

INSIGHT

How to Reduce **Hiring Risk** in Facilities Management



Introduction

Helping Organisations Avoid Expensive FM Hiring Mistakes

Hiring mistakes in Facilities Management are expensive. The impact is rarely limited to salary costs alone.

Poor FM hires can create:

- operational instability
- stakeholder frustration
- cultural disruption
- leadership tension
- contractor issues
- compliance risk
- and long-term performance problems

In senior Facilities Management roles, the consequences become even more significant.

A weak leadership appointment can quietly damage:

- team morale
- organisational trust
- workplace standards
- supplier performance
- and operational confidence

The challenge is that many hiring mistakes do not become visible immediately. Some candidates interview well but struggle operationally. Others possess strong technical capability but fail culturally. Some appear highly experienced but cannot lead effectively under pressure.

Reducing hiring risk therefore requires far more than reviewing CVs.

Strong recruitment decisions come from:

- structured assessment
- behavioural evaluation
- leadership analysis
- cultural alignment
- and long-term thinking

The strongest organisations understand that recruitment is not simply about filling vacancies. It is about protecting organisational performance.

Why FM Hiring Risk Is Increasing

Facilities Management roles have become increasingly complex.

Modern FM leaders are now expected to balance:

- operational delivery
- stakeholder management
- financial control
- workplace experience
- ESG priorities
- team leadership
- supplier performance
- and organisational strategy

This complexity makes hiring more difficult. Technical competence alone is no longer enough.

Organisations increasingly require FM professionals who can:

- communicate effectively
- influence stakeholders
- lead calmly under pressure
- and operate strategically

This broad skill requirement increases hiring risk significantly.

Facilities
leadership
is a board
decision



The Cost of a Poor FM Hire

Hiring mistakes are rarely isolated events. One poor appointment can create ripple effects across the organisation.

Examples include:

- declining team morale
- increased staff turnover
- operational inconsistency
- supplier issues
- stakeholder complaints
- slower decision-making
- and reputational damage internally

Senior FM hiring mistakes can also damage executive confidence in the FM function itself.

This is why reducing hiring risk must be treated strategically rather than administratively.

Strong Hiring Starts with Clarity

Many recruitment problems begin before the search itself starts. Poorly defined roles create poor hiring outcomes.

Common problems include:

- vague job briefs
- unrealistic expectations
- conflicting stakeholder opinions
- unclear reporting structures
- and undefined success measures

If organisations lack clarity internally, recruitment becomes reactive rather than strategic.

Strong hiring processes begin with alignment around:

- role expectations
- leadership requirements
- operational priorities
- cultural fit
- and long-term business needs

Hiring for Capability vs Hiring for Comfort

One of the biggest recruitment risks is hiring people who feel familiar rather than genuinely capable.

Many organisations unconsciously favour:

- similarity
- familiarity
- confidence
- or polished communication

...over actual leadership effectiveness.

Strong hiring processes challenge this bias.

The goal is not to hire the most impressive interview performer. It is to hire the individual most capable of succeeding in the real environment.

The office
did not
disappear
Expectations
around it
changed



Candidate Assessment Must Go Beyond the CV

CVs provide useful information.

But they rarely reveal:

- leadership quality
- emotional intelligence
- resilience
- communication style
- stakeholder management ability
- or cultural fit

Strong FM recruitment processes assess the person behind the experience. This requires deeper evaluation.

Structured Interviews Reduce Hiring Risk

Poor interviews often create poor hiring decisions.

Unstructured interviews tend to become:

- conversational
- inconsistent
- subjective
- and emotionally influenced

This increases bias significantly. Structured interviews improve assessment quality.

Strong interview structures evaluate:

- leadership behaviour
- operational judgement
- communication style
- decision-making
- stakeholder management
- and behavioural consistency

The strongest organisations assess candidates against defined competencies rather than instinct alone.

