and the team of engineers’ communication was second to none, making the installation process seamless.”
InnuScience takes the lead with IoT product monitoring system

InnuScience

Fast-growing InnuScience believes it is the first cleaning product manufacturer in the UK to launch an Internet of Things (IoT) based product monitoring system.

Its system – Connected Cleaning – works by monitoring product usage, which is then reported on a monthly basis against the budget per site. A key benefit of this system is to allow the proactive management of any deviations from budget that could potentially occur.

InnuScience, now an established global leader in commercial cleaning systems based on biotechnology, can achieve the upfront results of strong chemical products by using biological actives – fermentation extracts, enzymes and microbes – to create a residual cleaning action that boosts standards.

The industry leader prides itself on:

- Performance: Connected Cleaning offers a superior performance on porous surfaces – such as natural stones, tile grout and safety flooring – as the actives penetrate the micro pores and extract the dirt.
- Competitive Pricing: The cost in use of Connected Cleaning can be from as little as two pence per litre. InnuScience’s products are competitively priced compared to conventional cleaning products, ruling out the need to spend big to go green, as has been the case in the past.
- Respecting the Planet: InnuScience insists on all of its products being environmentally-friendly with ultimate biodegradability of 99.99 per cent – according to OECD test 301 - being standard. In addition to these stringent internal standards, all the company’s cleaning products are either Ecologo or Ecolabel certified.
- Safety: InnuScience’s cleaning products are not classified as hazardous – and in their diluted form they are not even classified, thus minimising any unwanted Health and Safety risks.
- Passionate Service: A National Support Team is on standby to offer a proactive approach by connecting cleaning, monitoring product usage and slashing costs.

A router integrated into InnuScience’s dispensing equipment communicates product usage data back to the company via Wi-Fi or 4G. InnuScience is then able to issue simple customer reports in a traffic light format, indicating if product usage is in line with budget. The sophisticated system can also flag up other metrics such as usage diagnostics and empty product warnings.

This efficient procedure allows InnuScience to adopt a proactive approach and ensure that clients never run out of products. The dispenser can be accessed remotely to take corrective action where necessary.

Nick Winstone, UK Managing Director of InnuScience, said: “InnuScience is passionate about providing high performance, responsible products that leave lasting impressions, so that you can go green without compromising the quality of your cleaning. Our revolutionary biotechnology products offer superior performance and unrivalled value for money. They are also planet conscious and people friendly.

“Technology has the ability to transform the way we clean and the way we control the budgets around cleaning product spend. By monitoring our customer spend on cleaning products we can ensure that savings are being delivered and that product usage is optimal per customer site.”

InnuScience UK, based in Milton Keynes, is the youngest and fastest-growing of the top 15 manufacturers in the country supplying biotechnology-based cleaning products to the Facilities Management, Building Care, Hospitality and Care Sectors.

The InnuScience UK range of professional cleaning products cover the needs of the most prestigious public sectors, education, restaurants, hotels, stations, airports, healthcare and retail contracts, and include cleaners and degreasers, maintenance products, industrial cleaners, odour eliminators, laundry products and floor care.

Happy 20th Anniversary JS Air Curtains

JS Air Curtains

Having been founded in 1999, JS Air Curtains is celebrating two decades of preventing doorway draughts across the UK. The West Sussex based air curtain specialist is still located at its original head office in Rustington, but has grown from having around 90 units in its catalogue to offering over 450 air curtains.

Commenting on the anniversary, JS Air Curtains’ UK sales manager, Kerry Jones, said, “The Company’s successful growth over the last 20 years has largely been due to offering a comprehensive range of air curtain styles, supported by friendly expert advice at very competitive prices.”

Kerry continues, “We are extremely proud of this milestone in our history and are really appreciative of the tremendous dedication and enthusiasm of the employees who have helped us on our journey. We would also like to thank all the amazing customers who have trusted us over the years to design and supply their air curtain systems.”

Mike Verney, area sales manager and a founding member of the JS Air Curtains team, comments, “Over the last 20 years we’ve seen a dramatic shift in the marketplace from cheap over-door heaters to much more effective air barrier solutions. Furthermore, we’ve worked continuously with designers and architects and have seen a definite trend of consultants wanting more than just plain box shaped units above doorways. Air curtains now, more often than not, have very architectural designs, customisable options and can offer more than just an air barrier, with the ability to carry signage, graphics, sensors and other features.”

Major milestones for JS Air Curtains across the last two decades include being the founding organisation of the Air Curtains Group at the Federation of Environmental Trade Associations (FETA), helping design solutions for some of the UK’s most prestigious buildings, like the Royal Albert Hall and the V&A Museum, and being acquired by the Condair Group in 2011.

In 1999, JS Air Curtains was formed as a sister company to JS Humidifiers. In 2011, world leading humidification specialists, the Condair Group, purchased the companies and subsequently rebranded JS Humidifiers as Condair plc. JS Air Curtains continues to maintain its longstanding brand identity and trades as a member of the Condair Group, operated from the same premises as Condair plc.

JS Air Curtains, the UK’s leading air curtain specialist, supplies an extensive range of air curtains for all commercial and industrial applications. You can find out more by visiting the company’s website at www.jsaircurtains.com.

e-mail your news to shirley@qubeonline.co.uk
As businesses of all sizes become increasingly reliant on digital data, workplace data breaches have become more common, and as a result, have gained widespread attention. In this post, Steve Thomas, Finance and Project Based Accounting Expert at The Access Group, takes a look at cyber security within the construction sector and the potential costs businesses could face.

Cyber security is a big talking point for all SMEs, and the impact can be deadly to any business, with more than half of SME businesses closing operations within six months of an attack due to not being able to recover from the financial repercussions.

The construction industry, in particular, is an attractive target for hackers due to the nature of business. Processing and handling large purchases and financial transfers on a regular basis leaves construction companies at risk - especially without an adequate malware software solution in place.

