

INSIGHT

The Executive Guide to FM Recruitment



Introduction

Hiring senior Facilities Management leadership has become significantly more complex. The modern FM market is no longer simply operational.

Today's senior FM leaders increasingly influence:

- Workplace strategy
- Operational resilience
- ESG
- Employee experience
- Organisational transformation
- And executive decision-making

As a result, hiring mistakes at senior FM level now carry substantial operational and commercial risk. Many organisations still underestimate how strategically important senior FM hiring has become. The wrong leadership appointment can create:

- Operational instability
- Stakeholder frustration
- Retention problems
- Reputational damage
- And long-term organisational disruption

The right appointment, however, can strengthen:

- Operational performance
- Organisational culture
- Workplace experience
- Resilience
- And executive confidence significantly

This is why executive FM recruitment increasingly requires a more strategic and disciplined approach.

Facilities Management Leadership Has Evolved

Historically, Facilities Management was often viewed primarily as operational oversight. Modern FM leadership now extends far beyond maintenance, compliance, and service delivery.

Today's senior FM leaders increasingly operate at the intersection of:

- Operations
- Business strategy
- Workplace experience
- ESG
- Technology
- And organisational transformation

As expectations increase, the leadership capability required has broadened significantly. Organisations are now searching for FM leaders who can combine:

- Operational expertise
- Strategic thinking
- Commercial awareness
- Executive communication
- And leadership maturity

That combination remains relatively rare.

—
Strong facilities
management is
invisible
when done well,
critical
when missing
—



Executive FM Hiring Carries Significant Risk

Senior FM hiring decisions often influence far more than operational performance alone.

The impact frequently extends across:

- Employee experience
- Workplace culture
- Organisational resilience
- Supplier relationships
- Executive trust
- And stakeholder confidence

Poor leadership appointments at senior FM level can create:

- Instability
- Communication breakdowns
- Operational inconsistency
- And cultural disruption

The cost of correcting failed executive hires is often substantial — financially, operationally, and reputationally.

The Strongest FM Leaders Are Rarely Active Job Seekers

One of the biggest realities in executive FM recruitment is that many of the strongest leaders are not actively searching for new opportunities.

High-performing FM professionals are often:

- Already successful
- Well-regarded internally
- And highly selective about career moves

This creates a heavily passive talent market. Traditional recruitment advertising alone is rarely enough to secure exceptional leadership talent. Executive FM recruitment increasingly depends on:

- Relationships
- Market access
- Credibility
- Discretion
- And long-term trust

The organisations that hire the strongest FM leaders are those that build genuine market relationships — not just job postings.

Strategic Hiring Starts With Strategic Clarity

One of the most common reasons executive FM hiring fails is unclear role definition. Many organisations focus heavily on responsibilities, reporting structures, and technical requirements.

But senior leadership hiring requires deeper strategic clarity. Before entering the market, organisations should understand:

- What leadership capability is genuinely needed
- What operational problems require solving
- What cultural dynamics exist internally
- And how the role contributes strategically to the organisation

Strong hiring starts with strong definition.

Senior FM hiring is a judgement call



Leadership Assessment Must Go Beyond CVs

At executive level, CVs rarely tell the full story. Technical experience matters. Sector exposure matters. But leadership quality often determines long-term success far more than credentials alone.

Strong FM leadership assessment should explore:

- Decision-making capability
- Communication style
- Emotional intelligence
- Stakeholder management
- Leadership calmness
- Operational judgement
- And behavioural consistency under pressure

The strongest executive recruitment processes assess:

- How leaders operate
- Not simply what they have done previously

Behavioural assessment, structured interviews, and reference intelligence all play important roles in building a complete picture of leadership capability.

Executive Communication Is Increasingly Important

Modern FM Directors increasingly interact directly with boards, executive teams, investors, and senior stakeholders. As a result, communication capability has become critically important.

Strong senior FM leaders must be able to:

- Simplify operational complexity
- Influence stakeholders
- Communicate risk clearly
- And operate confidently at executive level

This capability is often difficult to assess through traditional interview processes alone. Executive search processes that include structured presentations, stakeholder scenarios, and leadership challenges provide far better insight.

Market Mapping Creates Better Hiring Decisions

One of the most valuable components of executive search is market intelligence. Strong market mapping provides organisations with visibility they cannot achieve through standard recruitment activity.

