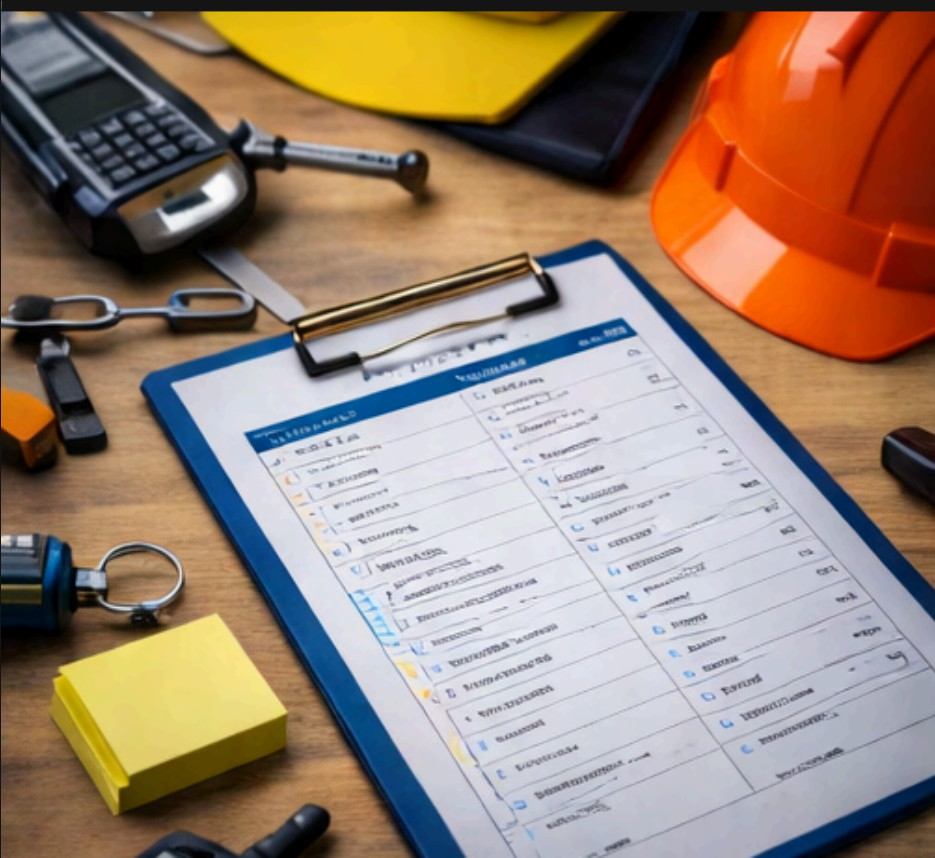


THE FACILITIES MANAGER WITHIN



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Introduction

Facilities Managers are one of the most important – and most overlooked – roles in any business.

When everything's working, no one notices.
When it's not, everyone feels it.

From keeping buildings operational to making sure teams can actually do their jobs day to day, a good FM underpins the entire workplace. Without that foundation, productivity drops, issues stack up, and small problems quickly become big ones.

Despite how critical the role is, many companies still approach hiring reactively – posting ads, relying on job boards, or hoping the right person appears. That process is often slow, expensive, and inconsistent.

Getting it right comes down to a simple approach:
hire well, develop properly, and give the right level of trust.

The best Facilities Managers aren't just found, they're built. You need someone with the right core traits, who can then grow into the role within your business.

In this guide, we'll cover:

- The key traits that make a strong Facilities Manager
- Practical ways to train and develop them
- How to give them the autonomy to run your building effectively



➤ The Most Important Manager in the Building

The Facilities Manager plays a central role in keeping a business running.

They're responsible for the basics that everything else depends on – power, heating, maintenance, safety, and overall functionality of the workplace. When these things are handled properly, your team can focus on their work without disruption.

When they're not, it's immediate.

An ineffective FM leads to downtime, frustrated staff, and a poor working environment. Over time, that impacts performance, retention, and even your reputation as an employer.