It is well known that in the past the construction industry has been a victim of many criminal activities; the theft of tools and equipment being one of the biggest violations. According to new research by the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), over half of builders in the UK have been victims of tool theft. The survey was based on results from 325 construction SMEs across the UK. But as time has moved on and everything becomes increasingly digitised, it is vital for leaders of construction companies to face the threat of cybercrime and focus attention on the risks and consequences of a potential attack. Many large purchases and financial transfers are conducted digitally, meaning stronger security measures need to be adopted in order to reduce the risk or threat of a data breach.

As John Chambers, the previous CEO of Cisco once said: “there are only two types of companies: those who have been hacked and those who could be”, and the construction sector is no exception to this. Construction businesses - no matter what size - are at risk of several cyber security attacks due to the nature of the business, with the most common including:

- Malware and viruses
- Phishing
- Ransomware
- Password hacking

Having said that, there is a lot that business owners of construction companies can do to help protect their business, such as:

- Firewalls
- Cloud hosting for key systems
- Use secure on-site Wi-Fi
- Staff training to increase awareness of cybercrime
- Install email threat detection

What damages and repercussions can a data breach cause?

Currently, £22,700 is the annual average cost for businesses that have lost data or assets after being victims of a cyber attack. This amount would be a drop in the ocean for a multinational, but for SMEs, micro-businesses and sole-traders within the construction sector, it could be the difference between being able to continue trading and going into administration.

Small construction business owners are relatively easy targets for cybercrime as more often than not, they don’t have the budget for a full-time IT employee - or are unaware of the importance and benefits of investing in this type of professional. In this day and age, it is advantageous to create room in the budget to protect your business, cash flow and assets against cyber risks as money is not the only thing at risk - 89% of SMEs reported that a cyber security attack impacted their reputation negatively while 30% reported a loss of clientele.

With the correct security measurements in place and eliminating the risk of a data breach, thousands of pounds could be saved and invested back into the business. £22,700 is a lot of money for an SME, and could fund various assets such as 19 used Ford transit vans for your workers and fleet, 1,305,565 cups of tea to fuel your workers, or even 19 years worth of cyber security prevention.

One thing is for sure, the costs of cyber security breaches can be substantial. What would you spend £22,700 on?
Fire Door Safety: Maintenance Matters

By Assa Abloy Door Group

The annual Fire Door Safety Week campaign (23 – 29 September) creates an opportunity for us to reflect on the vital role fire doors play in keeping a building and its occupants safe. Here, Brian Sofley, Managing Director of ASSA ABLOY Door Group, explores the latest legislation and advice when it comes to fire door safety and how this affects facilities managers.

Fire doors are often the first line of defence in a fire, yet a lack of understanding during specification, manufacture, installation, maintenance and management is still apparent. Even after the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017, fire doors remain a significant area of concern and are often not afforded the attention they require and mismanaged throughout their service life.

Following the aftermath of Grenfell, it was clear that a full review and reform was needed of the building and fire safety regulatory system. In May 2018, results of an Independent Review of Building Regulation and Fire Safety, led by Dame Judith Hackitt, were published.

It was this review that led to the publication of the Building a Safer Future: Implementation Plan from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which sets out how both the Government and the industry will achieve the systematic overhaul required to improve building and fire safety.

The plan sets out a statement of intent from the Government, for construction and manufacturing industries to take a comprehensive approach to fire safety products. Ensuring that, through third-party certification and standards, their safety requirements are integral – not just at the manufacturing stage, but during installation, inspection and throughout ongoing maintenance.

In the UK, current regulations require commercial and social housing developments to be fitted with fire doors, however, nationally there are no laws for the mandatory inspection and maintenance specifically of these doors.

This can create issues for facilities managers, as fire doors can become unfit for purpose if mistreated or poorly maintained.

Office guidance states that public or private shared properties should be split into compartments or smaller spaces with barriers to prevent the spread of fire and smoke. The fire doors used to help create these compartments should be able to halt a fire for at least 30 minutes, with taller or higher occupancy buildings needing doors to be able withstand a fire for at least 60 minutes. However, if just one of these components fail due to poor maintenance or damage, the effectiveness of the system can be severely reduced.

High use, lack of user care, insufficient or no maintenance and even the natural shifting and settling of a building over time can result in fire safety products becoming ineffective – from excessive gaps around door leaves to damaged or missing seals. In fact, one of the most common issues resulting in significant damage to doors, frames and hardware is simply down to general wear and tear, use or abuse. Although this cannot be prevented, actions of facilities managers can have a controlled effect on products when they are inspected and maintained regularly.

Incorrect specification throughout the construction phase, driven by budget reduction needs or to take competitive advantage often carries risk of non-compliance or potential for future failure post handover. Door frames manufactured from MDF materials, for example, when used on high traffic doors can often result in hinge screws no longer gripping properly and therefore causing door leaf movement, misalignment and inability to close. If a fire door leaves large gaps around the doorway, is damaged, or jammed open, it completely loses its effectiveness as a fire prevention tool.

In addition, poorly maintained hardware components, such as door closers can prevent fire doors from shutting properly thereby reducing the effectiveness of the fire door set.
Fire & Security

It is also not uncommon for unauthorised or uncontrolled modifications to be made, or accidental or malicious damage to be sustained by a fire door all of which can have a significant impact on its performance. In post Grenfell reports it was noted that in some properties large numbers of fire doors had even been removed, clearly resulting in no fire compartmentation as design intended.

When installed, a fire door is subject to varying demands and pressures according to the building use and type. Its performance as a fire door should always be assessed with these in mind. If neglected, these issues may cause fire control systems to fail, increasing the risk to both property and lives. So, what should be done?

