

## OVERVIEW

### Beyond Aesthetics:

### Can Buildings be Judged on how well they work?

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A group of experts gathered in Toronto to explore ways to measure overall facility performance. For the first time in a public forum, ASTM discussed standardizing "what is an effective building", and how to measure effectiveness.

Buildings have long been judged on aesthetics. That is not enough today. Because the typical Fortune 500 company has a quarter of its assets tied up in buildings and land, there is a need to develop standard ways to measure how serviceable a facility is and how it is performing.

The topic was timely. This special symposium on "Overall Facility Performance -- Use, Operation and Cost, " brought together architects, corporate executives, academics from a variety of disciplines, environmental researchers and planners, as well as representatives of public agencies -- each with different views on facility performance.

The symposium delved into how to measure performance and serviceability, what aspects ought to be quantified, which measurements are important to corporations, institutions and governments, which aspects are important to users of facilities, and which are most important to investors, financial executives, and building economists.

The symposium was organized by ASTM Subcommittee E06.25 to serve several purposes. In particular, the organizing committee the following goals in mind:

#### 1. Standards development

- Add to the knowledge base available for standards development work.
- Provide information and recommendations that would help ASTM Subcommittee E06.25 set directions and priorities for standards development work.
- Bring together individuals from organizations with relevant interests.

#### 2. Research

- Survey the field of facility performance and serviceability.
- Identify gaps in the knowledge base.
- Present and discuss papers on original research and application related to facility performance and serviceability.

#### 3. Practice

- Provide reference information of general application in measuring facility performance and serviceability.
- Contribute to building a network of people who have knowledge and interest in the field, but who are not yet in contact with each other.
- Inform people who are now working in relevant subject areas but have not explicitly considered overall performance or serviceability.

## 2 OVERALL FACILITY PERFORMANCE

ASTM Subcommittee E06.25 on Whole Buildings and Facilities is a relatively new subcommittee. It was formally created in 1983. Its creation was stimulated by questions such as: How well do facilities perform? Do facilities match organizational objectives? How well do facilities meet the needs of the occupants and visitors? What should occupants, visitors and facility managers expect? How can the serviceability of different facilities be measured and compared? How do we know, and show, that we are getting good value from facilities? What are the benchmarks? When is further investment justified? What are others doing with their facilities? What is typical?

Work is currently under way within ASTM Subcommittee E06.25 on several subject areas:

- Methods and techniques, such as how to compare the serviceability of various facilities; rating scales for comparing office facilities; methods for unit area measurement; and behavioural measures of serviceability and of occupant satisfaction.
- Aspects of performance that apply to many functional facility types, such as energy performance of whole buildings.
- Performance of specific functional facility types, such as office facilities with information technology; health care facilities, etc.

As a result of this standardization effort, owners, managers and users will for the first time be able to compare objectively the overall performance of buildings of different ages, construction types or locations for any specific use, such as to house one or another type of office, or for a particular health care service, library, laboratory, etc.

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