

INSIGHT

Workplace Experience & Employee Retention



Introduction

The role of Facilities Management has evolved significantly. Historically, FM was often viewed primarily as an operational support function focused on:

- maintenance
- compliance
- service delivery
- and building operations

Those responsibilities still matter greatly. But modern organisations increasingly recognise something deeper: the workplace directly influences how people feel. And how people feel at work influences engagement, performance, retention, wellbeing, collaboration, and organisational culture. As a result, Facilities Management is becoming increasingly central to employee experience. The strongest organisations now understand that workplaces are no longer simply environments people attend — they are environments people experience. This shift is transforming the role of FM from operational oversight into a key driver of organisational performance.

The Workplace Influences Human Behaviour

Workplaces shape the way people think, feel, and act. Strong environments create:

- connection
- motivation
- collaboration
- and psychological comfort

Poor environments, by contrast, often create disengagement, frustration, fatigue, and emotional detachment. Workplaces influence energy, mood, behaviour, communication, and focus on a daily basis. This is workplace psychology — and Facilities Management increasingly sits at the centre of it.

Employee Retention Is No Longer Driven by Salary Alone

For many years, organisations viewed retention primarily through salary, bonuses, and benefits. Those things still matter. But modern employees increasingly assess a broader range of factors:

- workplace quality
- leadership culture
- flexibility
- wellbeing
- and overall daily experience

People increasingly want to work in environments where they feel supported, respected, and connected — and where they enjoy being physically present. The workplace itself now influences retention directly. Organisations that invest in workplace quality report stronger retention outcomes as a result.

Great teams
start with
**one good
decision**



Experience-Led FM Is Becoming the New Standard

The strongest FM teams are increasingly experience-focused rather than purely operationally focused. This means asking deeper questions:

- How does the workplace feel?
- Does it support wellbeing?
- Does it encourage collaboration?
- Does it create energy?
- Does it reinforce organisational culture?

Facilities Management is increasingly responsible for shaping these outcomes. The modern FM function now influences both operational performance and emotional workplace experience simultaneously — representing a fundamental shift in how the profession is understood and practised.