Regular, mandatory checks can ensure that any wear and tear or ineffective doorsets can be noted and action can be taken. But fire safety can only be properly assured if the standards and checks of equipment such as fire doors, are carried out by-the-book and throughout the lifecycle of both the products and the building. This is best addressed through regular product specific inspection by qualified technicians, strict adherence to recommended maintenance cycles and completion of all necessary repairs or replacements of products where needed.

The success of regular inspections and ongoing maintenance in upholding fire safety relies on individuals being well-trained. As a critical component in the overall safety of a building, training should be regulated and up to standard so that skills can be certified and assessed – ideally testing should be carried out by a qualified person – not just the ‘responsible person’.

To aid the auditing and ongoing inspection of fire safety products, data should be held electronically, providing evidence of third-party certification, inspection records and performance related information. Approaching this as a digital first process makes it more streamline, less resource intensive and limits the risk of human error.

This year, the Government reviewed suggestions put forward by the Competence Steering Group and made recommendations on whether legislation should be introduced to underpin any new system in order to ensure compliance.

The Government agreed with much of what the Hackett Independent Review recommended, including the way facilities managers and building safety managers complete their role. Proposing to create, in law, the role of a building safety manager. Required to carry out their functions in accordance to the building safety certificate and the safety case, building and safety managers must ensure that qualified people are employed to regularly monitor and maintain the building and its information management systems.

We at ASSA ABLOY Door Group believe the implementation plan has stayed true to many of the recommendations outlined in the original review. The recognition of the importance of third-party certification and the need for legislation to cover fire safety products throughout the lifetime of a product and building is extremely encouraging for the future of fire safety.

Door Group can help support building specifiers and owners in complying with the latest standards and the recommended changes in the Implementation Plan, through our wide range of product solutions and services.

In fact, Door Group is one of very few manufacturers to offer a complete solution of fire doors, hardware and ironmongery through a ‘cradle to grave’ approach of technical specification, manufacturing, installation, fire door inspection and service, and maintenance packages in support of architects, contractors, facilities managers and end users.
Bolstering Security With Data-driven Facilities Management

Trevor Ball, business development manager UK & Ireland at Allegion UK, explains how facilities can improve security with big data.

Ever since the inception of the internet, data has been used to improve processes across the globe. Since the turn of the millennium in particular, the storage and use of data has expanded considerably.

A 2018 report by IBM found that 90% of the data in the world (at the time of the report) was created in the previous two years alone. As technologies develop and new devices become available to new users – the collection and analysis of data is unlikely to slow down anytime soon.

This is no different for facility management. As the IoT continues to change the landscape, new tech-driven solutions that adopt a data-driven approach offer new ways to manage buildings. From healthcare facilities to commercial and residential properties, these intelligent devices can offer added security and a host of other benefits. So, in future years to come, as access control becomes more IT-led, how do we use data to improve security?

**Data-driven decisions**

Despite new technologies becoming available to market, the future of the construction industry and its adaptation to digital tech is a topic that is hotly debated.

Intelligent access control, such as cloud-based systems, can track a host of useful metrics, all with the potential to improve both security and processes in general. Once integrated, these systems track both users and access points, collecting and storing what is known as big data, on information including approved access, declined access and lockdown instances. Collecting and using this information can present facilities with a myriad of security improvements. At a basic level, knowing which (and more importantly when) access points of a building are being used helps determine whether those areas are being used correctly.

Take the healthcare sector as an example. Most healthcare environments are designed to house open-plan areas, but all contain ‘off-limit’ areas that house confidential medical records, equipment and pharmaceuticals. Some of these areas, such as medicine cabinets, require stringent security. By collecting data on medicine cabinets access, a facility can detect any instances of declined access or wrongful access (think unusual after-hours activity). This information can then be used as the rationale for changing or revoking access rights, adding an extra layer of security when it is most needed.

A facility’s physical environment can also be optimized with this approach, from process efficiencies to budgeting. Collecting and analysing data on footfall for example, allows a facility to understand more about the flow of movement within the building and then necessary adjustments can be made based on data trends. Optimising these areas can not only impact processes but also provide a knock-on effect for both patient and staff satisfaction and outcomes. This isn’t to mention the potential of driving positive financial results.

**Lacking information on data**

Understandably, we must then question why more facilities aren’t using data as a key component in their security efforts. If data-driven facilities management can enhance security and processes, why aren’t we seeing widespread use of it?

Well, it’s fair to say that the integration of big data analytics comes with its challenges. Until recently, the UK has been slow to move on the use of data in facilities management, meaning information has sometimes been limited, even for those interested in adopting the practice. The lack of information has left a hovering ambiguity over the topic, leaving both installers and end users unclear as to how data-driven management could be helping their facilities. Accountability is also a potential issue for those who do implement it into their systems, with IT teams and facility managers needing to agree on a system that works for everyone.

With this in mind, it becomes transparent as to why many are reluctant to adapt to these moving technologies. Without a clear understanding of intelligent systems and how to use data, decision makers are reluctant to leave their comfort zones. For some, the old mantra rings true - 'If it’s not broke, don’t fix it'.

However, this stance could be seen as backwards thinking. While it’s true that this approach may not be beneficial to each and every facility right now, it seems that this progressive trend could one day leave them in the dark. Is it not better to be more proactive than reactive when it comes to security? Right now, sectors such as healthcare and education, could be taking advantage of tailored, intelligent access control systems. Those that are under security pressures or are subject to budget issues could benefit in both the short and long term by adopting a data-driven approach.

**The bigger picture**

Data-driven facilities management provides us with a new look method when ensuring our facilities are secure. We can no longer afford to use intuition or wait for potentially serious incidents to push us in to making the correct security decisions. Instead, the use of data now presents us with a structured, strategic option - securing facilities with the use of analytics and evidence.

