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Winning Ways

PAUL MCNALLY

... is a senior facilities manager at VINCI Facilities. He won the BIFM Newcomer of the Year award last October. In the first of a regular column about what sets awards winners apart, he explains what he was nominated for; the impact it's had; and what he's up to now.

► **WHAT:** Winner of Newcomer of the Year for rolling out a successful technological product on VINCI Facilities St Helens Hospital and Whiston Hospital contract.

► **MY ROLE:** I used 25-year-old Excel technology as the foundation for an FM-specific product to meet our needs. We called it VINCI's Interactive Computer Controlled Indicator (VICCI) and it provides a sophisticated frontend display, which we broadcast on a 65-inch monitor in the FM office at the NHS facility Whiston Hospital, to show everyone the status of work tasks.

► **THE IMPACT:** My whole philosophy is about looking at how you can enhance something without throwing a lot of money at it. And this wasn't expensive. We installed the big screen display at the FM office at the NHS facility Whiston Hospital and the results have been impressive.

VICCI uses customisable, real-time, automated displays with visual and auditory alerts to convey the status of work tasks. Making this public and responsive has cut SLA-related fines on the contract by 93 per cent and lifted ratings for customer satisfaction to 95 per cent and patient care to 99 per cent.

It worked so well that I've been tasked with rolling out the product at around 100 of our sites across the country over the next five years.

WHAT'S NEXT?

I'm learning more about Power BI, which is essentially the new glossy Excel so I can bring together multiple data streams – not just from CAFM systems. My focus is on data as we need to get hold of it and use it. We shouldn't just store it. Data is the fuel for AI, which is an area I am excited about, along with machine learning. I believe technology should be used to restore people's work-life balance and automating tasks is a way to free up a lot of their time. Automating responses to emails and creating meeting minutes, for example, would be a start. I want to push technologies but not lose ourselves or our identities in the process. Technology is great but we should combine it with natural intelligence.



A year ago, Carillion went bust, causing many to interrogate the problems with payment terms. Here is a selection of what those in the industry currently think about the evergreen payment terms debate

Paying it back

TREVOR CHAPLIN, DIRECTOR AT CANDOUR

"Openly paying when being paid may be illegal but we all know that it happens. The main contractor may be on 30 days but have subbies in longer timescales to allow it to be managed. I do a lot between clients and contractors trying to manage better payment processes and lots in both private and public sector try very hard to do well, some try equally as hard to frustrate you."

CHRIS MACKENZIE-GRIEVE, DIRECTOR AT VISIBLE PROJECTS LTD

"Pay when paid, I believe, is illegal. [The] public sector [is] committed to pay within 14 days; some just need to do it and client-side PMs need to ensure that this happens. My current projects are on 21 days and I make sure I prioritise getting payments through. Often it is a process problem (the system is set up for 30 days or particular dates of the month) and someone needs to adjust to reflect terms and conditions. With contractors you need to watch the T&Cs around early payment to subbies. This is where the '3 Ts' come in: Transparency, Truth and Trust!"

CLAIRE CURRAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR AT LINAKER LTD

"I find the whole piece around payments almost a 'black art'; for instance, large businesses often include regular bill payments such as phones, fleet and insurances to hit the average 50 days payment terms they quote. These regular, high-value expenditures cosmetically impact the averages quoted and the small subcontractors, which they're actually paying at 120 days, are ignored and diluted by the average. It shadows the problem of SME businesses trying to work with corporates and the fact that they therefore find it increasingly hard to survive. The industry needs diversity; having 4/5 major players is unhealthy for talent, clients, innovation, risk and overall profitability of the industry."

ALEXI OZIORO, POLICY MANAGER AT BESA

"This highly influential report from the BEIS Select Committee and the Cabinet Office's intervention are highly significant especially with the anniversary of Carillion just a month away. This reflects growing political pressure to address behaviour that is not just morally wrong, but is also bad for the UK economy by putting perfectly good businesses at risk of insolvency. Connecting fair payment to procurement is a powerful statement from government, and a very welcome development. We want to change people's perspective because this is just bad practice with no winners. We will use the data we gather on this to publicise the depth of the problem, but having the power to fine people would make a real difference."