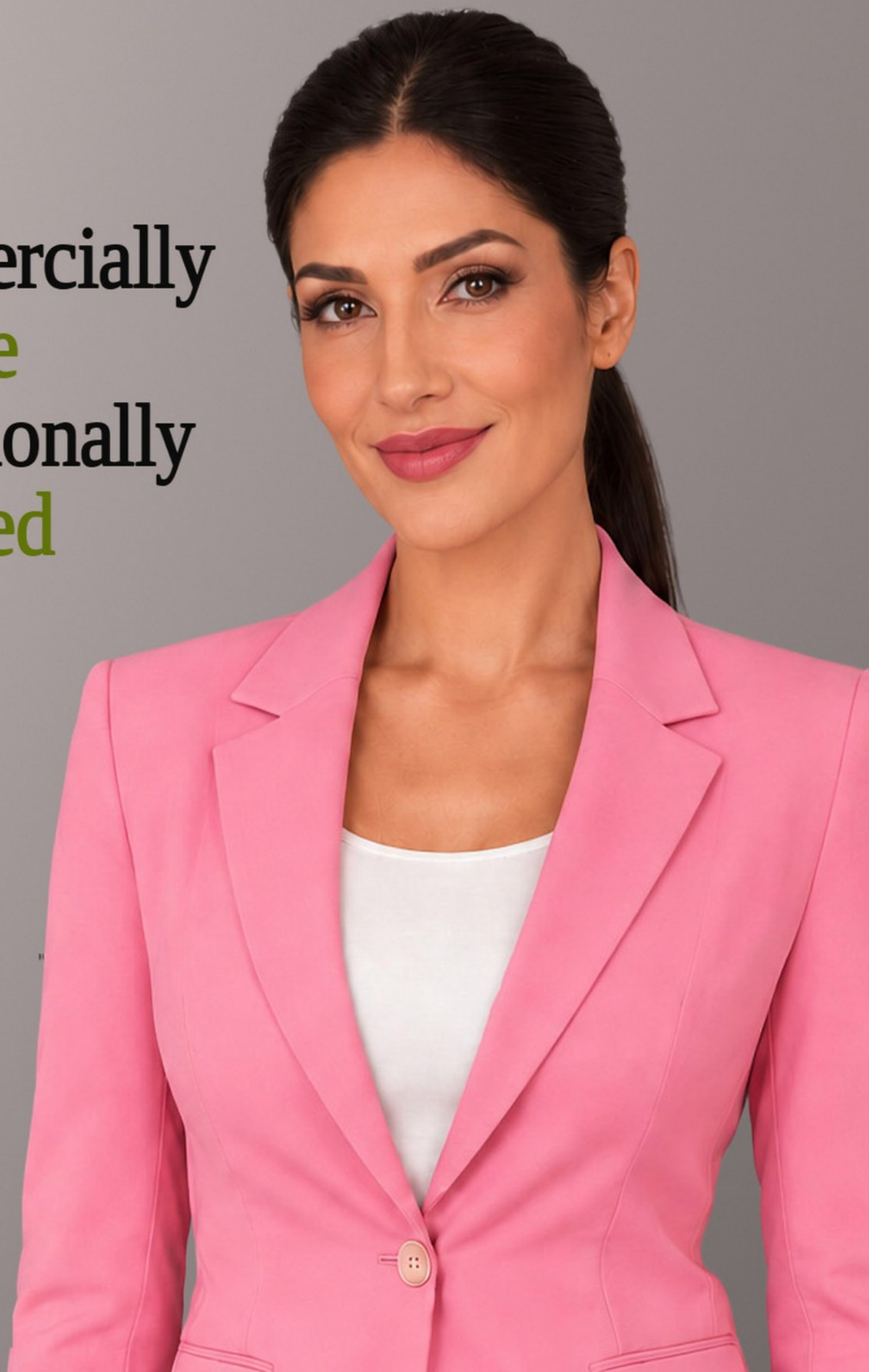
Hybrid Working Changed Workplace Expectations Permanently

Hybrid working accelerated a major shift in employee expectations. People no longer commute simply because they are required to. They increasingly expect the office to provide something valuable in return, including:

- collaboration
- connection
- culture
- energy
- social interaction
- and high-quality environments

If workplaces feel uninspiring, uncomfortable, transactional, or outdated, employees often disengage from office attendance entirely. This is why workplace experience has become strategically important — the office must now justify itself through the quality of the environment and experience it offers.

Commercially
credible
Operationally
informed



The Office Must Earn Attendance

Modern workplaces increasingly need to give people reasons to attend. Leading organisations now invest heavily in creating environments that reward presence:

- hospitality-style environments
- collaborative spaces
- wellbeing amenities
- food and beverage experiences
- wellness areas
- and flexible workplace design

This is not simply aesthetic investment. It is engagement strategy. Strong workplaces improve attendance, collaboration, and organisational connection. Organisations that treat the office as a product — something employees actively choose — consistently outperform those that mandate attendance without providing compelling reasons to be present.

Hospitality Mindset Is Reshaping FM

One of the biggest shifts in Facilities Management is the growing influence of hospitality thinking. Modern FM increasingly borrows from:

- premium hotels
- customer experience
- leisure environments
- and hospitality operations

This includes service mindset, attention to detail, comfort, responsiveness, and environmental quality. The strongest workplaces increasingly feel welcoming, human, and experience-driven. Facilities Management now plays a major role in creating this atmosphere — transforming workplaces from functional environments into places people genuinely enjoy spending time.

Belonging Has Become a Workplace Priority

One of the most important psychological needs inside organisations is belonging. People perform better when they feel:

- connected
- included
- safe
- and valued

The workplace influences this heavily. Workplace design can either encourage interaction and connection, or reinforce isolation and disengagement. Facilities Management increasingly shapes environments that support community, collaboration, and cultural identity — making belonging an active design outcome rather than an accidental one.