So, education is the key. Where required, certified training days could help provide a clearer understanding of these systems and their possibilities. Highlighting what’s available, how to integrate these systems and the end user benefits will widen the horizon of access control options for installers and subsequently the facility managers that adopt them.
Leading UPS manufacturer, CENTIEL, has opened its new Factory Acceptance Testing (FAT) Facility at its manufacturing facility located in Lugano, Switzerland. The state-of-the-art facility and CENTIEL SA’s global headquarters also house the Company's R&D, production, sales and marketing, logistics, finance and quality control of all CENTIEL’s UPS solutions.

Mike Elms, managing director, CENTIEL UK explains: “Every UPS we manufacture undergoes thorough individual stage and final testing prior to dispatch. On occasions, customers may wish to witness their own specific testing, be it standalone UPS units or a complete system comprising of several units in parallel. If this is a requirement then clients, or their representatives, can visit the factory to inspect and witness their own factory acceptance test against their required specifications before it is shipped. For customers unable to visit Switzerland, the facility is also available to video record or witness remotely, e.g. via Skype.

“The main purpose of factory testing is to verify the quality of the equipment manufacturer and the system’s correct operation and performance. The testing comprises of many, multiple operational functions,” continues Elms. “For example, it includes testing on normal mains operation, mains failure or battery mode, full load burn-in tests, varying load profiles with 100% unbalanced load, overload, 100% load switching from zero to max full load, and my personal favourite... the output short circuit test! Input/output waveforms and harmonics are also recorded, and efficiency figures verified.

“We have already had a number of key clients visit the FAT facility and they have reported that the rigorous testing has given them ‘peace of mind’ and proof of adherence against specification which is important when purchasing a UPS system to protect critical loads with zero downtime. Of particular interest has been the innovative testing platform. Rather than a traditional “load bank” CENTIEL has a unique facility based on UPS technology to imitate varying loads with regenerative power. This uses less energy from the mains supply, further adding to CENTIEL’s green credentials.”

Wayne McKane, critical power and HVAC engineer, G4S Secure Solutions confirms: “We visited CENTIEL’s FAT facility to witness the full functional testing of the CumulusPowerTM modular UPS systems now successfully deployed in two data centers on Guernsey. We saw the UPS run through their paces under all conditions, which meant we could guarantee the solution was fit for purpose and matched the required specification on behalf of our clients. It was time well spent.”

CumulusPowerTM is CENTIEL’s class leading, 4th generation, three phase modular UPS known for its “9 nines” system availability and low total cost of ownership. CumulusPowerTM has now been installed in data centers and comms rooms in over 60 countries across five continents. More than 50 MW of critical power loads are now protected with CumulusPowerTM in locations across the world including: the UK, Singapore, Australia, Germany, Spain, the Czech Republic, and the Channel Islands.

For further information please see: www.centiel.co.uk
NBT, the UK supplier of Pavatex insulation and airtightness products, has completed the first phase of a merger with building products giant, SOPREMA.

A global name in the construction supply chain, SOPREMA boasts 67 manufacturing sites around the world, more than 90 subsidiary companies and more than 4000 distributors. NBT first joined the group in 2016 and the legal process of creating the new UK business has been in progress in the interim, drawing on synergies between SOPREMA and NBT while ensuring that NBT retains its clear focus on delivering sustainable, robust and cost-effective solutions for the building envelope.

Andrew Mitchell from NBT/SOPREMA explains: “We have undergone what might be called a soft merger over the past couple of years and our customers probably haven’t noticed the difference as we’ve been going through the legal, commercial and operational process of completing the new structure.

“However, the integration of NBT and SOPREMA brings with it huge benefits for specifiers, procurement professionals, contractors and end-users as it enables a joined up supply chain focused on best-fit and best-practice solutions for the building envelope. For specifiers it means an integrated, expert approach to delivering a project-specific solution, for procurement and construction professionals it means a rationalised, cost-effective supply chain and for the end user it ensures buildings that will perform better and last longer.”

NBT’s Pavatex range of woodfibre insulation and airtightness tapes and membranes now sit alongside a huge array of SOPREMA solutions, including waterproofing, roofing, solar energy, insulation and acoustics. NBT has already been pioneering envelope solutions and driving take-up of sustainable, renewable building products in the mainstream construction industry and the company will now leverage the global capabilities of SOPREMA to take this vision forward.

Laurent Verheyden, MD of Soprema businesses in UK, adds: “The building envelope is becoming increasingly complex and specifiers often have to look to different suppliers for the varied elements of the build-up.

“What we can now offer is a specialism in complete envelope solutions, with hybrid systems that answer the needs of today’s construction sector, including buildability, performance and environmental goals. All of that will be backed by the warranty, technologies and expertise available from SOPREMA, for a high standard of support and quality assurance from first enquiry to final hand over.”

https://www.natural-building.co.uk/
With forecasters predicting record Summer temperatures of up to 40 degrees this year, the UK could be looking forward to a glorious summer. But, some SMEs are about to enter the season of broken air conditioning units and refrigeration systems and, with this, potentially suffer staff frustration, lower productivity, spoiled stock and profit losses as a result.

As we’ve seen over the weekend, the mercury can rise rapidly, causing ambient air temperatures to increase beyond comfortable levels. This puts extreme pressure on air conditioning units and refrigeration systems which, if they haven’t been serviced and maintained, can result in unexpected failures, and unpredictable costs. Unfortunately, when this occurs to one business, it often happens to many others simultaneously.

“On 26 July last year, temperatures reached their seasonal peak at 35.5 degrees in the UK,” comments Tod Harrison, CEO at Flowrite Services Ltd. “On this day alone, we received 379 emergency callouts to repair broken air conditioning units and refrigeration systems. This marked an 85% increase compared to the same day the week before.”