A strong Facilities Manager does more than just "keep things running." They manage contractors, oversee compliance, control costs, and ensure the workplace supports the people in it.

It's a role that sits right between operations and people – which is why the best FMs are just as strong with communication and organisation as they are with technical understanding.

Put simply: if your building works, your business works. And that starts with the right FM.



The Important Traits of a Facilities Manager

Qualifications matter – but they're not what make a great Facilities Manager.

The difference between an average FM and a strong one usually comes down to core traits. These are much harder to teach, and far more important day to day.

Strong communication and presence

An FM deals with people constantly – contractors, suppliers, senior stakeholders, and employees across the business.

They need to be confident, approachable, and able to handle situations calmly and professionally. If they can't communicate properly, things fall apart quickly.

Attention to detail

Facilities is built on the small things.

Whether it's spotting an issue before it escalates, keeping on top of compliance, or maintaining standards across a site – detail matters. A good FM notices what others miss and acts on it early.

These traits aren't easily trained. Some people naturally have them, others don't – and that's often what separates a reliable FM from someone who struggles in the role.

Hiring the Right Person

Finding the right Facilities Manager isn't just about ticking boxes on a CV.

It requires a clear understanding of the role and what actually drives performance in it. Too many hiring processes focus heavily on qualifications and systems experience, while overlooking the personality traits that make someone effective on site.

This isn't a role for a generalist approach.

Whoever is responsible for sourcing your candidates needs to understand Facilities Management properly – how the role works in practice, what challenges come with it, and what good really looks like.

That's how you get a shortlist that actually fits your business, rather than a stack of CVs that look good on paper but don't deliver in reality.

Qualifications and certifications are important, but without the right traits behind them, they don't mean much. Get the person right first – everything else can be developed.



➤ The Important Traits of a Facilities Manager

Start with Entry Level

In many cases, the best approach is to bring someone in at entry level and develop them internally.

If you get the right person – someone with the core traits and the right attitude – you can shape them into exactly what your business needs.

They'll learn your systems, your standards, and how your organisation operates from the ground up. That often leads to stronger long-term performance than hiring someone experienced who's used to doing things a different way.

It also builds loyalty. Someone who's been developed properly is far more likely to stay, grow, and take ownership of the role.

Get the foundations right early, and you're not just hiring a Facilities Manager – you're building one.



➤ Developing Your Facilities Manager

Training a Facilities Manager is similar to most internal development – but with one key difference: a lot of it is learned on the job.

Entry-level hires will usually fall into one of two categories:

- Strong academic background, limited practical experience
- Hands-on experience, but little formal training

The goal is to balance that. Focus on their gaps and build from there.

Learning Through Experience

Facilities Management is a practical role. The fastest way to develop someone is by getting them involved early.

Let them see how things actually run day to day – dealing with issues, speaking to contractors, handling pressure, and making decisions in real time.

You can't replicate that in a classroom.

Leading by Example

One of the most effective ways to train a new FM is simple – show them how you work.

That includes:

- How you track tasks and priorities
- How you stay organised
- How you manage issues before they escalate

Whether it's CAFM systems, spreadsheets, notes, or just your way of structuring the day – these habits are what make the role manageable.

Decision-making is a big part of this too.

Some decisions are straightforward (e.g. calling out a contractor for a fault). Others require judgement – weighing up cost, time, and long-term impact based on what the business actually needs.

That's where real learning happens.



Developing Your Facilities Manager

Formal Training

Alongside hands-on experience, formal training still has value.

There are a range of UK qualifications and courses in Facilities Management – from short certifications to full degree pathways. These can strengthen technical knowledge and give structure to their development.

If your business supports it, helping an employee access this training is a strong long-term investment.

Building Your Own Training Framework

You don't need to rely entirely on external courses.

There's a huge amount of knowledge available through industry resources, guidance, and practical experience within your own team. Combining that with internal processes allows you to create a structured training plan tailored to your business.

