

John M. Dunphy¹

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

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Public Works Canada manages 6,000,000 m² (66,000,000 sq.ft.) of office space throughout Canada in order to provide space for government employees. This portfolio of buildings of different sizes, conditions and age must be adapted to the requirements of many different agencies in order to provide facilities which can assist in maintaining or improving productivity in delivery of programs to the public.

Some issues affecting performance and serviceability of the facilities are flexibility, air quality, and economic viability.

Flexibility is related to the identification of those building attributes in new as well as older buildings which lend themselves to satisfying various functional requirements as efficiently as possible. Flexibility is an important criterion in new asset acquisition decisions, as well as decisions involving retention and disposal of older buildings in a total inventory.

There have been instances where air quality in sealed buildings has been alleged to create health problems. This has created a particular problem in identifying the pollutants that may be present, as well as the determination of those levels of pollutants which may be acceptable.

Important considerations related to older buildings are their continued serviceability and the possibility of effecting renovations, which will maintain or improve serviceability, in a cost effective way. While such renovations may be possible in a physical sense, they may not maintain or increase the return on investment, and could even reduce it.

The development of standards which could be used to better assess building performance from the owner's point of view, as well as the user's, becomes increasingly more significant. This would naturally lead to the setting up of performance measures for facilities, including methods of rating buildings quickly for different uses. This would include the efficiency of the facility as well as the impact on the working environment and employee productivity.

¹ John M. Dunphy, Public Works Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.