Flowrite runs a 24/7 helpdesk, directing a mobile service team of over 100 engineers across the UK, so help is never far away. “Despite this, and although our engineers always want to help ASAP, the reality is there can be a waiting period during the Summer months when demand is incredibly high,” continues Harrison.

With air conditioning now regarded more as a necessity than a luxury, and refrigeration systems being crucial to many businesses, any unexpected equipment downtime can cause frustration of staff, loss of productivity and stock and, ultimately, reduced revenue.

“If they are well maintained, commercial air conditioning units and refrigeration systems rarely fail,” Harrison continues. “The question owners of SME’s need to ask themselves is what is the cost to their business when equipment does fall unexpectedly. We are advising our customers to book a Summer Check-Up before things really heat up, as the cost of an emergency callout and resultant repair works - in addition to the potential cost to their business - is always more than any planned maintenance works.”

In addition to preparing for Summer, SMEs also need to be aware of the F-Gas regulations and how it will affect their business. Many air conditioning and refrigeration systems use HFC refrigerants, for example R-404A, which have a very high global warming impact if released into the atmosphere. As of 1 January 2020, of most impact to SMEs will be the ban on using these in the servicing of air conditioning and refrigeration systems. During a Summer Check-Up, Flowrite can review existing air conditioning systems and advise what businesses need to do to be compliant with the F-Gas regulations.

“Many premises still have outdated cooling systems in operation, which use gasses that are soon to be banned,” adds Harrison. “Come January, servicing older equipment which use these banned gasses will not be possible. If this is the last Summer your outdated air con units and refrigeration systems are going to be operational and legal, it’s a sensible business decision to update them now to avoid potential emergency callouts and repairs over the Summer on equipment which will have to be replaced in January regardless. Newer equipment is also far more energy efficient, so will actually save you money on running costs too.”

Flowrite can help SMEs be ready for what lies ahead with a Summer Check-Up. The service ensures that air conditioning and refrigeration systems are in optimum condition and will withstand the increased demands put on them during the peak Summer months.

For more information or to book a Summer Check-Up, please contact the Flowrite team on 0845 603 4040 enquiries@flowriteservices.co.uk or visit www.flowriteservicesltd.co.uk.

OOO for Summer!

Hottest day of the year results in 85% increase in commercial air conditioning and refrigeration emergency callouts
The work of Banksy, Stik and Inkie has brought street art to the masses and they are renowned for their colourful and intricate murals which bring visual excitement to otherwise uninspiring surroundings. As a result, some brands now commission street artists to create murals promoting their products or latest releases.

Graffiti, on the other hand, is generally unwelcome. It's traditionally seen as a more anti-social form of street art, which is usually carried out to deliberately deface, mark or ‘tag’ a wall, property or other surface, without an intent for people to enjoy looking at it.

For businesses, the unexpected appearance of graffiti on a premise can be detrimental to the property and more importantly, the brand’s image. This is especially the case in the retail, transport and property sales industries, where the presence of graffiti has been associated with a wide range of negative side effects, including decreased sales, reduced passenger numbers, and a steep decline in property values in the area. In schools and public places, the presence of graffiti is equally unfavourable, potentially conveying the message that crime happens frequently and is tolerated in the area.

**Time is of the essence**

The sooner graffiti disappears, the better. Its quick and effective removal often acts as a deterrent, where the offender may feel as though their efforts have been wasted if their work only appears for a very limited time.

It is also worth noting that under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, the person responsible for the surface is accountable for the cost of getting graffiti removed. This means that it falls to the owners or managers of a building to deal with the problem. If graffiti is left untouched for too long, local authorities can issue a Graffiti Removal Notice, which gives the property owner or manager a timeframe to remove the graffiti or face the risk of prosecution.

The offending material could just be painted over, but this is not always a practical solution. In fact, it can sometimes create what is seen as a blank canvas, inviting even more graffiti in the future.

Luckily, the permanent and effective removal of graffiti
Graffiti Cleaning

needn’t be as onerous or time-consuming as you might think.

The benefits of Ecoblasting

Ecoblasting is one of the most successful ways to remove graffiti. It works by using compressed air to blast an environmentally benign abrasive, such as bicarbonate of soda or recycled glass, on the surface to remove substrate layers.

Traditional methods of graffiti removal can involve the use of aggressive corrosive chemicals, and excessive amounts of water. Ecoblasting, on the other hand, is completely environmentally friendly, meaning it is safe to carry out in more rural locations without contamination risk to wildlife or watercourses that might be on or near the site.

Alternative abrasives

The abrasive material used to help remove graffiti can be altered depending on the surface, location and the extent of paint being removed. Bicarbonate of soda is an effective material to remove paint from glass and rubber, without any permanent damage being caused to the surface. If the graffiti is on concrete or a less delicate surface, recycled glass is a quick and effective solution.

If the graffiti is near an electricity source, the process should be altered so it’s completely dry to comply with health and safety regulations.

An expert opinion

Specialist technicians will always offer a full assessment of the premises before any Ecoblasting takes place. Given the service can be used on glass, wood, metal, brick and most stone surfaces, including soft stone, such as limestone, which would be eroded by an acid cleaner, a survey will ensure that the correct abrasive is used. It will also take into account the hardness of the surface, and the environmental requirements needed for a given location.

Following Ecoblasting, an Anti-Graffiti coating should be applied to the surface. This coating prevents the paint from being absorbed, so in areas prone to frequent targeting, the graffiti can be quickly and easily removed with detergent and water. Treating the surface like this should hopefully prevent any repeat offenses from happening, once they realise their future work can be removed without hassle.

A sticky situation

Along with graffiti, discarded chewing gum can be another indication of anti-social behaviour. While this may seem like a minor issue at first, its removal can add up. On average each piece of unsightly chewing gum can cost £1.50 to remove and can take up to five years to biodegrade. Hiring a professional cleaning service will make sure the task is done as quickly and effectively as possible.