For organisations with multiple sites, this can go further – creating a consistent internal standard for Facilities Management across the company.

Done properly, you're not just training someone to do the job. You're building a reliable, scalable approach to how your facilities are managed.



➤ Building Capability on the Job

On-the-Job Training

Apprenticeships remain one of the most effective ways to develop strong Facilities Managers.

FM is a hands-on role. You learn it by doing it.

Once you've hired the right entry-level candidate, set expectations early. Be clear about what the role actually involves – not just the good parts, but the reality of it too.

There will be wins, like delivering a successful project or improving a site. There will also be pressure – urgent issues, out-of-hours calls, and problems that need fixing immediately.

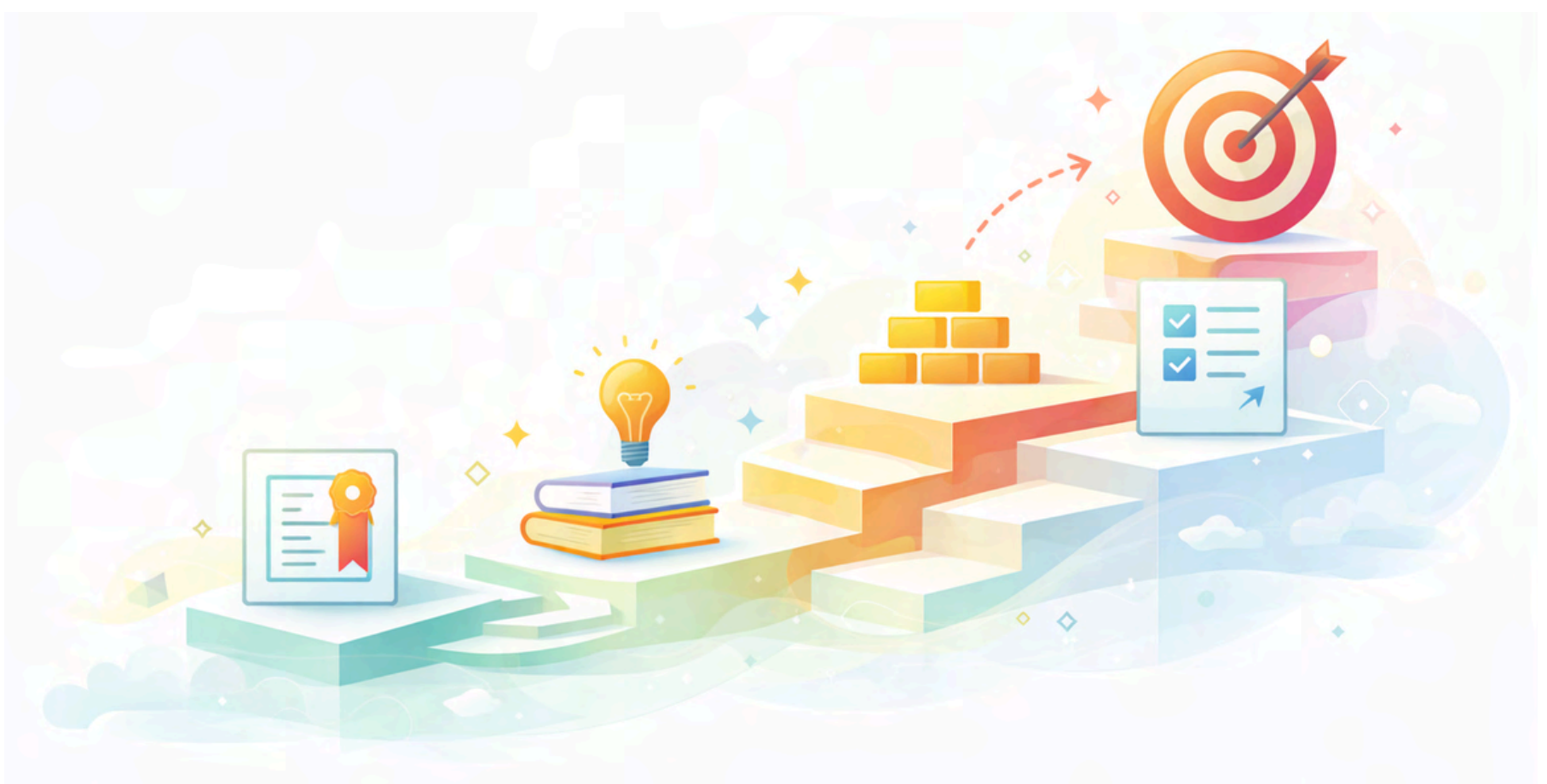
If someone understands both sides from the start, they'll settle into the role much faster.