We take pride
in what we do
and are renowned
in the industry
**for our integrity
and honesty**



Workplace Design Influences Organisational Culture

Workplace environments communicate organisational values constantly. Employees absorb signals from every aspect of their surroundings:

- layout
- environmental quality
- maintenance standards
- amenities
- lighting
- acoustics
- cleanliness
- and overall atmosphere

Strong workplaces reinforce professionalism, care, energy, and organisational pride. Poor environments often communicate the opposite unintentionally. Facilities Management therefore plays a direct role in shaping how an organisation's culture is perceived and experienced — not through policy documents, but through the physical reality of daily working life.

Employee Engagement Is Strongly Influenced by Environment

Many organisations attempt to improve engagement purely through leadership initiatives, communication strategies, or HR programmes. But physical environments strongly influence engagement psychologically. People naturally respond to:

- comfort
- aesthetics
- functionality
- social connection
- and environmental quality

Facilities Management increasingly contributes directly to how engaged employees feel on a daily basis. Organisations that recognise the link between physical environment and psychological engagement are better positioned to create workforces that are genuinely motivated, present, and committed.

Culture
is often
shaped
quietly
through
operational
leadership



Amenities Are Becoming Strategic Tools

Modern workplace amenities are no longer viewed simply as perks. They are increasingly part of broader retention, wellbeing, and engagement strategies. This includes:

- cafés
- wellness spaces
- social areas
- quiet focus rooms
- gyms
- event spaces
- and hospitality-driven food offerings

Strong amenities improve employee satisfaction, attendance quality, and workplace experience. As organisations compete for talent, the quality and range of workplace amenities has become a meaningful differentiator — one that Facilities Management professionals are increasingly responsible for delivering and developing.

Strong Workplaces Reduce Friction

The best FM teams often reduce daily operational frustration without employees necessarily noticing. This includes:

- comfortable environments
- reliable technology
- intuitive layouts
- responsive service
- and smooth workplace functionality

Small frustrations compound emotionally over time. Strong FM operations reduce these friction points significantly. This improves morale, productivity, and emotional workplace experience — creating environments where people can focus on their work rather than expending energy navigating operational obstacles.

Psychological Safety Extends Into Physical Space

People need environments where they feel safe, comfortable, respected, and supported. Workplace quality influences psychological safety more than many organisations realise. Poor environments can increase:

- stress
- tension
- fatigue
- and emotional disconnection

Strong workplace environments create calmness, clarity, and comfort. Facilities Management therefore contributes directly to workplace wellbeing — not merely through physical safety and compliance, but through the creation of environments where people feel psychologically secure and emotionally settled.

The office
did not
disappear
Expectations
around it
changed



FM Increasingly Influences Employer Brand

Candidates increasingly assess workplace environments before joining organisations. Strong workplace environments now influence attraction, perception, and organisational reputation. Many candidates evaluate:

- office atmosphere
- design quality
- workplace energy
- and environmental standards during interview processes

The workplace has become part of employer branding. Organisations with compelling, well-maintained, experience-led workplaces attract stronger candidates and convert them more effectively. Facilities Management now contributes directly to the impressions formed during the recruitment process — making the physical workplace a talent acquisition tool.

Culture Is Reinforced Through Everyday Experience

Organisational culture is not built through slogans alone. It is reinforced through daily experience. People remember:

- how environments feel
- how they are treated
- and how workplaces support them emotionally and practically

Facilities Management influences these daily experiences constantly. The FM function now plays a larger role in culture than many organisations previously recognised — because culture is not merely what leaders say it is, but what employees experience it to be. The built environment shapes that experience profoundly.

Experience-Led FM Requires Different Leadership

Modern Facilities Management leadership increasingly requires a broader skill set beyond traditional technical expertise. It now demands:

- emotional intelligence
- hospitality thinking
- communication skill
- and behavioural awareness

Technical operations still matter enormously. But modern FM leadership increasingly blends operational excellence with human-centred thinking. The strongest FM leaders understand both systems and psychology — and are able to translate that understanding into workplaces that genuinely serve the people who use them.