There are two common methods you could consider for removal, depending on the surface to be treated. The first is to use steam with a ‘gum gun’, which melts the gum quickly off the surface. Alternatively, Ecoblasting can also be used to remove chewing gum from certain surfaces.

After chewing gum has been removed, a surface restoration paint can be used to remove any stains or discoloured surfaces left behind.

If you are unsure how to clean graffiti or remove chewing gum, it is always best to consult a professional. Technicians are trained to understand the latest legislative requirements in their area of expertise and will be able to recommend the correct process to follow on a case-by-case basis. Thanks to Ecoblasting, in the unfortunate event that your property is damaged, you can rest assured that the issue can be solved quickly, safely and efficiently.
As we approach the start of a new academic year, Peter Fane from award-winning ground maintenance and horticulture specialists Nurture Landscapes offers his insights into the importance of facilities management (FM) at universities, reminding us of the wider contribution it makes to students, locals and the environment.

An exciting introduction to adulthood, a student’s university experience will stay with them for life, shaping career choices and creating life-long friendships.

With a record-high enrolment of 700,000 undergraduates last year and tightening competition between institutions, universities across the UK are caught in a cycle of investment; continually striving to improve facilities and bring in more academics to attract a stream of high-calibre students.

Libraries, labs and lecture halls

Accommodating thousands - if not tens of thousands - of eager students, universities can seemingly operate in a parallel universe. University caters for every aspect of student living. Boasting an expanse of libraries, laboratories and lecture halls (not to mention a labyrinth of shops, restaurants, sports facilities, and study spaces) - universities offer some of best facilities in the country.

Overseeing everything from creating inclusive, outdoor spaces to maintaining sports fields and addressing student environmental concerns, facilities managers play a vital role in delivering the experience universities want to offer and what students have come to expect.

Facilities Management for Universities: Shaping the Student Experience

Nurturing social circles

Anecdotally, and as any graduate will quickly affirm, you have a greater chance of winning the Euro Millions twice in a row than being allocated good first year accommodation! Cooped up in a stuffy, dark room, littered with last week’s dirty laundry, student accommodation can quickly become suffocating for a fresh-faced eighteen-year-old. With essay deadlines looming, students often opt to bite the bullet: locking themselves away and working into the early hours of the morning.

By cultivating and maintaining beautiful outdoor spaces, facilities managers can help suppress these harmful
tendencies and generally alleviate the stresses of university life.

From planting new flora around a campus lake, creating an idyllic backdrop for a summer barbecue; or the maintenance of an enclosed, peaceful escape for students to meet and socialise away from a bustling cityscape, a well-maintained outdoor space provides a welcoming and inclusive space for students.

The recently revitalised Malet Street Gardens, owned by the prestigious University of London who contract with Nurture Landscapes, are living proof of how outdoor spaces create a hub for students and enhance the atmosphere of a campus.

Through choosing new plants and regularly maintaining the upkeep of the green areas, Malet Street Gardens has been renovated into a relaxing spot for students and the local office workers to share. Sustainability initiatives such as recycling and space to entice wildlife have also placed the University of London in the public eye as a campus which is driving environmental awareness forwards.

Being open to the public and office workers, the Gardens encourage university students to socialise with individuals both inside and outside of their usual circles and demonstrates how grounds maintenance has further-reaching benefits.

**Facilitating greatness**

Sports clubs and societies are a central component of the university experience and are a major pull for prospective students. The 2017/2018 British Active Students Survey Report produced by British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) found that not only do active students enjoy a greater sense of wellbeing and inclusion, but that they also go on to become more employable graduates.

Specialist grounds maintenance provides optimum training facilities for budding athletes. The fierce inter-university rivalries which play out at varsity year after year and the ever-anticipated nationwide sporting competition, BUCS, inspire immense university pride. Showcasing talented student athletes and top-tier facilities, varsity attracts hordes of proud students – all cheering for their respective university teams.

Competitive sport aside, well maintained sports facilities also encourage casual players and newcomers to dust off their rackets or try something new. The sports field is where friendships and competitive rivalries form, encouraging social interaction, teamwork and tenacity. Indeed, last year’s Active Lives Adult Survey published by Sport England found that active adults had all round better mental wellbeing whilst participating in sport, rewarding their socialisation and tenacity.

Motivating students to take up new sports gives them the opportunity for individual development and is likely to improve their lives on and off the field.

**Giving back to the environment**

Universities never sleep; the constant hubbub of students, staff and workers commuting at all hours has huge implications for local residents and the environment. Whilst the benefits of excellent sporting facilities are obvious to FM decision-makers and professionals, the environmental impacts are equally vital.

Environmental sustainability awareness is especially prominent at universities. Brandishing bamboo toothbrushes and package-free fruit, students are often at the forefront of popular and progressive sustainability practices. Aligning university facilities - and their management - with authentic and widespread student concerns enables institutions to connect with their students’ values.

The installation of new flora and maintenance of existing plants lie at the heart of most university sustainability commitments. Being one of the most effective methods for naturally reducing a carbon footprint, newly planted flora provide fantastic aesthetic benefits whilst demonstrating tangible commitment towards reducing carbon dioxide levels.

However, we can take this one step further. Wherever cost-effective, utilising electric vehicles for transport and employing more efficient technologies for maintenance work ensures that a commitment to protecting the environment is achieved more demonstrably. A reduction in fuel costs of up to 90% helps mitigate a potentially expensive purchase of an electric fleet, ultimately making it a worthwhile long-term investment.

An exemplar in sustainable facilities management and client of Nurture Landscapes, Cranfield University recently won the Wildlife Trust's BCN “Best Newcomer Wildlife Garden” at the “Wildlife Gardening at Work Awards”. Committing to a number of initiatives, Cranfield has installed annual meadow beds and a dynamic mowing regime to improve species diversity.

