

INSIGHT

---

# How to Build a High- Performing Facilities Management Team



# Introduction

Strong Facilities Management teams rarely happen by accident.

Behind every well-run building, workplace, estate, or operational environment is usually a team that combines:

- technical capability
- operational discipline
- communication
- leadership
- and consistency under pressure

Yet many organisations struggle to build FM teams that remain stable and high-performing over time.

Some rely too heavily on individuals rather than systems. Some hire reactively under pressure. Others focus purely on technical competence while overlooking leadership, culture, or communication.

The result is often:

- inconsistent performance
- operational friction
- high turnover
- burnout
- and reduced confidence across the wider business

This guide explores how organisations can build stronger, more resilient Facilities Management teams capable of delivering long-term operational success.

# High-Performing FM Teams Are Built Deliberately

Many organisations assume strong teams form naturally over time.

In reality, high-performing FM functions are usually built through:

- clear standards
- strong leadership
- structured hiring
- accountability
- operational clarity
- and cultural consistency

The strongest FM environments tend to share several characteristics:

- calm leadership
- clearly defined expectations
- trust between teams
- operational discipline
- and strong communication

Performance is rarely accidental.

---

Sector  
knowledge  
shortens  
every search

---



# Start With Role Clarity

One of the biggest causes of FM hiring failure is unclear role definition.

Many organisations recruit broadly for 2018someone operational2019 or 2018someone who can manage everything.2019 This usually creates confusion both internally and externally.

Strong Facilities Management teams begin with clarity around:

- responsibilities
- reporting structures
- decision-making authority
- technical requirements
- leadership expectations
- and operational priorities

Without clarity:

- accountability weakens
- performance becomes inconsistent
- and recruitment quality suffers

Strong teams are built on clear operational foundations.

# Hire for Behaviour, Not Just Experience

Technical competence matters in Facilities Management.

But many hiring mistakes occur when organisations over-prioritise CV experience while underestimating behavioural qualities.

The strongest FM professionals often demonstrate:

- calmness under pressure
- communication skills
- operational judgement
- reliability
- emotional intelligence
- and leadership stability

These qualities often determine long-term success more than technical experience alone.

A technically strong individual who creates friction internally can destabilise an entire team.

High-performing FM environments are usually built around people who improve clarity, stability, and operational trust.

---

Facilities  
leadership  
is a board  
decision

---



# Leadership Quality Shapes Everything

Facilities Management teams often mirror the behaviour of leadership.

Where leadership is reactive, inconsistent, unclear, or overly political, performance usually deteriorates over time.

Strong FM leaders typically:

- communicate clearly
- create structure
- reduce operational noise
- remain calm under pressure
- and maintain standards consistently

They also understand that leadership is not simply operational control — it is the ability to create confidence across people, processes, and environments.

Many retention issues within FM teams are leadership issues disguised as recruitment problems.

# Build Systems, Not Dependency

Many FM departments become overly dependent on specific individuals.

When knowledge, relationships, or operational processes sit entirely with one person:

- risk increases
- resilience decreases
- and succession becomes difficult

High-performing FM teams rely on:

- documented processes
- operational consistency
- clear escalation routes
- shared knowledge
- and structured communication

This creates continuity, scalability, and operational resilience. Strong systems reduce pressure on individuals and improve overall team stability.

---

In  
uncertain  
markets,  
clarity  
becomes  
leadership

---



# Communication Is a Performance Multiplier

One of the most underestimated drivers of FM performance is communication quality.

Facilities Management sits at the intersection of:

- operations
- people
- contractors
- leadership
- compliance
- and employee experience

Poor communication creates confusion, delays, operational friction, and loss of trust.

Strong FM teams communicate clearly, calmly, consistently, and proactively. This includes:

- stakeholder communication
- contractor management
- internal updates
- escalation handling
- and expectation management

Operational competence without communication rarely scales effectively.

# Create Clear Standards

High-performing teams usually operate within visible standards.

These standards often include:

- response expectations
- reporting structures
- meeting cadence
- communication quality
- operational behaviour
- and accountability frameworks

Without standards:

- inconsistency increases
- performance becomes personality-dependent
- and leadership credibility weakens

The strongest FM environments create operational clarity that remains stable even under pressure.

---

The best  
FM leaders  
bring calm to  
complexity

---



# Retention Begins Long Before Resignation

Many organisations only focus on retention after problems emerge.

By that point:

- trust has often already declined
- frustration has built
- and disengagement has started

Strong FM teams are retained through:

- leadership consistency
- manageable workload
- career development
- operational support
- and recognition

People rarely leave stable environments where expectations are fair, communication is strong, and leadership creates confidence.

Retention is usually built daily — not repaired reactively.

# Invest in Development

Facilities Management continues evolving rapidly.

Modern FM leaders increasingly require:

- workplace strategy awareness
- ESG understanding
- technology adoption
- communication capability
- and commercial awareness

High-performing organisations increasingly invest in:

- mentoring
- leadership development
- operational training
- and succession planning

The strongest FM teams are learning organisations — not static operational functions.

---

Fit is the  
hard part  
of hiring

---



# Recruitment Quality Determines Team Quality

Many long-term operational issues begin with rushed hiring decisions.

When organisations hire under pressure without clear criteria, behavioural assessment, or proper process, they often create future instability.

