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Recruitment

MAXWELL STEPHENS GUIDES

FOR CANDIDATES

30 Steps to Success in the Facilities Management Recruitment Process



Thirty practical do's and don'ts that take FM candidates from defining their search to interviews, follow-up and feedback.

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30 Steps to Success in the Facilities Management Recruitment Process

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01
Introduction

Looking for a new role in Facilities Management can be slow and, at times, discouraging. FM is a broad and demanding sector, and the best roles attract strong competition. The candidates who succeed are rarely the ones who apply most often. They are the ones who prepare properly and present their experience clearly.

This guide sets out 30 practical do's and don'ts drawn from our experience of recruiting across FM, estates and workplace since 2006. They follow the candidate journey in order, from deciding what you want, through applications and interviews, to what you do once you know the outcome.

Treat the steps as a working checklist. Some will feel obvious, but in our experience the obvious steps are the ones most often skipped when a search is under pressure.

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Preparation is the difference you control.



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02

Before You Start Looking

The decisions you make before sending a single application shape everything that follows. Get these right and your search becomes more focused, less stressful and more likely to end in the right role.

1. Don't Resign on the Strength of a Verbal Offer

When a better role is offered verbally, particularly if you are unhappy where you are, it is tempting to hand in your notice straight away. Resist it. A verbal offer is hard to prove and can be delayed, changed or withdrawn.

Wait until you have a **written offer and a signed contract**, and any conditions such as references or checks have been confirmed, before you resign from your current job.

2. Do Define What You Are Looking For

If you haven't decided what you want from your next role, it is hard to know where to start or which vacancies deserve your time. Before you begin, write down exactly what you are looking for: the type of role, sector, location, working pattern and salary expectations. That clarity makes every later decision easier.

3. Don't Be Afraid to Start Lower Down

Ambition matters, but so does realism about the roles your experience supports. If you are new to FM, or moving into a new area of it, applying for senior management roles is unlikely to succeed. Most people work their way up, so be prepared to start at a more junior level. Show commitment and capability, and progression often comes quickly.

4. Do Use a Range of Search Methods, but Don't Spread Yourself Too Thin

Employers now find candidates through many channels, so don't restrict yourself to one. Use online job sites, LinkedIn, professional networks, industry events and careers fairs, and specialist recruitment consultancies.

Be selective about the recruiters you register with. Choose a small number who understand your part of FM, can represent you properly and have a genuine chance of helping you. Being registered everywhere is not the same as being well represented.

> **CHOOSING A RECRUITER**
>
> Ask a consultant which FM roles they have filled recently and how they will present you to employers. A specialist should be able to talk credibly about your discipline, your level and the market for it.

5. Don't Expect Jobs to Come to You

The right role rarely lands in your lap. Finding it takes effort, and that means networking and building your contacts as widely as you can. Candidates who work hard at the process tend to see results, and employers notice the effort you have made to find them.

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Never resign on a verbal offer.

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03
Your CV and Applications

Your CV and application are usually the first evidence an employer sees of your experience. They decide whether you are invited to interview, so they deserve real care.

6. Do Make Sure Your CV Is Professional, Current and Error-Free

Employers and recruiters receive large numbers of CVs and do not have time to interview everyone. Many will set aside a CV with spelling or formatting errors without reading further. Check yours carefully, ask someone you trust for a second opinion and keep it up to date. It is the document that earns you the interview, so it is worth refining.

7. Don't Send the Same CV for Every Role

You don't need a new CV for each application, but you do need to tailor it. If you are applying for a regional Facilities Manager role, for example, a CV that emphasises single-site experience will undersell you. Bring forward the experience that matches the role, or the employer is unlikely to look twice.

8. Do Take Time Over Application Forms

Application forms can be time-consuming, but don't let one put you off a role you really want. Complete every section fully and accurately, and ask for help if you need it. A form deserves the same care and detail as your CV, and a rushed one is easy to spot.

9. Do Put Your Full Contact Details on Your CV

Employers expect to be able to reach you easily, so make your phone number and email address clear at the top of your CV. Include a link to your LinkedIn profile too. It gives employers a fuller picture of your experience and any recommendations you have received.

10. Don't Forget a Cover Letter

It is tempting to send your CV to as many places as possible, but a short, tailored cover letter or covering email should go with every application. Use it to explain exactly why you are the right person for this role, drawing on the experience most relevant to it.