Every search
starts with
the brief



Behavioural Indicators Matter

Past behaviour is often one of the strongest indicators of future performance.

Strong FM interview processes explore:

- how candidates handled pressure
- how they managed conflict
- how they led teams
- how they communicated during crises
- and how they responded to operational failures

These behavioural indicators reveal far more than theoretical answers.

Leadership Assessment Is Critical

Facilities Management leadership roles require far more than technical expertise.

Strong FM leaders typically demonstrate:

- calmness
- accountability
- communication
- resilience
- influence
- and emotional control

These qualities are often most visible when discussing:

- difficult situations
- operational setbacks
- stakeholder conflict
- or crisis scenarios

Strong interviewers explore these areas carefully.

Cultural Alignment Matters More Than Many Realise

Many technically strong hires fail culturally rather than operationally.

Culture influences:

- communication
- leadership style
- decision-making
- stakeholder relationships
- and team dynamics

A candidate may possess excellent experience yet still struggle within a specific organisational environment.

Strong recruitment processes therefore assess:

- behavioural fit
- leadership compatibility
- values alignment
- and communication style

This reduces long-term hiring risk significantly.

Fit is the
hard part
of hiring



Pressure Reveals Leadership Quality

Strong FM leaders perform well under pressure. Weak leaders often become reactive, defensive or inconsistent during operational stress.

Interview processes should therefore explore:

- crisis management
- difficult stakeholder situations
- operational failures
- and leadership challenges

These discussions often reveal:

- emotional control
- accountability
- self-awareness
- and leadership maturity

Long-Term Fit Matters More Than Short-Term Availability

One of the most common recruitment mistakes is prioritising immediate availability over long-term suitability.

Hiring under urgency often creates:

- rushed decisions
- reduced assessment quality
- and emotional decision-making

Strong organisations focus on long-term fit rather than short-term convenience.

Because replacing the wrong hire is usually far more expensive than waiting slightly longer for the right one.

Over-Complex Hiring Processes Create Risk Too

Ironically, overly complicated hiring processes can also increase hiring risk.

Some organisations:

- over-interview
- delay decisions
- involve too many stakeholders
- or create unnecessary process layers

This often damages:

- candidate experience
- decision clarity
- and recruitment momentum

Strong hiring processes are:

- structured
- thorough
- but efficient

Complexity does not automatically improve decision quality.

Strong
hiring
processes
protect
decision
quality
under
pressure



Reference Checking Should Be Strategic

Reference checking is often underused. Many organisations treat references as administrative confirmation rather than strategic evaluation.

Strong reference conversations explore:

- leadership style
- pressure management
- stakeholder relationships
- communication
- reliability
- and behavioural consistency

This provides valuable insight beyond formal interview performance.

FM Hiring Requires Emotional Intelligence

Strong hiring decisions are rarely purely technical.

The best recruitment outcomes combine:

