

BLOG FROM RORY MURPHY, COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR, VINCI FACILITIES

DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

It is impossible to read an article these days that doesn't talk about the relentless march of technology within FM and the built environment and how embracing the digital age or the fourth industrial revolution is something that we all simply need to take in our stride.

Some commentators would have us believe that the rise of technology and increased automation, robotics and artificial intelligence will negate the need for skilled professionals in the future but that is simply not the case.

Change is difficult, learning new skills can be stressful, whilst embracing new technology can be both time consuming and risky.

We are undoubtedly on a trajectory that will see rapid change within the built environment but the majority of this change will come in buildings that already exist and require a mix of traditional skills as well as those demanded by the digital revolution.

Our sector faces a number of challenges ranging from our attractiveness to a new working generation at one end of the scale through to the upskilling and digitisation of an existing workforce at the other... Throw in the complexities caused by the availability of labour that Brexit may produce and the competition from other major sectors and you can see that automation is only one of the issues we need to confront.

It is easy for us to concentrate purely on the facilities management element of our sector and look at all the good work that the RICS/BIFM and other are doing to promote and define what it means to work in our sector but our skills issues are deeper than that.

How do we work with colleges, educational establishments, skills councils, trade bodies to develop the craftspeople and skilled engineers that are so sadly lacking across the whole of our industry? We are kidding ourselves if we believe this fourth industrial revolution will be driven out of shiny new construction projects and in sparkling new smart cities where it is out with the old and in with the new across the board.

Technology in the main will need to be retrofitted, in buildings that require a blend of traditional and emerging skills, we'll need joiners, plasterers, bricklayers, decorators to supplement the technicians, engineers and data managers that will deliver this digital vision. We will need these skills against a backdrop of increasing spend on infrastructure, on a push to develop new housing and a general reduction (possibly) in our ability to access skilled labour from beyond our shores.

There is a chronic lack of courses available to match the demand that we already have and progressive thinking is required. As with any solution though we will need to engage all the stakeholders, working with Government, the Local Colleges and the community to develop plans that offer the greatest access to training and development.

As a sector we are uniquely placed to offer the widest range of opportunity across both hard and soft services, we have roles to suit almost every taste and from a social value perspective we have the opportunity to unlock true potential across all sectors of our communities.

There are already great examples of educational partnerships and progressive thinking but these



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need to be replicated and encouraged throughout the country.

The digital revolution will touch us all and we will need to embrace new skills and possibly confront new risks in terms of automation, artificial intelligence or robotics. The revolution, however, will be delivered on the ground, where complex skills and craftsmanship are required. As an industry, we are a long way from an automated solution that will replace these traditional skills and particularly in the complex world of refurbishment and retrofit where solutions are often more fluid than in a traditional new build.

A revolution may well be upon us and as facilities professionals we need to understand absolutely the risks and opportunities that these advances present us... We mustn't lose sight though of the fact that this revolution will be delivered steadily and progressively across a diverse range of property types and assets, a revolution delivered by skilled craftspeople, dedicated professionals and technology experts that drive a revolution in our built environment.

INSTORE PARTNERS WITH CANCER RESEARCH UK

Instore, Compass Group UK & Ireland's specialist provider of restaurant and cafe food services for high street retailers has announced Cancer Research UK as its official charity partner.

The Instore team has already raised over £27,000 this year to support various Cancer Research UK initiatives through a range of fundraising activities, and has now pledged to raise a further £22,500 in 2017 by taking part in Stand Up to Cancer in October and through collection goblets which will be placed in Instore cafes throughout the country.

The money raised will be used towards research into more than 200 types of cancers affecting men, women and children. Since 2009, Instore has raised £194,000 for Cancer Research UK.

C&C GROUP WALK FOR WILL

The C&C Group regularly raises money and awareness for local charities, and the team's latest fundraising efforts for the Teenage and Young Adult service at The Christie are of particular significance.

On 21 October, Cerys, Lesley, Anne-Marie and Natalie will join others raising vital funds for the trust by completing a 10km walk through the streets of the Salford Quays, Manchester.

Helping to provide inspiration and hope to cancer patients and their families, the charity offers the best treatment and care to those at the facility, including former employee of C&C Catering Engineers Ltd, Will Clark, who is currently fighting cancer in the unit.

Clark, son of former C&C Catering Equipment Ltd's Trevor Clark, has shown incredible courage and inspired all at the Group with his fighting spirit. Members of the team will therefore be taking part in the Night of Neon event in Salford to fundraise and help support the fantastic care given by the trust.