Before you press send, check that:

- ✓ Your CV is tailored to this role and free of errors
- ✓ Your phone number, email address and LinkedIn link are correct
- ✓ Any application form is complete and accurate
- ✓ Your cover letter is written for this role and this employer
- ✓ You have noted the closing date and who to contact

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Tailor every CV to the role.



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04

Following Up and Staying Resilient

What you do between applying and hearing back matters more than most candidates realise. Stay organised, stay visible and keep things in perspective.

11. Don't Be Afraid to Follow Up on Your Application

You may worry about chasing, but a polite follow-up shows you are keen and can prompt an employer to look at your application. A short call or email before the closing date, confirming your application has arrived, is usually welcome.

12. Do Check Your Messages Every Day, Including Your Junk Folder

Some employers will phone to invite you to interview. Others will only email, or send a message through a recruitment platform. Check your inbox, your junk or spam folder and your voicemail daily. A missed message can mean a missed interview.

13. Do Ask for Feedback If You Are Unsuccessful at the First Stage

Popular roles can attract very large numbers of applications, so feedback at the screening stage is not always available. There is no harm in asking, though, and even a brief comment can sharpen your next application.

14. Don't Be Discouraged If You Are Not Invited to Interview

Being turned down before interview is disappointing, but try not to take it personally. Shortlists are shaped by many factors you cannot see. Take what you can from it, adjust where needed and keep going. The right role is often closer than it feels.

15. Do Consider Voluntary Work While You Search

If your search is taking time, voluntary work can prevent gaps on your CV and keep your skills current. Many opportunities are flexible and don't require a fixed commitment of time or hours. It keeps your experience up to date and shows employers that you are proactive.

> *"Persistence counts, but only when it is paired with preparation.*

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Good answers need evidence, not adjectives.

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05
Preparing for Interview

An interview invitation means your experience has done its job. From here, preparation makes the difference between a nervous performance and a confident one.

16. Don't Underprepare

There is no such thing as being too prepared for an interview. Find out exactly what the organisation does, how its buildings and services are run, and where your role would sit. Many employers expect you to understand the business before you apply, let alone by the time you interview.

17. Do Show Genuine Interest in the Organisation

Ask thoughtful questions and show real curiosity about what the organisation does. Imagine it is your business: how would you want a candidate to talk about it and conduct themselves in front of you? Then ask yourself honestly whether you would hire you.

18. Do Research Your Interviewer

If you know who will interview you, find out a little about them. A previous employer, a shared connection or a common professional interest can help you build rapport. LinkedIn is the natural place to start. Keep anything you use relevant and professional.

19. Don't Be Late

Lateness is one of the fastest ways to lose an employer's confidence. If you cannot arrive on time for the interview, they will wonder about your timekeeping in the job. Plan your journey, do a trial run if the location is unfamiliar and leave in plenty of time.

For a video interview, test your link, camera and sound in advance and join a few minutes early. Being early is always better than being late.

20. Do Dress to Impress

Dress smartly and make sure your clothes are clean and pressed. Business attire is the safe choice unless you have been told otherwise, and the same standard applies on video. As the saying goes, dress for the job you want, not the one you have.

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An interview is a two-way decision.



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06
In the Interview

Most interviews are decided by how clearly you evidence your experience, and by how you conduct yourself while you do it.

21. Don't Let Nerves Take Over

Interviews are nerve-racking for almost everyone, but there are practical ways to manage anxiety and make a good impression. Get a good night's sleep and eat properly beforehand. If you have researched the organisation and practised your answers, you have every reason to feel confident. Smile, and make eye contact with your interviewer.

22. Do Prepare Examples for Every Question

Interviewers want more than yes or no. They need evidence that you can do the job, which means showing you have done similar work before. Prepare specific examples for the questions you are likely to face.

> **STRUCTURE YOUR EXAMPLES**
>
> Set out the situation, the task, the action you took and the result. It keeps answers concise and makes your own contribution clear, which is exactly what structured and competency-based interviews are designed to test.

23. Don't Be Afraid to Be Confident About Your Abilities

Many people find it hard to talk about their strengths, but it is a core part of any interview. Other candidates will be doing it, so don't leave yourself in the shadows. Be specific, be factual and let the evidence speak for you.