Strong market mapping provides organisations with:

- Visibility of available leadership talent
- Competitor structures
- Compensation benchmarking
- Leadership trends
- And succession insights

This improves strategic hiring decisions significantly. Because effective executive recruitment is not simply about finding candidates — it is about understanding the market properly.

Experience
earns trust
Judgement
keeps it



Confidential Search Protects Organisational Stability

Many senior FM hiring projects require discretion. Sensitive leadership transitions demand a carefully managed approach to protect internal stability.

This may involve:

- Succession planning
- Leadership restructuring
- Organisational transformation
- Or confidential replacement situations

Professional executive search processes allow organisations to:

- Protect internal stability
- Maintain confidentiality
- And manage sensitive leadership transitions carefully

Discretion is often critical at senior leadership level. The right search partner understands the sensitivity involved and manages the process accordingly.

Stakeholder Alignment Is Essential

One of the most common executive hiring problems is internal misalignment. Different stakeholders often hold different — and sometimes conflicting — expectations.

Different stakeholders often hold different expectations around:

- Leadership style
- Operational priorities
- Strategic direction
- And cultural fit

Without alignment, hiring decisions become inconsistent and confused. Strong executive recruitment processes ensure:

- Clarity
- Alignment
- And shared decision-making frameworks internally

This significantly improves hiring outcomes and reduces the risk of internal disagreement derailing a strong appointment.

Specialist
FM
recruitment
with
executive-
level
standards



Over-Complex Processes Often Damage Executive Hiring

Many organisations unintentionally weaken executive hiring outcomes through excessive process complexity. Senior FM leaders interpret disorganised processes as indicators of internal instability.

Common issues include:

- Too many interviews
- Delayed feedback
- Unclear decision-making
- And shifting expectations

Senior FM leaders often interpret slow or disorganised hiring processes as indicators of internal instability. Strong candidates frequently disengage from poorly managed executive recruitment processes. The strongest organisations balance:

- Thorough assessment
- With decisiveness and clarity

A well-structured executive process signals organisational competence. It reassures strong candidates that the organisation operates effectively — before they've even accepted an offer.

Succession Planning Is Becoming Increasingly Important

Many organisations remain overly reactive in executive FM hiring. Leadership succession is often only addressed after disruption has already occurred.

Leadership succession is often only addressed after:

- Resignations
- Operational disruption
- Or retention problems emerge

Forward-thinking organisations increasingly treat succession planning strategically. This includes:

- Identifying future leadership gaps
- Developing internal talent pipelines
- And maintaining visibility of external market capability

Succession planning reduces long-term operational risk. Organisations that build proactive succession strategies are better positioned to manage leadership transitions without operational disruption.

Specialist
recruitment
is not about
volume

It is about
understanding



Cultural Alignment Matters at Executive Level

Senior FM leaders influence organisational culture heavily. This means cultural alignment becomes critically important during executive hiring.

Strong executive appointments usually align with:

- Leadership values
- Organisational behaviour
- Communication culture
- And operational philosophy

Technical capability alone rarely guarantees leadership success. Behavioural fit matters significantly — and organisations that assess cultural alignment rigorously make stronger long-term appointments.

Leadership Stability Influences Retention

Strong senior FM leadership has a powerful knock-on effect throughout the organisation. The quality of executive leadership shapes team confidence, engagement, and performance.

Strong senior FM leadership often improves:

- Retention
- Engagement
- Operational confidence
- And team stability

Weak leadership appointments often create:

- Turnover
- Uncertainty
- Communication breakdowns
- And operational inconsistency

Executive FM hiring therefore directly influences wider organisational performance. The downstream impact of a poor senior appointment often extends far beyond the individual role.

The Best Executive Hires Strengthen Organisational Trust

At senior level, leadership quality often shapes organisational trust. The right FM leader creates reassurance, confidence, and clarity — particularly during periods of change.

Strong FM leaders create:

- Calmness
- Clarity
- Confidence
- And operational reassurance

This becomes particularly valuable during:

- Periods of change
- Operational pressure
- Workplace transformation
- Or organisational uncertainty

Trust-led leadership is increasingly becoming a defining characteristic of exceptional FM executives. Organisations that prioritise this quality in their hiring decisions benefit measurably.