Furthermore, the newly implemented Ridan composters have received praise from locals and students alike – providing an environmentally friendly solution for waste recycling. Likewise, the installation of beehives and series of hive side talks have created a real “buzz” around campus, contributing to biodiversity and raising awareness of the honeybee.

Cranfield’s sustainability initiatives have contributed significantly towards its environmental mission, firmly establishing the institution as a stalwart for bringing students and the wider community behind a vital cause.

On a different environmental theme, attracting students from lower-income backgrounds has become an increasingly important issue for universities. Providing students with the opportunity to grow their own produce generates a cost-effective alternative to supermarket food-shopping and could be key to attracting less affluent cohorts of students in future years.

Allocating allotment space on campus and educating students on which vegetables will grow best has been a highly successful method for promoting self-sufficiency.

Effective facilities management and ground maintenance are integral to making the everyday special at university. Improving the environment for students in ways which go beyond the aesthetic are important contributions to university life and bring a range of other benefits.

From attracting students from lower income backgrounds, contributing to the sustainability agenda, providing a calming outdoor environment to facilitating athletic and sporting prowess, FM is involved at every stage in shaping and improving the university experience.
The renovation game
How facilities managers can make the most of a floor renovation

Benjamin Franklin famously said, “by failing to prepare you are preparing to fail.” This quote resonates in many circumstances, particularly in construction. Failing to prepare for a floor renovation can be costly and facilities managers should consider how careful planning can make a renovation go smoothly. Here, Connie Johnson, vice president of marketing at surface preparation equipment manufacturer National Flooring Equipment, explains how facilities managers can best plan for a floor renovation.

There are many reasons to renovate a building. An older facility might need renovating so that it is safe to work in or a commercial building might need to change its aesthetics to attract more customers. No matter the objective, facilities managers should think about how changing the floor can improve the facility.

Flooring is often an afterthought during a renovation, but it can make an impact on staff and customers in a facility. A poorly maintained floor can have breaks or bubbles that can increase the risk of slips and trips, one of the main causes for sick days. For example, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) predicts that slip and trip accidents cost employers over £500 million a year in sick days, injury claims and production delays.

Choosing the right floor covering can increase safety but also impact the aesthetics and functionality of a building. For example, warehouse workers will struggle to manoeuvre packages and equipment in a carpeted factory. However, they can easily work on a polished concrete floor and the reflective floor can also reduce the need for as much artificial light, increasing energy efficiency.

After deciding on the objective of the renovation and understanding what the new floor covering will look like afterwards, facilities managers can start to plan the renovation.

Finding the right contractor

Facilities managers will work closely with contractors during a renovation, so it is important to choose someone that can complete the work to the desired specifications. Working with a contractor with the right equipment, tooling and expertise can improve productivity on the jobsite and achieve the desired final floor.

A good contractor will have access to a range of equipment that can take up an old floor quickly and efficiently. For example, a larger building requires a larger machine to get the work done and different floor coverings require different tooling. Facilities managers should work with a contractor that takes the time to understand what equipment is needed to complete work efficiently.

Communicating with the contractor early in the renovation ensures that they can bring everything they need to the facility. The contractor should also be able to visit the site before the renovation so that they can plan efficiently, and facilities managers should also let contractors know the timeline of the work so that they are productive when on site. For example, surface preparation should be completed later in the renovation. If the floor is done first, it may cause problems when electricians come to wire the house. Even something minor like wet paint spatter from the walls can impact the quality of the floor finish.

Machine power

Understanding the available power sources in the building will also be important for contractors. The availability of single or three phase power will determine what equipment the contractor can bring. If the job requires a larger machine, but the facility only has single phase power, contractors may need to bring three phase generators to complete the work efficiently.

Facilities managers should also prepare the building for the contractor and the machines that will be used to ensure the whole floor is properly prepped. All equipment should either be removed from the worksite or covered to prevent any damage. Making the contractor aware of any equipment or furniture can help them better prepare.
Managing the renovation

Sufficiently planning for a renovation can help to reduce disruption of day-to-day activities. Before work begins, facilities managers should decide how much of the building needs to close during renovation. Is it easier and safer to close the whole facility for a shorter time period or close smaller areas of the facility and let employees or customers around the rest of the building?

Factors such as health and safety and the difficulty of the job will help facilities managers to decide how much of the facility to close. By communicating with the contractor, they can understand how surface preparation could impact anyone in the facility. For example, shot blasting or cutting concrete releases silica dust into the air. If anyone inhales a large amount of silica, employees or customers can contract silicosis, a potentially dangerous lung condition.

Facilities managers should ensure that the contractor takes precautions to mitigate silica dust inhalation. Most surface preparation equipment attaches to dust collectors that remove a large amount of dust in the atmosphere. Ensuring that a contractor brings dust collection equipment can keep construction workers and employees safe while on the job site.

Great expectations

From conception to completion, facilities managers and contractors need to manage one another’s expectations. Once the work has started, it is important for facilities managers to contact the contractor daily. This way, they can understand each stage of the work and ensure that it is going well.

Facilities managers need to know what the desired finish of the floor should be before the job starts and communicate that to the contractor. Once both the contractor and manager understand the expected finish, they must work together to reach this and understand how long it will take.

Facilities managers should allow contractors to take the time necessary to complete effective surface preparation. If a floor renovation is rushed and done incorrectly the covering may not bond to the substrate, causing loose flooring or bubbling, that is both visually unappealing and can be a safety hazard. Fixing any problems caused by rushing will increase costs and delay completion of the whole renovation, so allowing the contractor to take longer and do it correctly first time is crucial.

Future maintenance

Considering how to keep the new floor in good condition from the outset can extend the lifespan of the flooring. The contractor can suggest if there are any coatings that can be put under or over the floor to prevent extended damage. For example, if water damage was the reason for the renovation, the floor contractors can lay a moisture barrier underneath the new covering to safeguard the new floor.

