Facility managers' reading list

In celebration of World FM Day, Eptura put together a list of some of their favorite books on facilities management, from introductions and references to deep dives on BIM for FM, root cause analysis, asset management, criticality, sustainability, leadership, the Internet of Things (IoT) and smart buildings, artificial intelligence (AI), and even a few on important trends in architecture and design.

Facility management introductions, overviews, and references

Let's jump into the list with some books perfect for diving into facility maintenance. The ones here provide good coverage on the various topics a facility manager needs to know, and you'll likely want to keep them handy so you can dip back in later when you need a quick refresher or look up a fact or figure.

Total Facility Management Fourth Edition by Brian Atkin and Adrian Brooks

The updated version still includes detailed explanations of what facility management means to different stakeholders, including owners, tenants, operators, and most importantly facility managers, but it also adds a lot more information on many of the newer industry standards. There are also expanded sections on sustainability and environmental management, two topics quickly growing in importance.

One of the strengths is how the authors consistently show the connections between facility management and an organization's overall objectives, highlighting the key role the built environment plays in long-term success.

Facilities Manager's Desk Reference by James M. Wiggins

The book's big pitch is its width, with information and insights "covering all the principal facility management (FM) services." Designed for the busy facility manager (Is there any other kind?), the book can be your go-to reference on everything from legal compliance to creative ways to cut costs. With a focus on concise practical advice, there's lots to appeal to both accomplished professionals and those newer to the field, including students.

Data for effectiveness, efficiency, and experience

For all the advantages that come with an overview, sometimes what you need is a deep dive. The following books take one or two topics and show you how the right data can help you target and achieve a specific goal.

BIM for Facility Managers by the International Facility Management Association (IFMA)

Business information modeling is at the center of design and construction, connecting everyone from the architects to the team that sources the rebar. But all those early investments in data can go to waste during operations and maintenance, the two most expensive phases in the facility life

cycle. IFMA sets out the guidelines for linking BIM data with facility management platforms and includes six case studies to illustrate how your data can deliver more.

Building T.E.A.M.S.: A Guide to Capital Needs Analysis by Cameron Christianson

According to the online description, the book promises to be "a guide for facilities professionals on how to develop, implement, and manage a long-range life cycle planning and annual facility condition assessment program. It speaks to elements of total cost of ownership modeling as well as the strategic foundation required for long-range planning."

But it's also the fulfillment of a promise the author made to his father to share his groundbreaking work on facilities management and capital planning, including his admonition: "Just remember, facilities management is people management, and we bring the buildings along for laughs."

The Workplace Index Report by Eptura

Getting ahead of facility and workplace trends starts with diving into the numbers. By pouring over proprietary data — including 2.7 million desks, 37,000 buildings, and 440,000 floors across more than 8,000 companies — Eptura updates and deepens its industry insights with its latest Workplace Index.

Packed with information on everything from return-to-office campaigns to sustainability programs, the report creates a clear path to operations and maintenance success by showing where we are as an industry and where we should go from here.

Maintenance and Reliability Best Practices Third Edition by Ramesh Gulati

Already a solid resource for facility and maintenance managers on a wide range of critical topics, including leadership, change management, ISO standards, maintenance optimization, and communication, the latest edition adds:

- Forty percent more end-of-chapter self-review questions
- New chapters on standards, with a focus on ISO 55000
- Insights into new trends like Industry 4.0, Maintenance 4.0, and IIOT

For the more motivated, Gulati offers a separate workbook for extra practice and review.

Root Cause Analysis Made Simple by Susan Lubell

Looking for an introduction to RCA but aren't sure where to start? Lubell delivers explanations of the basics of RCA, what it is, why you need it, and the concrete steps you can take toward implementation. At just under 70 pages, it's an efficient way to get up to speed on this critical process for maintenance and reliability.

Physical Asset Management: An Organizational Challenge by Dharmen Dhaliah

Facility management is all about getting things to work together, from the smallest gears in your assets and equipment to the people on the team, from your department to all the other departments across the organization. Dhaliah sets out a framework for holistic success and then uses case studies to show you how all the parts can work together. The book promises, "Existing gaps and overlaps are uncovered, exposing those that hinder collaboration and alignment."

[Risk-Based Asset Criticality Assessment Handbook](#) by [Suzane Greeman](#)

This one is special for us. Suzane Greeman was an asset management legend, both for her industry knowledge and passion for sharing it. We are proud to have had her as the first guest on the Asset Champion podcast, and since her passing, we miss her dearly.

For everyone whose job comes down to keeping an asset-packed facility online, the book's message hits home: If you're running an asset-heavy organization, you need a systematic process for assigning criticality. The problem: many organizations lack programs that are well thought out and properly implemented, leading to hidden, uncontrolled risk.

The solution: this book, Risk-Based Asset Criticality Assessment Handbook.

Greeman leveraged her extensive career and long list of successes into a step-by-step process for fixing the traditional approach to assigning criticality, empowering organizations to develop their own methodologies specific to their operating contexts.

[Why Execution Fails and What to Do About It Second Edition](#) by [John Fortin](#)

Thanks to his extensive career as a change manager, Fortin knows that if you don't have some room in your plan for failures, your whole project is going to fail. In an [Asset Champion podcast](#) interview, the author explains that success isn't a straight line.

In fact, success is a cycle.

