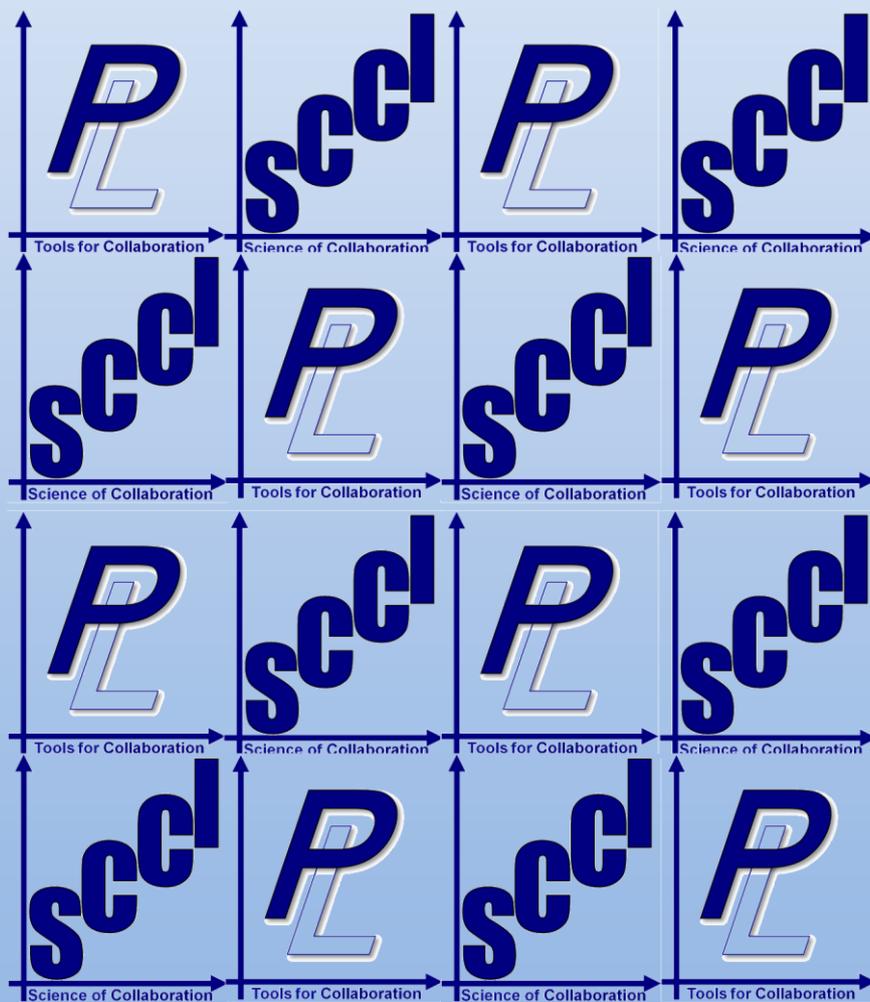


# Case Study: Public Sector FM 'FM is just cleaning, gardening and security'



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## Case Study – FM is just cleaning, gardening and security

*By Andrew Humphries & Linda McComie*

### 8 Month Total Facilities Management Public Sector Relationship:

- Customer – Core Government department with 300 plus UK operating sites
- Supplier – Global Outsourcing Company

#### Objectives:

- To understand the relationship dynamics in order to solve issues and speed up the contract implementation
- To develop a long-term relationship between the partners

#### Issues Revealed:

- The Supplier had no experience of multi-site TFM operations
- The Customer had unrealistic expectations
- The Customer organisation and sub-contractors were unused to centralised FM
- Relationship management including communications was patchy

**“The key to getting this relationship back on track is to concentrate on getting the fundamentals, the basic service right. Instead knee jerk reactions and increased bureaucracy are running our staff ragged preventing them from learning and delivering the service. Blowing issues out of proportion is undermining the trust of all the parties”**

