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## Comments on A Performance Profile Approach to Measuring Overall Building Performance by Franklin Becker

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The corporate facilities manager is charged with the care, maintenance, management and maximization of corporate properties. Primary responsibilities usually revolve about finding better ways to increase the performance of buildings and the serviceability of facilities. Primary interests for doing so almost always center on the office environment.

There is a new class of worker emerging in the office environment today. Highly educated, technologically skilled and carrying a somewhat different set of values than the average clerical worker; professional knowledge workers place new demands on both management and the facility manager. They want more input in developing the work processes and designing the work environment.

The knowledge worker functions best in an informal environment where communications are quick and direct. The work process calls for greater interaction between individuals, groups of individuals and even whole departments.

It is incumbent on the facility manager to find ways to support this new breed of knowledge workers and the work processes that serve them best. Meanwhile, corporate management is beginning to insist more and more that the facilities plan also supports the corporation's overall business plan.

Instead of expecting professionals to work within the existing environment, the facility manager should elicit their input in creating an environment conducive to maximizing their performance. Standards should take into account the imperatives of the 'team' work process, where the ability to communicate quickly and informally is paramount. To do so, facility managers must do more than merely tolerate the new work process, they also have to understand and support it.

Discussion of cost containment is usually limited to reducing upfront costs of furniture and equipment by standardizing workstations at the lower common denominator. That kind of economy all too often proves false. The ability to manage change -- new technology bringing about increased employee churn -- is a more effective way of holding down costs. Also better procurement processes and asset management should plan a greater role in long-term cost containment programs.

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