Culture
is often
shaped
quietly
through
operational
leadership



Employer Reputation Influences Executive Attraction

Senior FM professionals increasingly evaluate organisations carefully before engaging with opportunities. Employer brand now influences executive hiring outcomes directly.

Senior FM professionals increasingly evaluate:

- Organisational reputation
- Leadership credibility
- Workplace culture
- And strategic direction before engaging

Executive candidates often conduct significant due diligence on employers.

Organisations with strong reputations, credible leadership, and clear strategic direction attract stronger candidates — and retain them more effectively.

Executive Recruitment Is Becoming More Relationship-Driven

Transactional recruitment approaches are becoming less effective at senior FM level. The strongest executive search outcomes increasingly come through relationships, not advertising.

The strongest executive search outcomes increasingly come through:

- Relationships
- Trust
- Sector understanding
- Market credibility
- And long-term network development

Executive FM recruitment is becoming increasingly consultative. Organisations that partner with specialist search consultancies who understand the sector deeply consistently achieve better hiring outcomes.

The Future FM Leader Will Be Increasingly Multifaceted

The profile of the ideal FM executive continues to evolve. Expectations are rising, and the capability required is broadening significantly.

The future FM executive will increasingly require:

- Operational depth
- Strategic thinking
- Emotional intelligence
- ESG awareness
- Technological understanding
- And board-level communication capability

This evolution will continue reshaping executive FM recruitment over the coming years. Organisations that recognise and prepare for this shift will be better positioned to attract and retain the leaders they need.

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



Conclusion

Executive Facilities Management recruitment has evolved significantly. Modern organisations now require FM leaders who can operate confidently across operations, strategy, transformation, workplace experience, and ESG.

Securing the right senior FM leaders requires:

- Strategic role definition
- Disciplined assessment processes
- Market intelligence
- Stakeholder alignment
- Cultural clarity
- And a commitment to relationship-led search

Pressure, fear, urgency and uncertainty all influence decision-making quality. The strongest organisations reduce unnecessary complexity, emotional noise, and fragmented decision-making. They create hiring environments where calmness, clarity, and intelligent judgement can thrive. Because ultimately, exceptional recruitment is not simply about filling vacancies — it is about making thoughtful decisions about people who will shape the future of organisations.

About Maxwell Stephens

Maxwell Stephens is a specialist Facilities Management recruitment consultancy supporting organisations across the UK. We combine deep sector understanding with long-term relationship-led recruitment.

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 behind senior FM hiring: passive candidates, the role of search consultants, counteroffer outcomes and measuring quality of hire.

- 66% of UK workers are passively open to moving (not applying but willing for the right offer); only 18% are active jobseekers.
Source: [Totaljobs Hiring Trends Update, 2026](#)
- 30% of UK organisations that recruited rated recruitment/search consultants among their most effective attraction methods.
Source: [CIPD, Resourcing and talent planning report 2024](#)
- Of UK employees who accepted a counteroffer, 34% had left within six months and 74% within a year.
Source: [Robert Half, Half of counteroffers successful as hiring crisis continues, 2022](#)
- Globally, 89% of talent acquisition professionals agree measuring quality of hire will become increasingly important.
Source: [LinkedIn, The Future of Recruiting 2025](#)
- For 12 permanent director-level FM and estates roles Maxwell Stephens advertised from 2023 to 2026, the median top-of-range salary was £93,000.
Source: [Maxwell Stephens analysis of 497 advertised vacancies, May 2023 – September 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

UCL Director of Campus Infrastructure and Operations Recruitment

UCL appointed Maxwell Stephens to recruit a Director of Campus Infrastructure and Operations for an estate of more than 200 buildings valued at over £2 billion. We ran an extensive search for leaders of large, complex portfolios, placing particular emphasis on combining strategic vision with operational credibility. The appointee brought large-scale estate leadership, a record of driving safety culture change and a collaborative style that strengthened links with academic departments.

It illustrates a structured executive search testing strategic vision, operational credibility and stakeholder influence for a senior appointment.

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

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
- **What Makes a Great Facilities Director?**
maxwellstephens.com/blog/what-makes-a-great-facilities-director
- **Free eBook: Questions to Ask a Recruitment Partner Before You Engage**
maxwellstephens.com/blog/free-ebook-questions-to-ask-a-recruiter-before-you-hire-them

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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