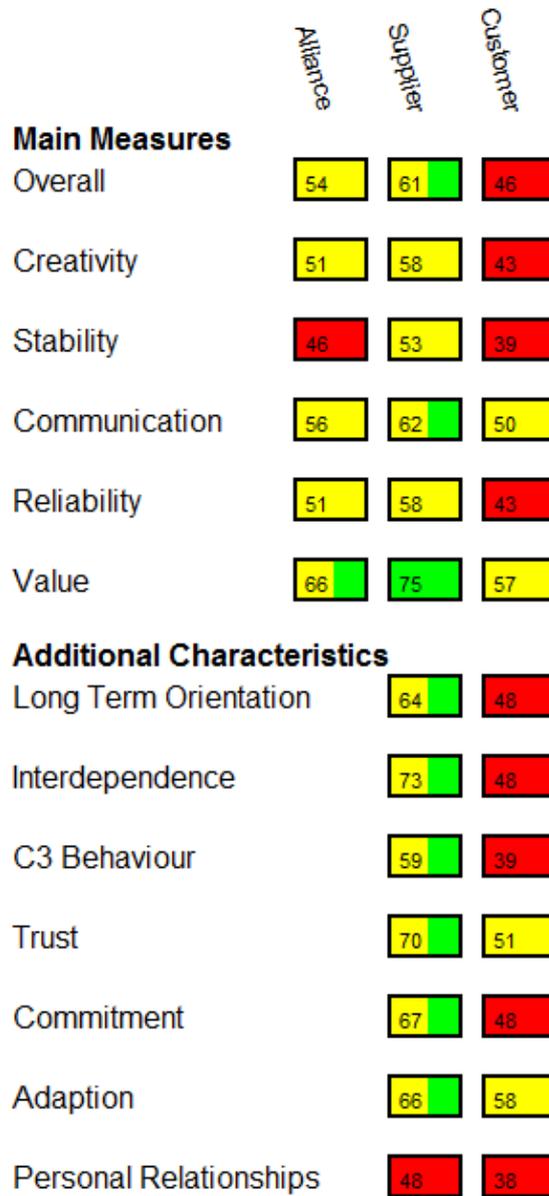
#### Notes

The TFM Contract includes services such as cleaning, ground maintenance, security, planned maintenance and small projects. The relationship started 8 months ago to provide comprehensive services to 300 sites in the UK. Subsequently there has been considerable Customer organisational and staff change as a result of restructuring. The Supplier has also experienced difficulties in establishing steady state staffing.

Therefore implementation has been delayed and the basic service is not yet in place and both partners were experiencing higher than expected costs. A particular instance of this was where sub-contractors were exploiting the chaotic lack of control to their own advantage.

The Appraisal survey was completed by 101 knowledgeable staff across both organisations and 6 follow-up interviews took place.

## Performance at a glance



- **Innovation** – the leap of faith, being creative, flexible and resilient
- **Investment** – Alignment of objectives, investment in people, know-how, infrastructure and management effort and, long-term vision
- **Communication** – open and transparent, frequent and extensive, learning, planning and anticipating
- **Operations** – focusing on service and product delivery, lowering joint costs and risks, building trust
- **Value** – perceived and actual benefits, satisfaction
- **Long-term Orientation** – encouraging stability, continuity, predictability and long-term, joint gains
- **Interdependence** – loss in autonomy is compensated through the expected gains
- **C3 Behaviour** – Collaboration, Co-operation, Co-ordination, joint resourcing to achieve effective operations
- **Trust** – richer interaction between parties to create goodwill and the incentive to go the extra mile
- **Commitment** – the relationship is so important that it warrants maximum effort to maintain it
- **Adaption** – willingness to adapt products, procedures, inventory, management, attitudes, values and goals to the needs of the relationship
- **Personal Relationships** – generating trust and openness through personal interaction

Bandings	Colour	Response
0-49%	Red	Urgent Action Required
50-59%	Amber	Corrective Action Required
60-74%	Amber Green	Corrective Action Recommended
75-100%	Green	OK Unless High Priority

The traffic lights reveal a mixed picture of a slowly developing relationship that has been affected by poor implementation of the TFM contract although service delivery is improving. A combination of Customer staff turnover and re-structuring and, the inability of Supplier SDMs to concentrate on relationship development has meant that personal relationships have not yet developed. This resulted in frustration and low morale.

**“We are on the bend; gradually breaking through problems. More effort from the Supplier is needed to give us confidence we are not going to slip back”**

## Recommendations

These are essential steps to move the relationship forward to where issues are the exception rather than the norm and the joint benefits of TFM are achieved. They are also crucial in getting costs under control. The over-arching requirement is to ensure that the traditional 'them and us' attitude characteristic of FM projects is over-turned and joint success is achieved through joint efforts.

- **Service Delivery Management**
  - Provide administrative support for SDMs to enable them to concentrate on delivering TFM value to their customers
  - Ensure all SDM posts are filled
  - The Help Desk functions and processes need to be continuously updated to meet the needs of the SDMs and the Customer's personnel
  - IT support for SDMs and Customer sites must provide comprehensive, easily accessible information to enable them to work efficiently
  - Formal joint training for staff who manage TFM service delivery needs to be put in-place for basic and continuation purposes
  - Ensure that training includes relationship management and the use of performance measurement to track progress and drive improvement initiatives
- **Contract Understanding**
  - Relationship managers ensure that contract specification for each site is tailored to accommodate local operations and effective TFM delivery. This activity needs to become the centre of continuous interaction
- **Process Management**
  - The undue focus of management on minor issues should cease immediately to free up resources for TFM delivery and process improvement
  - Centralised process management should be established to ensure that responsibility for its efficiency and continuous improvement is clear, effective and dynamic
  - Local processes around the management of sub-contractors should be streamlined and closely understood by all concerned so that jobs are supervised, certified complete and paid for efficiently
  - All contracts managed by the TFM need to be rationalised from a centralised procurement perspective in order to improve service quality and value for money
  - Local, joint quality improvement procedures should be put in place to ensure that all staff can contribute to increasing TFM effectiveness
- **Communications & Culture**
  - The TFM should have a unified communication system that ensures that all staff are 'on-message'. This also requires the organisation to listen to and exploit the ideas of front-line staff. It needs to emphasise the importance of joint responsibility for success in order to change the culture

**“As committed as most are, the contract is under-resourced with SDMs too overloaded, such that the quality of service they would like to give cannot possibly be achieved. Invariably he who shouts loudest gets his timely response whilst others wait”**

## Outcomes

Subsequently the partnership was unable to make TFM work. The Customer now has separate facilities management contracts for security, cleaning and maintenance with new partners.

## Notes

This case proved that effective relationship management is even more important when partners are experiencing operating difficulties. It is also clear that Customers generally have unrealistic expectations of their FM partners, that a seamless service will be provided from day one with the all the benefits and cost reductions. This is emphasised even more when the intention is full collaboration as represented in TFM.

Moreover both sides underestimate the complexity of these operations and the necessity of working closely together to achieve success.



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