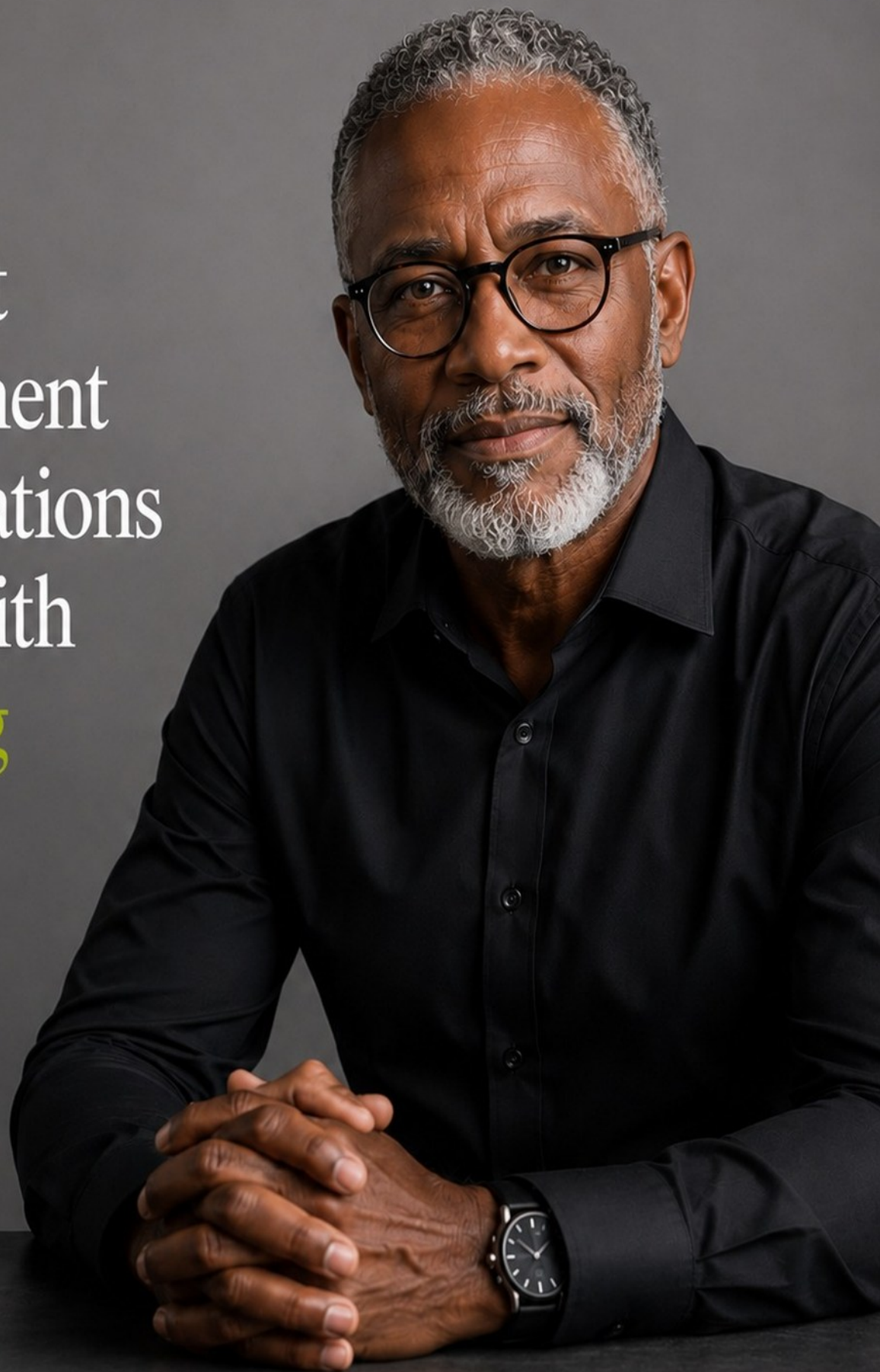
- operational evaluation
- behavioural assessment
- leadership analysis
- and emotional intelligence

The strongest interviewers observe:

- communication style
- listening ability
- emotional control
- accountability
- and self-awareness

These traits often predict leadership effectiveness more accurately than technical discussion alone.

The best
recruitment
conversations
begin with
listening



Candidate Experience Influences Hiring Outcomes

Strong candidates assess employers carefully throughout the recruitment process.

Poor communication, delayed feedback, confusing interviews, or inconsistent messaging can damage trust quickly.

High-performing FM professionals often have multiple opportunities available.

Strong candidate experience therefore reduces:

- offer rejection risk
- reputational damage
- and loss of top talent

Hiring Confidence Comes from Process

The strongest recruitment decisions are rarely based on instinct alone.

They come from:

- clarity
- structure
- behavioural evaluation
- leadership assessment
- and disciplined process

Strong hiring frameworks reduce emotional decision-making and improve consistency. This creates better long-term outcomes.