In
uncertain
markets,
clarity
becomes
leadership



Employee Retention Is Becoming an Experience Challenge

Retention problems are increasingly connected to culture, leadership, wellbeing, flexibility, and workplace experience. People rarely stay long-term in environments that feel:

- emotionally draining
- disconnected
- or operationally frustrating

Strong workplace environments improve loyalty, engagement, and emotional connection to organisations. Facilities Management is therefore increasingly relevant to retention strategy — not as a secondary consideration, but as a primary driver of whether people choose to remain in organisations over the long term.

The Workplace Is Becoming a Strategic Asset

The strongest organisations increasingly view the workplace as a cultural asset, an engagement tool, and a performance driver. Facilities Management now contributes directly to:

- organisational effectiveness
- workforce stability
- and employee retention

This represents a major evolution in the profession. FM is no longer simply a cost centre or support function. It is a strategic contributor to organisational performance — and the leaders who recognise this are positioning their organisations for stronger engagement, retention, and competitive advantage.

—

Every senior
hire is a
risk
decision

—



The Future of FM Will Be Increasingly Human-Centred

The future workplace will likely become more experience-led, more hospitality-driven, more flexible, and more psychologically aware. Facilities Management will increasingly shape:

- how organisations function
- how workplaces feel
- and how people experience work itself

This moves FM far beyond operational delivery alone. The profession is evolving into something genuinely strategic — a discipline that sits at the intersection of operations, culture, psychology, and human experience. Those who lead this evolution will shape the organisations of the future.

Conclusion

Facilities Management is no longer simply about buildings. It is increasingly about people. Modern workplaces directly influence:

- engagement
- retention
- wellbeing
- collaboration
- and organisational culture

As a result, FM now plays a central role in organisational performance. The strongest Facilities Management teams increasingly combine operational excellence with workplace psychology, hospitality thinking, and experience-led leadership. Because ultimately, people do not simply work inside workplaces — they experience them. And the quality of that experience increasingly shapes the quality of organisational performance itself.

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. We work with organisations ranging from FTSE-listed companies to growing businesses — helping them find the FM talent that drives workplace excellence. For more information, visit **www.maxwellstephens.com** or call **0207 118 4848**.

What the Data Says

The evidence linking workplace experience and retention: flexible working, the office environment, retention difficulty and hybrid working patterns.

- 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](#)
- 73% of employees in Leesman's global workplace data say their office environment supports them in sharing ideas and knowledge with colleagues.
Source: [Leesman, The workplace why, 2025](#)
- 56% of UK organisations say talent is more difficult to retain.
Source: [CIPD, Resourcing and talent planning report 2024](#)
- More than a quarter (28%) of working adults in Great Britain hybrid worked between January and March 2025.
Source: [Office for National Statistics, Who has access to hybrid work in Great Britain?, 2025](#)
- 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

Workplace, Wellbeing & Facilities Appointments for SBHG

SBHG, a housing association serving West London, appointed Maxwell Stephens to recruit a Workspace, EDI & Wellbeing Business Partner and a Facilities Coordinator. We developed a targeted strategy for each role, assessing workplace experience, communication, cultural alignment and a proactive approach to change. The Business Partner brought dedicated leadership on employee experience, inclusion and wellbeing, supporting a more structured approach to workplace experience.

It shows an organisation investing in workplace experience and wellbeing as part of how it engages its people.

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

Related Reading

- Employee Retention Strategies for 2026: How to Keep Your Best People
maxwellstephens.com/blog/employee-retention-strategies-in-2026
- Small Things Make a Big Difference: Improving the Working Environment
maxwellstephens.com/blog/small-things-make-a-big-difference-easy-ways-to-improve-the-working-environment
- The Workplace Priorities Employees Value Most
maxwellstephens.com/blog/3-key-employee-needs-which-must-be-met

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



CONTACT

t: 0207 118 4848

w: www.maxwellstephens.com
e: info@maxwellstephens.com



LONDON

Golden Cross House
8 Duncannon Street
Strand
London
WC2N 4JF