24. Do Be Aware of Your Body Language

Your body language says a great deal about you. Being open, attentive and personable gives you a better chance of success. Appearing closed or apprehensive sends the wrong signals, however strong your answers are.

25. Don't Forget to Have Questions Ready for the End

Always prepare questions to ask at the end of the interview. It shows you are engaged and want to understand the role properly. Useful areas to explore include:

- How the team works and who you would work with most closely
- The culture of the organisation
- Development and progression opportunities

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Rejection is information. Ask for feedback.

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07
After the Interview

The interview is not the end of the process. How you handle the days that follow, whatever the outcome, can shape your next opportunity as well as this one.

26. Do Follow Up Promptly

Soon after the interview, send a short message thanking the employer for their time and confirming your interest. If you are closely matched with another candidate, it may tip the balance in your favour. If a recruiter arranged the interview, give them your feedback quickly too.

27. Do Remember That an Interview Works Both Ways

It is easy to see an interview as the employer deciding whether they want you. It is equally your chance to decide whether you want them. There is no point accepting a role that isn't right for you, so be confident you will enjoy it and can succeed in it before you commit.

28. Don't Burn Your Bridges If You Are Unsuccessful

Candidates are turned down for all kinds of reasons, and it is not always a question of being good enough. Whatever the outcome, thank the employer for their time. They may well consider you for another role in the future.

29. Do Connect With the Employer on LinkedIn

Whatever the outcome, it is worth connecting with your interviewer on LinkedIn, with a short personal note, and following the organisation's page. It widens your network and reinforces your interest in the company. You never know when that contact may prove useful.

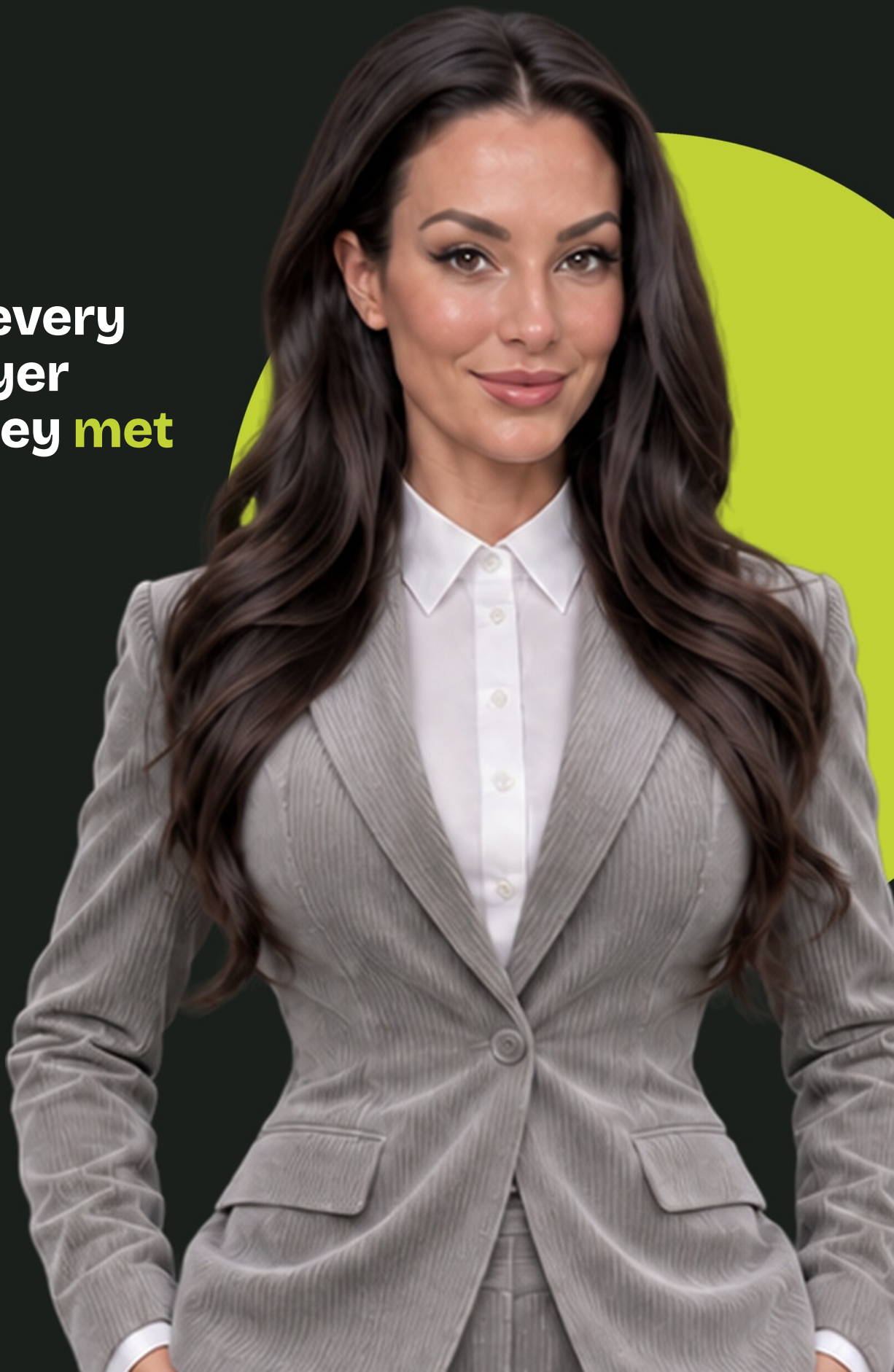
30. Don't Be Embarrassed to Ask for Feedback