Preparing the floor correctly in the first place is the best way to extend the lifespan of a new floor. Facilities managers should employ a contractor that knows how to efficiently remove the previous covering including any adhesives used to lay the original floor. They then need to prepare the substrate, which is usually concrete, so that the new covering can be put on a clean and level floor that has the right concrete surface profile (CSP).

Taking the time to prepare for a renovation can help guarantee success. In surface preparation, choosing the right equipment and tooling is key when planning a renovation, so facilities managers should be in close contact with contractors to ensure the floor renovation is a success.
What football manager would give the centre-forward the ball and have the rest of the team sit in the dugout watching him try to score? There are eleven players in each team on the pitch, and good teams pass the ball fluently from one to another. So why are meeting rooms designed to encourage one person to hog the “ball”? The impressive 4K screen or projector at the end of the boardroom table usually has one and only one connection to it – the person who owns that connection owns the meeting. Handing over to another presenter requires inconvenient fumbling with cables – and then a different person owns the meeting. That’s like our football manager calling the centre forward back to the dugout and sending another player onto the pitch, rather than using the whole team.

10-20% of a typical office or commercial building is devoted to meeting room space. Are these spaces set up to facilitate productive meetings? The furniture and technology provided in employee work areas are carefully managed for comfort and productivity. Meeting spaces by contrast are often dressed to impress—outfitted with the latest and greatest high-tech AV and IT equipment. While these high-end products are impressive (and costly), they rarely make sharing content during a meeting easy and intuitive.

Current technology degrades the meeting experience

I remember when we brought paper to meetings and used pens to write on flipcharts or whiteboards. Paper is democratic. Anyone could leap up and add thoughts to a flip chart or whiteboard. Simply by making copies ahead of time anyone could share a document with those around the table. No fumbling.

The biggest cost of a meeting is, of course, the attendee cost. The higher the salary of each attendee, the higher the cost of the meeting. In order to derive as much value as possible out of a meeting, every attendee must be actively engaged in the discussion and striving towards reaching the meeting’s goal.

Unfortunately, the technology in many meeting rooms inhibits rather than encourages meeting engagement and content sharing—effectively wasting an incredible amount of money unnecessarily.

New technology facilitates information sharing

In order to drive more effective meetings, meeting spaces including conference rooms and huddle spaces should be
Transforming Meeting Areas

outfitted with technology that makes it easy and intuitive for participants to share content from laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Wirelessly stream device screens, app windows, HD videos and more – whatever it takes to drive consensus and get the job done.

Mersive Solstice, an award-winning wireless collaboration platform, enables meeting participants to easily share content to any display from any device they bring to the meeting. Solstice effectively makes sharing a piece of content as easy as throwing a piece of paper down on a conference room table leading to improved decision making and better meeting results.

For example, BNL Gruppo BNP Paribas has deployed over 100 Mersive Solstice Pods in meeting rooms and spaces in its new and award winning 75,000 m2. headquarters in Rome. Commenting, Antonio Amoroso, Technical Architect at BNL Gruppo BNP Paribas said, “In our new headquarters, we wanted to offer our co-workers access to the very latest technology, to maximize collaboration and to make information sharing fast and simple. Plus being in the financial industry, data security and centralized management are paramount. We sought the right wireless solution to create a clean, easy and inclusive working environment. Our vision was that anyone in a meeting could securely share content from any device quickly and easily including smartphones, laptops, tablets and other devices. Solstice is the perfect solution as it allows for a number of devices to be connected to one screen without any risk of data breach or viruses. It enables a truly interactive meeting whereby all participants can contribute content to the display as part of the discussion.”

Addressing network security concerns

Connecting any device to the corporate network brings a potential security risk – which is compounded if those devices are owned by employees rather than the company or worse still associated with visitors to the premises. Security is a key concern. However, Solstice’s dual-network mode supports secure collaboration between users on two separate WiFi / Ethernet networks, such as corporate and guest users. Solstice has been deployed in some of the most secure government and private organizations in the world and is hardened with multiple layers of security features and protocols. User and admin authentication, network encryption of Solstice traffic, code obfuscation, and annual 3rd-party penetration testing — these features and more ensure every Solstice deployment remains secure.

Solstice Dashboard and Kepler, a powerful cloud-based deployment monitoring and meeting analytics tool, make implementation and management of any number of Solstice Pods easy to manage, control, and monitor. Further, Kepler streamlines the day-to-day oversight of Solstice while also providing data analytics on meeting space utilization. How often is each space used and by how many participants? How many share content and from what type of device? How interactive are the meetings? You can even obtain participant feedback on the quality of each meeting.

Antonio Amoroso continues, “We were impressed by the central management facilities offered by Mersive. We are allowing a massive number of devices including employees’ own phones to access screens on our corporate network across over 100 rooms. In evaluating the solution, we were very impressed with the consideration given to the security implications by Mersive. Solstice Pods are an enterprise grade solution that is designed to support central management by an IT team. For example, we are able to use the Solstice management interface.”

“Solstice has exceeded our original expectations,” Antonio Amoroso concluded. “Because Solstice is essentially an in-room software platform, we can continue to develop new use cases. For example, we are now able to display corporate messages of our choice in meeting rooms and public areas – reminding staff of promotions or events for example. We look forward to future releases of the software so that we can continue improving ways we can share content and collaborate.”

More engaged teams – better business results

By redesigning meeting spaces and deploying the right technology companies can help ensure more robust, engaging meetings. Changing the environment with comparatively inexpensive technology transforms the meeting environment to facilitate collaborative content sharing. This will bring about improved decision making and better meeting results. By fully leveraging the insights of the whole team in every meeting you will not only get to your corporate goals faster but also achieve greater employee satisfaction for the team.
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