

WHAT BOLD MOVES SHOULD INDIVIDUAL FMS CONTEMPLATE?

Birnbaum:

“Jump on what’s topical. OK, so not everyone has our passion for the statutory requirements, but well-being, mental health, sustainability, use of plastics – all are exciting avenues you can use to get stakeholders interested. Then you can bring them on to perhaps some of the more fundamental issues.”

McNally:

“Ignore how you may be perceived by others. OK, barriers and challenges will come your way, but you need to be 100 per cent committed and steadfast in your beliefs. Don’t be swayed and don’t wait.”

Carr:

“Make sure you put together a team with the right set of skills: those who are tech-savvy, those who are strong people managers, and those able to adapt to organisational change. You need to ensure you have all those bases covered. It’s your ability to get that mix right and get all the right skill sets on the pitch that can make you stand out.”

Jones:

“Be prepared to take the skills you’ve acquired in one particular sector and test yourself in a different one. Often when you go into adjacent sector what you took for granted in, say, the corporate HQ environment might be completely alien. But then you may introduce a new idea and people are bowled over by it. You need to find it in yourself. Are you prepared to let go of the side and swim across the pool?”

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

PAUL MCNALLY

BOLD INITIATIVE: IMPATIENCE IS A VIRTUE

Paul McNally loathes meetings in which too many tech-based acronyms are bandied about as mere possibilities and aspirations. He wants action.

“My energy comes from the impact of my actions. I gain enthusiasm by seeing things having an immediate effect,” McNally explains.

While McNally acknowledges big-picture ideas of where technology can take us are essential, he prefers focusing on a technology’s core element that will yield immediate results.

That’s why McNally is unimpressed, for example, by building information modelling (BIM). “I’ve worked with some of the best BIM consultancies in the UK and I’m trying to understand how could it really affect FM? OK, so we’ve got a 3D model of a building? Fantastic, but who’s got time to explore it and say what impact that can have.”

That’s not to say McNally isn’t making use of existing technology. He won Newcomer of the Year by revamping roughly 25-year-old Excel software for contemporary needs.

In what became known as VINCI’s Interactive Computer Controlled Indicator (VICCI), McNally created a sophisticated frontend display to broadcast the status of work tasks on a 65-inch monitor in the FM office at the NHS facility Whiston Hospital.

“My whole philosophy is looking at how you could enhance something without throwing a lot of money at it,” McNally says.

VICCI, through customisable, real-time, automated displays with visual and auditory alerts, has cut SLA-related fines at VINCI Facilities’ St Helens Hospital and Whiston Hospital contract by 93 per cent and brought up ratings for customer satisfaction to 95 per cent and patient care to 99 per cent.



Client and provider are also benefiting from the transparency even if McNally had to convince a “mixed bag of generations” to embrace it.

“When I first began on this project, I’d locate myself in the corner of a room and observe – like an FM psychologist – and then speak directly to people to get feedback,” McNally says.

With a big success to his name, next on McNally’s agenda is learning more about Power BI, “the new glossy Excel”, to bring together multiple data streams – not just from CAFM systems.

“Data is key,” McNally argues. “It’s not so much how you interrogate it, it’s what you do with it. Let’s not store it. Let’s use it. Data is the fuel for AI.”

And AI and machine learning is where McNally is ultimately heading, but he wants to use it to restore the work-life balance for the labouring masses by automating tasks such as responding to emails and producing meeting minutes. He says: “Let’s push technologies but let’s not lose ourselves; let’s not lose our identity.”