

Alton J. Penz¹

Comments on Facility Performance and Serviceability from a Facility Manager's Viewpoint by Arthur P. Hahn

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A recent study by BOMA International of office tenants - both those with lease and owner-occupants - substantiated that office organizations are growing, shrinking, and churning - moving personnel to different positions and locations in the organization - at high rates. This study suggests that each year 60% of office organizations will need more space than they occupy, 30% will have adequate space, and 10% will have excess space. Matching space supply with needs is obviously a 'bumpy' process for an organization. Tenants often adjust by moving; owner-occupants, in contrast, more often try to make do with the available space.

A typical organization pays, directly or indirectly, about \$14.00 per square foot per year for office space, according to the *Experience Exchange Report*. In order to justify placing a worker in that space, the organization must achieve about \$130.00 per square foot per year in productivity, or value-added, from that worker.

Several studies in the last few years have revealed that a frequent reason for replacing mechanical or electrical equipment in a building is not physical failure but technological or functional obsolescence. Performance needs change before the equipment wears out.

Finally, the nature of the people entering the U.S. labor force in the next twenty years is shifting dramatically towards minorities and workers with few skills or formal education (the two traits are not necessarily synonymous).

What do these four observations suggest? First, that high quality performance of buildings that supports high levels of worker satisfaction and productivity is essential. Buildings should offer environments that are comfortable with respect to such issues as temperature, air quality, acoustics, and lighting.

Second, commercial building spaces must be flexible to accommodate organization change. Moving organizations and changing the amount of floor space used, is expensive and cumbersome. Existing spaces should be both expandable and contractible, and the means for distinguishing types of flexibility are needed.

Third, building materials and equipment quality should be measurable in terms of low maintenance and operating labor requirements, predictable expected lifetimes, with consistent performance throughout the life of the product. Long lifetimes are not as important as consistent performance and predictable lifetimes.

¹ Dr. Alton Penz is Vice President, Research for the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) International, 1250 Eye St. N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20005, U.S.A.