Strong recruitment processes typically include:

- role clarity
- behavioural assessment
- leadership evaluation
- structured interviews
- and long-term thinking

The strongest teams are usually built slowly and deliberately — not reactively.

# Culture Matters More Than Most Organisations Think

FM culture directly affects:

- retention
- accountability
- communication
- performance
- and operational resilience

High-performing teams tend to operate within cultures that value:

- professionalism
- trust
- consistency
- ownership
- and calm problem-solving

Where culture becomes political, reactive, blame-driven, or chaotic, strong people rarely stay long-term.

Culture is not an abstract concept inside FM operations — it directly influences operational outcomes.

---

Operational  
excellence  
is often built  
through  
**consistency**  
rather than  
**visibility**

---



# Technology Is Supporting Better FM Teams

Technology is increasingly helping FM teams improve:

- reporting
- compliance
- communication
- asset management
- and operational visibility

However, technology alone does not create high performance.

The strongest organisations use technology to:

- improve clarity
- reduce friction
- support decision-making
- and free teams from unnecessary administration

Technology should support operational quality — not replace leadership.

# Key Characteristics of High-Performing FM Teams

Strong Facilities Management teams are usually characterised by:

- operational calmness
- leadership consistency
- clear accountability
- communication quality
- trust
- professionalism
- and adaptability

They tend to operate proactively rather than reactively.

Most importantly, they create confidence across the wider organisation.

—  
A wrong hire  
costs more  
than an  
empty seat  
—



# Common Mistakes Organisations Make

Some of the most common FM team-building mistakes include:

- reactive hiring
- unclear leadership
- poor communication
- overloading strong individuals
- inconsistent standards
- lack of structure
- and failing to invest in development

Over time, these issues compound into:

- turnover
- operational instability
- and weakened performance

## Conclusion

High-performing Facilities Management teams are rarely built through luck.

They are usually the result of:

- strong leadership
- structured recruitment
- operational clarity
- communication quality
- and deliberate cultural standards

Maxwell Stephens has spent over two decades helping organisations across the UK and internationally build high-performing Facilities Management teams.

If you are looking to strengthen your FM function — whether through one key hire or a broader team-build — we would be glad to help.

Contact us at [info@maxwellstephens.com](mailto:info@maxwellstephens.com) or call 0207 118 4848.

# What the Data Says

What the research says about management quality, team dynamics and early attrition, and why they matter when building a high-performing FM team.

- Half of UK workers who rate their manager as ineffective plan to leave within 12 months, versus 21% of others.  
Source: [Chartered Management Institute \(CMI\), Better Management Report: Take Responsibility, Take Action, 2023](#)
- Google's Project Aristotle studied 180 teams and found psychological safety was the most important of five dynamics behind effective teams.  
Source: [Google re:Work, Understand team effectiveness](#)
- Only 27% of UK workers describe their manager as 'highly effective'.  
Source: [Chartered Management Institute \(CMI\), New study: Bad managers and toxic work culture causing one in three staff to walk, 2023](#)
- 82% of people entering UK management roles have had no formal management and leadership training, CMI found.  
Source: [Chartered Management Institute \(CMI\), Better Management Report: Take Responsibility, Take Action, 2023](#)
- 95% of candidates placed by Maxwell Stephens remain in role one year after appointment.  
Source: [Maxwell Stephens, 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.

## See It in Practice

### Evelyn Partners Multi-Role Facilities Management Recruitment

Evelyn Partners appointed Maxwell Stephens to deliver a coordinated, multi-role programme strengthening its Facilities Management function across several regions: a Senior Regional Facilities Manager, two Regional Facilities Managers, a Facilities & Security Manager and a Health & Safety Administrator. We defined a clear profile for each position, combined direct search with targeted outreach, and assessed every candidate for technical expertise, leadership capability and cultural fit.

It illustrates building an FM team as a whole, with clearly defined roles, rather than filling each vacancy in isolation.

[Read the full case study at maxwellstephens.com/case-studies/evelyn-partners](https://maxwellstephens.com/case-studies/evelyn-partners)

### Related Reading

- **The 5 Habits of Highly Effective Managers**  
[maxwellstephens.com/blog/habits-of-a-good-boss](https://maxwellstephens.com/blog/habits-of-a-good-boss)
- **How to Create an Effective Onboarding Programme**  
[maxwellstephens.com/blog/top-tips-for-creating-an-effective-onboarding-program](https://maxwellstephens.com/blog/top-tips-for-creating-an-effective-onboarding-program)
- **Cross-Functional Skills Every Facilities Manager Needs**  
[maxwellstephens.com/blog/cross-functional-skills-every-facilities-manager-needs](https://maxwellstephens.com/blog/cross-functional-skills-every-facilities-manager-needs)

### Talk to Maxwell Stephens

Planning an FM, estates or workplace appointment? [Contact us](#) for a confidential conversation, or [browse more case studies](#).



# A FINE POSITION TO BE IN



**maxwell  
stephens**  
*Recruitment*

Maxwell Stephens Recruitment is registered in  
England and Wales No. 02660883



## CONTACT

t: 0207 118 4848

w: [www.maxwellstephens.com](http://www.maxwellstephens.com)  
e: [info@maxwellstephens.com](mailto:info@maxwellstephens.com)



## LONDON

Golden Cross House  
8 Duncannon Street  
Strand  
London  
WC2N 4JF