

Paul Tranquada¹

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

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Dr. Becker's suggestions for measuring overall facility performance are good ones which could be adopted in evaluating the effectiveness of facility management in government. I agree with the suggestions for selecting performance indicators such as user complaints.

As a first step we must overcome problems with the flawed decision making process which causes design decision making to be subdivided into disciplines. Subdivision of disciplines is necessary because of the specialized knowledge required to design air handling, structural and electrical systems, etc. While factually no one can dispute that those professions are highly specialized, collective accountability must prevail if we are to achieve what Dr. Becker describes as the systems approach. That is, facility performance measurement is not efficiency in only one area but organizational effectiveness or multiple outcomes from building performance.

Perhaps the best example of my point is the situation which resulted in some buildings during the energy crisis of the late 70's. The first generation of energy efficient buildings received mixed reaction from occupants because the measure of building performance was not occupant satisfaction but energy cost per square foot. Using single measure logic it made some sense to design structures with less windows, raise the temperature in the summer and lower the temperature in the winter and recirculate more air. There are better alternatives to meeting both energy and comfort requirements and we have learned the power of public opinion. Occupant complaints have the potential to stall organizational output.

I particularly like Dr. Becker's proposed performance profile model or facility management balance sheet as he calls it. It communicates easily understood information and omits meaningless data.

1 Paul Tranquada, Facility Manager, Province of Ontario, Ministry of Revenue, 33 King Street West, Oshawa, Ontario, L1H 8H5, (416)433-5126