Learning Through Shadowing

The most effective way to train someone is to show them how the job is actually done.

Start with shadowing. Let them observe, assist, and gradually take on responsibility.

Don't limit this to just one person. Exposure to different team members gives a broader view of how FM works in practice. Everyone has slightly different ways of working, and that variety helps build a more capable and adaptable FM.





Building Capability on the Job

A Simple Development Structure

A structured approach makes progression clearer. This doesn't need to be rigid, but a phased model works well:

Phase 1 – Observe

They follow and watch. Encourage note-taking and involvement in real situations – including high-pressure ones. They need to see the full reality of the role.

Phase 2 – Support

Start handing over smaller tasks. Emails, calls, contractor coordination. Let them try, step back, then review performance and feedback.

Phase 3 – Own Tasks

They begin managing work independently. This could be anything from reactive issues to small projects. You're still there, but less involved day to day.

Phase 4 – Take the Lead

At this point, they should be capable of running the role. You step back, offering guidance where needed, while they take ownership of decisions and delivery.

The time line will vary depending on the business, but the progression stays the same.

Learning Beyond Your Business

You don't have to develop someone in isolation.

Building relationships with Facilities Managers in other organisations can add real value. Exposure to different environments, systems, and ways of working helps broaden their understanding of the role.

It also brings fresh ideas back into your business – which is often where the biggest improvements come from.





Stepping into the role

Releasing Your Facilities Manager

Once your trainee is ready, the next step is simple, give them ownership.

This is where the real transition happens. They move from learning the role to actually running it.

Choosing the Right First Site

If possible, place them in a location that's easy to support.

Being nearby makes a difference. It allows you to step in when needed, review decisions together, and give guidance in real time.

If that's not practical, regular contact becomes even more important. Calls, messages, and quick check-ins can act as a safety net while they build confidence.

The goal is to support, not to control.





Stepping into the role

Ongoing Development

Training doesn't stop once they take over.

The first few months are where most of the real learning happens, so how you support them during this period matters.

Avoid "Seagull Management"

Dropping in just to point out issues and leaving again doesn't help anyone. If you're reviewing their work, make it balanced – recognise what's going well, not just what needs fixing.

Stay Connected

You don't need to be overbearing, but regular contact helps. A quick daily or weekly check-in can prevent small issues from becoming bigger problems.

Encourage Continued Learning

Courses, industry events, and further training all add value. Give them the time and support to actually attend – it pays off long term.

Structured Reviews

For the first six months, regular check-ins are key. Keep them informal but consistent – monthly works well. The aim isn't to criticise. It's to:

- Review progress
- Talk through challenges
- Adjust where needed

Small improvements over time make a big difference. With the right support, this is where a good FM becomes a strong one.





Building Strength Within Your Business

Once you've successfully trained and developed a Facilities Manager, you're not just filling a role – you're creating a standard.

From there, the process becomes repeatable. You can bring in the next person, develop them in the same way, and continue building strength within your business.

