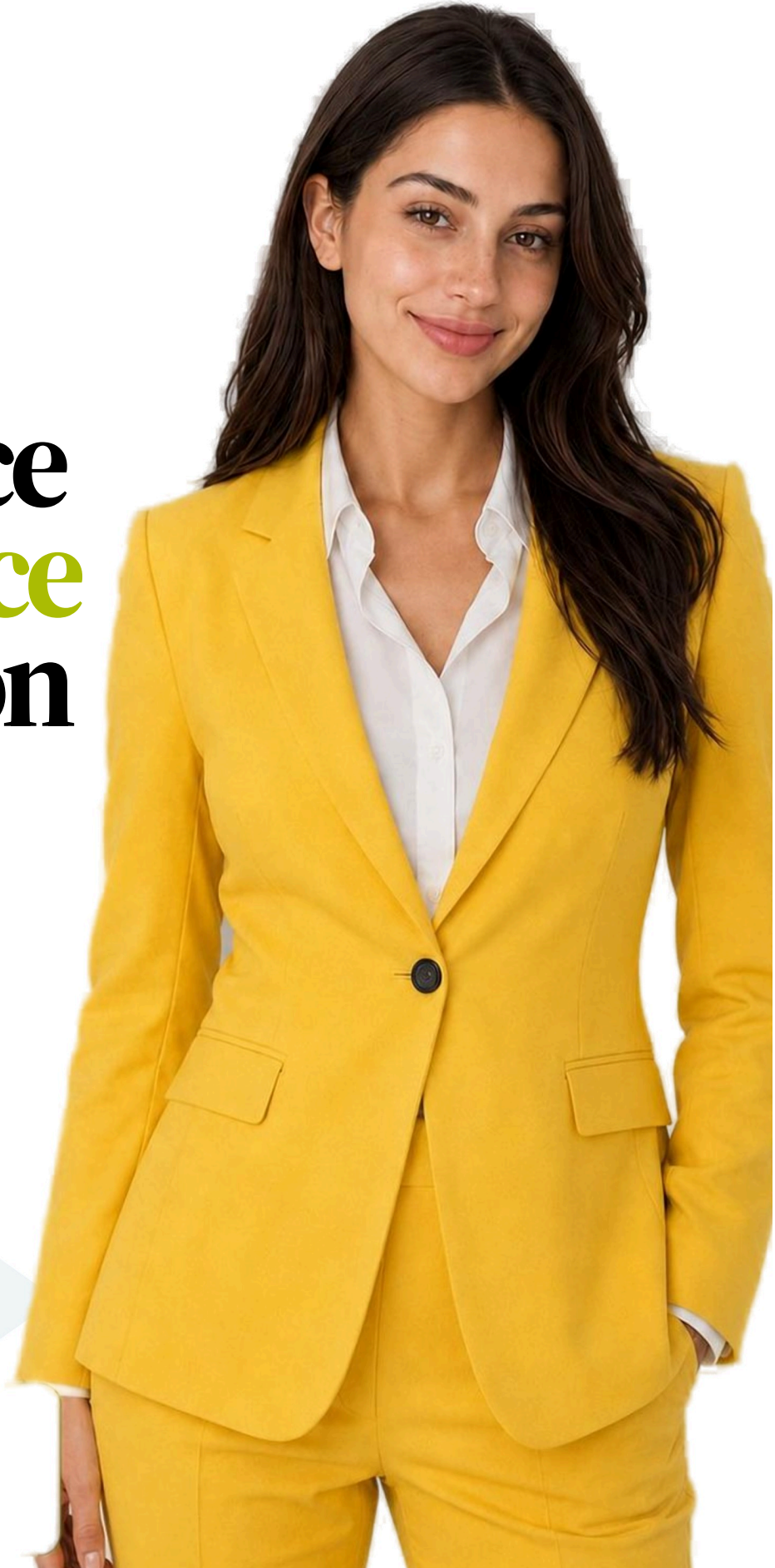


INSIGHT

The Workplace Experience Revolution



Introduction

Facilities Management is changing rapidly. For many years, FM was viewed primarily as an operational function focused on:

- buildings
- maintenance
- compliance
- and cost control

Today, that perception is evolving. Modern organisations increasingly recognise that the workplace directly influences:

- employee engagement
- productivity
- wellbeing
- collaboration
- culture
- retention
- and overall business performance

As a result, Facilities Management is no longer simply about maintaining environments — it is about shaping experiences. The strongest FM leaders now operate at the intersection of operations, workplace strategy, hospitality, employee experience, and organisational culture. This shift is creating what many describe as the workplace experience revolution. And Facilities Management sits at the centre of it.