"…planning of your project, executing it, but then just making sure you're checking in on yourself, that it's going well. So, you have to have that PDCA (plan, do, check, act) circle. You may have to restart, refresh a couple of times."

And once he's defined success in the book, he goes back to show how to bring the whole team along with you.

Smart buildings and sustainability

"Work smart, not hard" is great advice, but for today's facility manager, it means something a bit different. Many of today's buildings are "smart," packed with sensors pulling in real-time data on everything from temperatures to occupancy. The result is more control and less waste, but only if you know how to leverage all that data into actionable insights.

[Internet of Things for Facility Management: Strategies of Service Optimization and Innovation](#) by Nazly Atta

Imagine being a doctor before the invention of the stethoscope, back when the best you could do to hear their heartbeat was hold your head close to a patient's chest. Now jump to today, where X-rays have given way to MRI and CAT scans. New technologies have completely changed the field of medicine, and doctors have had to adapt by learning new skills to keep up.

It's the same with facilities, where sensors can capture many different types of data, and a lot of it. So, facility managers now need to know how to incorporate real-time, large-scale data sets into their processes.

Atta gives an overview of the new tech, explains the changes it's bringing with it, and offers ideas about how FMs can leverage data to deliver better decision-making.

The Upcycle: Beyond Sustainability–Designing for Abundance by William McDonough

We often think of recycling as using the same material over again in the same way. And sometimes, that's the case; glass bottles are made into more glass bottles. An aluminum can comes back as a new aluminum can. But often, "recycling" is just downcycling, where the second time around, the materials are used for less valuable products. Could we be doing more?

In this follow-up to the successful *Cradle to Cradle*, the author envisions products and facilities that don't just sustain life but grow it. With implications for every aspect of the built environment and its effects on the natural world, the book is an important source of ideas and insights for anyone excited about the green future.

Details of design

When your facility and all the assets and equipment inside it are running smoothly, it's like you've taken the perfectly fabricated and carefully calibrated "guts" of an analog watch and scaled them up to the size of a building. Everything is where it needs to be, exactly when it needs to be there.

And it's no accident. It's the result of "design," the careful process of planning, testing, and refining a product or service so it works painlessly, reliably, and intuitively.

The Design of Everyday Things by Donald Norman

When organizations started trying to entice people back to the office, they soon realized they needed ways to "justify the commute" by delivering a better employee experience. They needed to improve the ways people could interact with and be supported by the workplace.

So, it makes sense for facility managers to go to the source and learn from the guy who coined the expression "user experience." The author advocates a more holistic view of design, starting with his famous example of how his team at Apple carefully considered every aspect of the customer's experience – right down to making sure their computers came in a box that could easily fit in the backseat of a car.

A lot of the book is a high-level introduction to the importance and practices of good design, so you might find more to think about than concrete, actionable steps.

How Buildings Learn, What Happens After They're Built by Stewart Brand

There's plenty of talk these days about the possibilities and pitfalls of converting empty office space into residential real estate. But the idea that buildings change over time is nothing new.

Sometimes the changes are due to age. Sometimes they're because of the surroundings or other external forces. But the problem, according to the author, is the lack of processes for managing these changes.

Brand provides examples of both buildings that successfully found new lives and those that didn't, complete with carefully annotated pictures. He then outlines a process for designing facilities that can age well before eventually being reborn.

Get the coffee table version

Eptura is a software company, so of course we love all things digital. That said, there are some books that work better as plain old paper. Midway through a challenging day at the keyboard, it's a good idea to take five minutes away from the screens and grab a book. Clicking through a document is always more efficient, but when it comes to relaxing and getting lost in a text or images, it's never as effective as sitting with a big heavy book in your lap.

The LEGO Architect by Tom Alphin

Even a brief description of the book gives you a good idea of how much fun it would be to flip through the pages.

"Travel through the history of architecture in The LEGO Architect. You'll learn about styles like Art Deco, Modernism, and High-Tech, and find inspiration in galleries of LEGO models."

After you finish building the 12 models in the book, you can move on to The LEGO Engineer.

Leadership for FMs

People think facility managers keep facilities, assets, and equipment up and running. But that's not exactly true. What they do instead is run the teams that keep everything working.

Which is why leadership is one of the most important skills for facility managers. You don't need to know everything about every asset. But you do need to know everything about managing and motivating the people who do.

LEADERSHIP ASSETS: Empower Your Career from the Workshop to the Boardroom by Dr Monique Beedles

A lot of fields have well defined paths to success. Want to be a doctor? Start with med school. Looking to be a movie star? Head to Hollywood. But what's the first step to being a success in facility management? Traditionally, it's been a lot less clear.

Until now. Beedles draws on her own experiences to deliver a framework for charting a personal path from the workshop to the boardroom, including an explanation of the nine essential leadership skills you need along the way.

The Productive Leadership System – Maximizing Organizational Reliability by Tom Moriarty

A famous quote about leadership is that "Leaders aren't born, they're made." Moriarty offers an interesting spin: Leaders aren't trained, they're held accountable.

Basically, instead of relying on traditional leadership training programs that tend to overpromise, under deliver, the author proposes a system that focuses on the concept of accountability. There are different leadership roles, including experts, managers, coaches, and visionaries, but they all share a desire to be responsible. The best way to help them develop as leaders is to create systems through which they made accountable.

If you're looking to advance into a leadership role within the field of facility management, the book outlines the skills you need to get yourself there.