Most employers are willing to give feedback after an interview, so if you are unsuccessful, ask for it. It is the most reliable way to improve for the next one.

> *"Every interview, successful or not, should leave you better prepared for the next.*

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Leave every employer glad they met you.



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08

Putting the 30 Steps to Work

None of these steps is complicated. The difference lies in doing them consistently, especially when a search is taking longer than you hoped.

Clarity about what you want, care over every application, thorough preparation and a professional approach after each interview will put you in a stronger position than most of the candidates you are competing with.

If you are looking for your next role in Facilities Management, estates or workplace, our consultants can help you target the right opportunities and prepare properly for each stage. Visit maxwellstephens.com, call 0207 118 4848 or email info@maxwellstephens.com.

THE EVIDENCE

What the Data Says

What UK data shows about today's job market for candidates.

16%

UK applications submitted are up 16% and interviews needed to land a single role are up 18%, Totaljobs found in 2026.

Source: Totaljobs Hiring Trends Update, 2026

77%

77% of UK candidates say it's harder to get an interview than a year ago.

Source: Totaljobs Hiring Trends Update, 2026

66%

Two in three (66%) UK candidates don't hear back beyond an automated acknowledgement when they apply.

Source: Totaljobs Hiring Trends Update, 2026

12 weeks

The average time to hire in the UK climbed to 12 weeks in spring 2026, up from 10 weeks in autumn 2025.

Source: Totaljobs Hiring Trends Update, 2026

92%

92% of the 497 FM vacancies Maxwell Stephens advertised from 2023 to 2026 showed a salary figure, giving candidates pay clarity up front.

Source: Maxwell Stephens analysis of 497 advertised vacancies, May 2023 – September 2026

Sources were checked in September 2026. Select a source to open the original research. Maxwell Stephens figures are drawn from our own published vacancies and placement records.

CASE STUDY

See It in Practice

Head of Facilities for The Royal College of Psychiatrists

The Royal College of Psychiatrists engaged Maxwell Stephens to recruit a Head of Facilities with operational FM expertise and experience of events and membership organisations. We screened candidates for qualifications, experience and cultural fit, shortlisted against the College's own person specification and ran in-depth behavioural assessments. Shortlisted candidates received thorough interview preparation, including insight into the client's expectations and guidance on presenting their experience and achievements. The appointed Head of Facilities went on to strengthen the College's FM function across premises, sustainability, health and safety and contract management.

It shows the preparation this guide recommends, from understanding the employer to evidencing your achievements, at work in a real senior FM appointment.

Read the full case study · **Browse all case studies**

FROM THE BLOG

Related Reading

- Interview Preparation for Facilities Management Candidates
- How to Write the Perfect CV: A Complete Guide to Standing Out
- Why You Should Always Ask for Feedback After an Interview

MAXWELL STEPHENS INSIGHTS

Continue Reading

- **The Facilities Management Interview Guide**
- **Facilities Management Career Guide**
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