The Office Has Changed Permanently

The workplace has changed significantly over recent years. Hybrid working, changing employee expectations and shifting attitudes toward flexibility have fundamentally altered how people view the office. Employees no longer come into the workplace simply because they have to. Increasingly, they expect the workplace to provide:

- value
- experience
- convenience
- connection
- and purpose

This has created a major shift in workplace strategy. The office is no longer competing against other offices. It is competing against home, flexibility, autonomy, and convenience. This means organisations must think differently about what the workplace offers people.

Great teams
start with
**one good
decision**



The Rise of Experience-Led FM

This is where Facilities Management becomes strategically important. Modern FM teams are increasingly responsible for shaping how workplaces feel, how employees experience environments, and how people interact with the office itself. Experience-led FM focuses on creating workplaces that support:

- productivity
- wellbeing
- collaboration
- comfort
- and engagement

This goes far beyond operational maintenance. It is about designing environments people actively want to spend time in.

Employees Now Expect More from Workplaces

Workplace expectations have changed significantly. Employees increasingly expect:

- high-quality environments
- modern amenities
- flexible working areas
- better technology
- hospitality-style service
- wellness support
- and smoother workplace experiences

In many organisations, workplace experience now directly influences recruitment, retention, employee satisfaction, and employer branding. The quality of the workplace increasingly shapes how employees perceive the organisation itself.

Hospitality Thinking Is Entering Facilities Management

One of the biggest shifts within FM is the growing influence of hospitality principles. Historically, many workplaces were designed primarily around efficiency and space utilisation. Modern workplaces increasingly focus on:

- comfort
- service
- atmosphere
- convenience
- and human experience

This hospitality mindset changes how FM teams operate. The strongest workplace environments now feel welcoming, intuitive, professional, and experience-driven. Employees increasingly compare workplace experiences to hotels, premium hospitality environments, airports, cafes, and customer-focused brands. Organisations are responding accordingly.

Better
leadership
decisions
under
pressure



Premium Workplaces Are Winning Attendance

One of the clearest trends in the market is the divide between commodity office space and premium workplace environments. Many average workplaces struggle to encourage attendance. Meanwhile, high-quality workplaces with strong employee experience strategies often see significantly higher engagement. This is not accidental. People are more willing to attend workplaces that:

- improve collaboration
- support focus
- provide comfort
- create energy
- and enhance the working experience overall

The workplace itself has become part of the employee value proposition.

Hybrid Working Has Changed Workplace Purpose

Hybrid working has permanently altered how offices are used. Employees increasingly come into workplaces for:

- collaboration
- meetings
- culture
- social interaction
- innovation
- and relationship building

Deep focus work is often completed remotely. This means workplace environments must now support different behaviours. The strongest FM strategies understand this shift. They design workplaces around interaction, flexibility, movement, and experience — not simply desk density.

Office Utilisation Matters More Than Ever

Modern organisations are paying much closer attention to workplace utilisation. Facilities leaders are increasingly analysing:

- attendance patterns
- occupancy trends
- collaboration usage
- meeting space demand
- and employee behaviour

This data helps organisations understand how workplaces are actually being used, where inefficiencies exist, and what employees value most. Experience-led FM increasingly combines operational expertise, workplace analytics, behavioural insight, and strategic planning.

Good hiring
creates
momentum

Poor hiring
creates
friction



Workplace Experience Influences Retention

The employee experience now extends far beyond salary and benefits. People increasingly evaluate:

- workplace quality
- leadership culture
- flexibility
- wellbeing
- environment
- and day-to-day experience

Poor workplace environments can quietly damage morale, engagement, retention, and productivity. Strong workplace environments can strengthen loyalty, collaboration, employer reputation, and employee satisfaction. Facilities Management therefore plays a direct role in retention strategy.

Amenities Have Become Strategic

Modern workplace amenities are no longer viewed as superficial extras. Increasingly, they are part of broader workplace experience strategy. Examples include:

- high-quality food and beverage options
- wellness spaces
- collaboration zones
- quiet focus areas
- breakout environments
- fitness facilities
- and hospitality-style services

These features help create workplaces employees genuinely value. The goal is no longer simply attendance. It is engagement.

—

Precision
over volume

—



FM Leaders Are Becoming Workplace Strategists

The Facilities Management role itself is evolving rapidly. Modern FM leaders are increasingly involved in:

- workplace transformation
- employee experience strategy
- ESG initiatives
- workplace analytics
- hybrid working strategy
- and organisational culture discussions

This represents a major shift from purely operational leadership. Strong FM leaders now help shape how organisations function, how employees experience work, and how workplace environments support performance.

Employee Engagement Is Influenced by Environment

Workplace environments influence behaviour significantly. Poorly designed environments often create:

- frustration
- fatigue
- disengagement
- and operational friction

Strong environments improve energy, communication, collaboration, and wellbeing. This is why workplace design and Facilities Management increasingly sit closer to HR, employee experience, culture, and organisational strategy. The workplace itself has become part of the employee experience ecosystem.