FM Recruitment Is Increasingly Strategic

Facilities Management is now deeply connected to:

- workplace experience
- organisational resilience
- ESG
- operational continuity
- employee engagement
- and business performance

As a result, FM hiring decisions carry greater strategic importance than ever before.

The quality of FM leadership increasingly affects the wider organisation directly.

Strong
recruitment
businesses do
not just fill
vacancies.
They build
trusted
networks



Great Hiring Is About Risk Reduction

No recruitment process removes all uncertainty. But strong hiring processes reduce avoidable risk significantly.

The strongest organisations understand recruitment is not about:

- speed alone
- charisma
- or polished interviews

It is about identifying:

- capability
- leadership quality
- behavioural consistency
- and long-term fit

Conclusion

Facilities Management hiring mistakes are costly. But many are avoidable.

Strong recruitment decisions come from:

- clarity
- structured assessment
- behavioural evaluation
- leadership analysis
- and disciplined hiring processes

The strongest organisations:

- hire carefully
- assess deeply
- communicate clearly
- and prioritise long-term fit over short-term urgency

Because ultimately, great FM recruitment is not simply about filling roles. It is about protecting operational performance, leadership quality and organisational trust.

About Maxwell Stephens

Maxwell Stephens is a specialist Facilities Management recruitment consultancy supporting organisations across the UK.

We recruit FM professionals across:

- Facilities Management
- Estates
- Workplace Management
- Property Operations
- Building Services
- and FM Executive Leadership

Our approach combines deep sector understanding with long-term relationship-led recruitment.

For more information, visit www.maxwellstephens.com or call **0207 118 4848**.

What the Data Says

The evidence on hiring risk: the cost of a poor appointment, the predictive value of structured interviews, early leavers and late dropouts.

- A poor hire at mid-manager level on a £42,000 salary can cost a business more than £132,000, the REC found.
Source: [Recruitment & Employment Confederation \(REC\), Hiring mistakes are costing UK businesses billions each year, 2017](#)
- Structured interviews have the highest mean validity of common selection methods (.42) in the Sackett et al. meta-analytic update.
Source: [Sackett et al., Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2023](#)
- 41% of UK organisations that selected candidates in the past year said new recruits always, mostly or sometimes resigned within their first 12 weeks.
Source: [CIPD, Resourcing and talent planning report 2024](#)
- Over a quarter (27%) of UK organisations that recruited in the past year reported challenges with counteroffers or dropouts after offer acceptance.
Source: [CIPD, Resourcing and talent planning report 2024](#)
- 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

Recruiting a Facilities, Contracts and ICT Manager for the Association of Anaesthetists

The Association of Anaesthetists appointed Maxwell Stephens exclusively to recruit a newly created Facilities, Contracts and ICT Manager to support its strategy of digital working, lower running costs, better premises and greener ways of working. With no incumbent to benchmark against, we first agreed what good looked like, then assessed candidates on operational breadth, supplier management, health and safety, ICT, commercial awareness and cultural fit.

It shows how agreeing success criteria before searching reduces the risk inherent in a newly created role.

[Read the full case study at maxwellstephens.com/case-studies/the-association-of-anaesthetists-of-great-britain-and-ireland](https://maxwellstephens.com/case-studies/the-association-of-anaesthetists-of-great-britain-and-ireland)

Related Reading

- **Recruiting Facilities Management Leaders: Judgement, Risk & Decision Quality in a Tougher World**
maxwellstephens.com/blog/recruiting-facilities-management-leaders-judgement-risk-decision-quality-in-a-tougher-world
- **Job References from Previous Employers: What Should Be on Them?**
maxwellstephens.com/blog/getting-job-references-from-previous-employers-what-should-be-on-them
- **Do Psychometric Tests Improve Recruitment in Facilities Management?**
maxwellstephens.com/blog/psychometric-tests-to-be-or-not-to-be-that-is-the-question

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



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