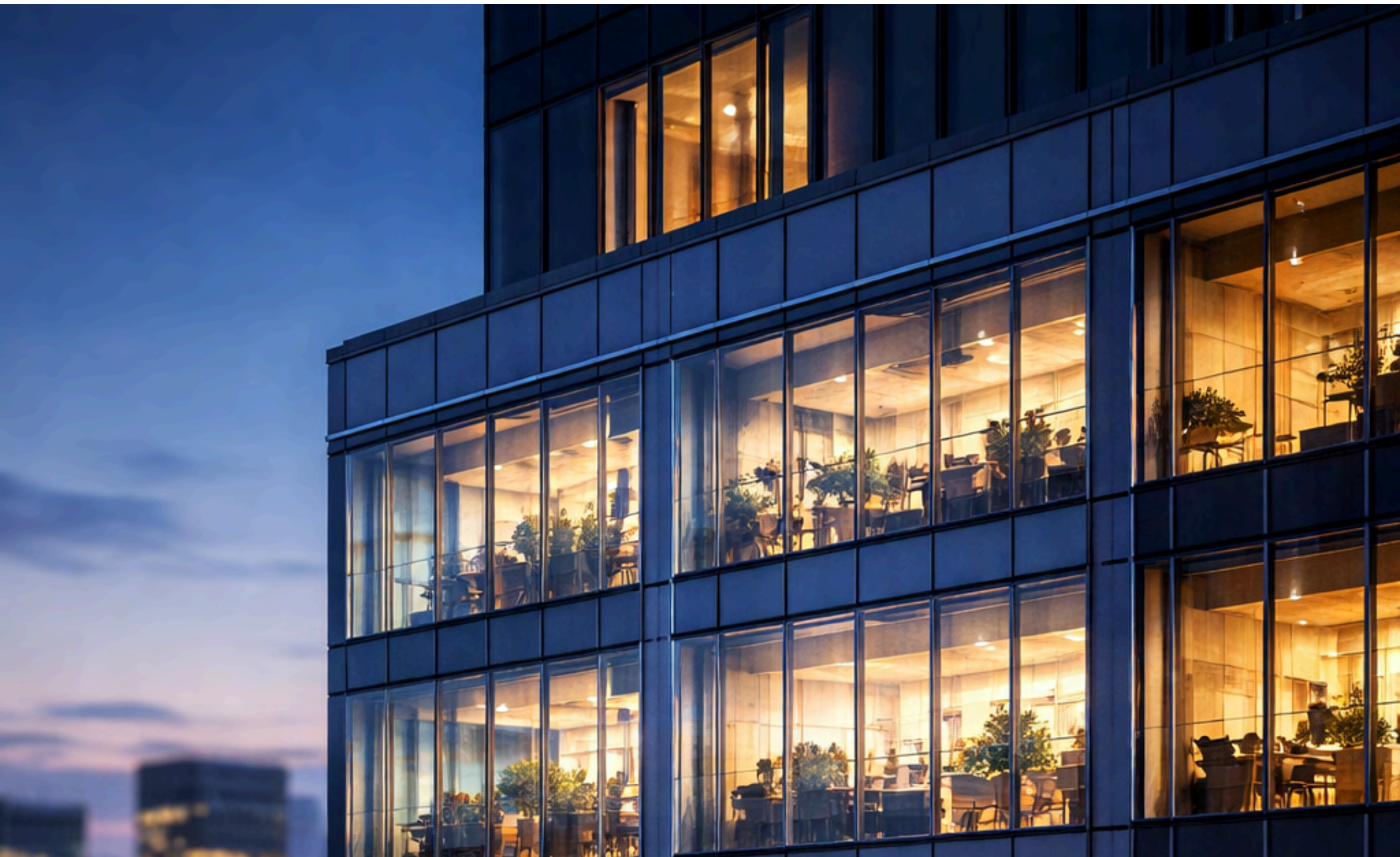
While this approach can apply to many roles, it's especially valuable in Facilities Management. The impact of a strong FM is immediate, and developing someone internally often leads to better alignment, stronger performance, and long-term stability.

You're not relying on luck in the hiring market, you're building capability from within.

Final Thoughts

Get the person right.
Invest in their development.
Give them ownership.

Do that consistently, and you won't just have a Facilities Manager, you'll have a reliable foundation for your business to operate and grow.



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