References
tell you what
a CV
cannot



Experience-Led FM Requires Emotional Intelligence

Modern FM leadership increasingly requires strong interpersonal capability. Facilities leaders now interact closely with:

- executives
- employees
- workplace strategists
- HR leaders
- and organisational leadership teams

Technical expertise remains important. But emotional intelligence, communication and stakeholder management are becoming equally critical. Experience-led FM is fundamentally human-centred.

Technology Is Reshaping Workplace Experience

Technology is also transforming Facilities Management. Modern workplaces increasingly integrate:

- workplace analytics
- occupancy tracking
- smart building systems
- room booking technology
- environmental controls
- and employee experience platforms

This allows organisations to better understand how people use space, what employees value, and where improvements are needed. Data-driven FM is becoming increasingly important.

The Workplace Is Becoming Part of Employer Brand

Increasingly, workplaces communicate organisational identity. Candidates and employees judge organisations partly through:

- workplace quality
- atmosphere
- design
- flexibility
- and employee experience

The workplace itself now acts as a visible trust signal. Strong workplaces communicate professionalism, investment, culture, and leadership standards. Poor environments often communicate the opposite.

—
Good operators
make the difficult
look routine
—



Experience-Led FM Creates Competitive Advantage

As competition for talent increases, workplace experience becomes increasingly valuable. Organisations that invest in employee wellbeing, workplace quality, flexibility, and experience-driven environments often strengthen:

- retention
- recruitment
- engagement
- and overall organisational culture

Facilities Management therefore becomes a strategic contributor to business performance rather than simply an operational support function.

The Best Workplaces Feel Intentional

Employees notice when workplace environments are thoughtfully designed. Strong workplace experiences rarely happen accidentally. They are created through:

- strategy
- listening
- operational discipline
- leadership
- and attention to detail

The best FM teams understand that small details shape overall perception. Everything contributes to experience: cleanliness, lighting, temperature, technology, hospitality, responsiveness, and communication.

The Future of FM Is Experience-Led

The future of Facilities Management is increasingly experience-driven. Operational excellence will always matter. But modern FM leadership now extends far beyond maintenance and infrastructure. The strongest FM functions increasingly shape:

- employee experience
- workplace culture
- organisational performance
- and long-term business strategy

This evolution is changing how organisations view Facilities Management entirely.

Operational
excellence
is often built
through
consistency
rather than
visibility



Conclusion

Facilities Management is entering a new era. The workplace is no longer simply somewhere people attend. It is now:

- a collaboration hub
- a cultural environment
- a brand experience
- and a strategic business asset

As employee expectations evolve, FM leaders are becoming central to workplace experience, engagement, wellbeing, and organisational performance. The strongest organisations increasingly understand a simple reality: people may work remotely by choice. But they return to workplaces because of experience. And Facilities Management now plays a defining role in creating that experience.

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. To discuss your next hire or career move, contact our specialist team today.

What the Data Says

What UK and workplace data says about office attendance, engagement and flexibility, and why experience-led FM now shapes whether people come in.

- UK office occupancy has stabilised above 40%, reaching a new high of 44.1% in late January 2026.
Source: [Remit Consulting, News Release: UK office occupancy stabilises above 40% as sector divide widens, 2026](#)
- Only 10% of UK employees are engaged at work.
Source: [Gallup, State of the Global Workplace: United Kingdom Country-Level Data, 2026](#)
- Individual focused desk-based work matters to 89% of employees, yet only 27% of corporate real estate leaders cite 'enabling productivity' as a reason for the workplace.
Source: [Leesman, The workplace why, 2025](#)
- Around 1.1 million UK workers say they left a job in the last year because of a lack of flexible working.
Source: [CIPD, Flexible and hybrid working practices in 2025](#)
- Maxwell Stephens has specialised in Facilities Management, estates and workplace recruitment since 2006.
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

Workplace Manager for Adobe UK & North EMEA

Adobe asked Maxwell Stephens to recruit a Workplace Manager, based at its flagship London office at the White Collar Factory, to lead workplace operations and deliver a consistent employee experience across the UK and North EMEA. We ran a targeted search for leaders of regional or international workplace operations. The appointee streamlined facilities and supplier processes and focused on workplace standards, communication and service to improve employee experience.

It shows employee experience treated as a core leadership responsibility across a multi-site, innovation-led workplace.

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

Related Reading

- **How Workplace Design Shapes Employee Experience and Business Success**
maxwellstephens.com/blog/the-importance-of-the-working-environment-amazing-offices-from-around-the-world
- **Neil Marshall: FM Now Is About Supporting People, Not Buildings**
maxwellstephens.com/blog/fm-now-is-about-supporting-people-rather-than-supporting-the-building
- **Is the Office Dead? Why the Workplace Still Matters in a Hybrid World**
maxwellstephens.com/blog/why-the-traditional-workplace-is-still-needed-in-the-post-lockdown-world

Talk to Maxwell Stephens

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



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