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Comments on Establishing Appropriate Measurements for the Performance of Buildings and the Serviceability of Facilities by Francis T. Ventre

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In discussing the measurement of performance and serviceability, a means of distinguishing between the objective and subjective must be developed. The difficult problem is that even objective criteria are generally products of subjective thought and prejudices.

Historically, residents of buildings have had difficulty in measuring the performance and serviceability of those buildings on a scale that would allow comparisons with either a standard or with other buildings. We must establish methods of ratability so that we may know the effectiveness of resources expended, not just from an operating cost standpoint but also from the view of how happy and productive we can keep the building occupants.

Performance of a facility must be defined in the context of a scale of importance. It needs to be established just how to relate one entity to another. In real terms, only the occupants or users of the building can define the scale of importance. Performance of a facility influences the overall productivity of people within. The performance level of a facility should be high to stabilize the occupants and to serve as an indicator of the return on initial capital investment. Only by using a numerical scale of universally accepted parameters can the study be made objective.

Serviceability is an extremely important parameter for a facility. Without an acceptable level of serviceability, the performance level of any facility cannot be maintained. Unless the building management takes an active interest in maintaining performance through proper service, the overall performance will slip. Measuring serviceability needs to be done to determine overall facility efficiency and investment return. It too needs to be measured on a numerical relative scale by facility occupants.

In order to test my premises, I conducted a brief survey in two buildings on performance and serviceability. Parameters were selected based on my personal experience as to what building occupants think is important to them. A scale of 1 to 5, with 5 the highest, was used. The results, although rudimentary, provide a basis for evaluating those two buildings in relation to other similar buildings. This simple exercise, which may not be statistically relevant, brings the discussion out of the classroom and into the real world.

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