

## **Preface of the publisher**

### **20. Journal for Facility Management: Science meets Practice**

The year 2020 started as usual, and then, mid of March, everything was different. From one moment to the next flying, meeting, seeing friends was almost impossible. A lot of studies envision COVID-19 as a game changer. I consider the pandemic as an accelerator. Existing trends and challenges were speeded up or made visible due to the pandemic.

New ways of working were already a hot topic in the last years. We could see a lot of discussions how the new office should look like. There was already a discussion, if and how to include home office in the new work environment. Due to COVID-19 companies were forced to use home office. Home office was the only way to enable business continuity. But companies also learned that they have to enable their employees to work from home. The first steps were to enable access to documents from everywhere and video conferencing as physical meetings were not possible at all.

Years ago, Diane Coles Levine was already giving a presentation on activity-based working and the enablement of home office at the IFM congress in Vienna. At this time, she was with a large health care insurance provider in the Bay area. She stressed the importance of setting up home office in a right way to secure data security and work life balance. But she also described the limitation of home office. For example, her company limited home office to two days per week to secure social binding, learning and interaction.

COVID-19 made these difficulties more visible than before. Working from home kept the business running, but social binding was lost or not build up. How to gain trust when you do not know people and you have no possibility to meet in person? Onboarding without physical meeting? Teaching on distance? How could a fair deal regarding costs and efforts look like? How to secure work life balance?

Also, digitalization of the core business was speeded up by COVID-19. Offerings had to be made to the clients via the web, as shops were closed down totally. Clients were accepting or better had to accept these new ways of interaction and procurement to fulfil their demands.

A lot of challenges. Therefore, this issue of Journal für Facility Management provides you with insights into the development of the industry and workplace management:

- The Upwards Trend of the Outsourced Facility Service Industry in Germany and Austria
- How do people from different generations approach work? Implications for workspace design

- New World of Work characterized by the digitalization and flexibility. Change Management and Facility Management at the heart of change.
- Implementation of a virtual occupancy sensor for smart building support

The last worldwide economic crisis happened after 2008. The first paper shows that according to EU statistics the FS industry grew faster than the rest of economy in Germany and Austria between 2008 and 2016 in terms of value added and full-time equivalents. In Germany, there were no decreases for any FS activities in terms of profits, value added, personnel costs or wages. This points out that this industry supported the economic recovery after 2009.

The second paper makes a connection between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the meaning of work for the motivational theory. The authors performed a field study to find solutions for the multi-generational environments fostering skill and experience sharing. The solution takes care on cultural identities and changes in motivational patterns.

The third paper covers the effects of changes of physical workplaces triggered by trends like digitalization and flexibilization. As the world is Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous (VUCA) Facility Managers are to support new way of working, collaborative work and activity-based working (ABW) strategies with real and virtual office concepts understanding psychological and sociological interactions between people and space. Co-operation of FM, HR and IT is necessary to achieve workspaces fostering networking, interconnection and health. Mere cost reduction is not enough anymore.

The last paper provides more insight in predicting occupancy patterns. Having access to either real-time presence data or patterns extracted from historical data is particularly valuable when dealing with facility design. The paper proposes a cost effective and privacy-preserving method to extract the occupancy information. By aggregating semantic knowledge, motion sensor data and data from dwelling entrance doors, a robust virtual occupancy sensor has been developed.

These articles are giving answers to day-to-day problems for the time after COVID-19 that we need to be prepared for. At this point, I want to thank all international researchers who sent us numerous abstracts and papers for the double-blind review. The decline rate was kept high with more than 50%. The high-quality research handed in enabled us to increase the quality of the IFM journal over the last years. Thanks for your help, and we are looking forward for your future support. I also want to thank the members of the editorial and the scientific board for their terrific work. They supported me in reviewing first the abstracts and then the full papers and gave a lot of input to the authors.

The high decline rate, the high reputed members of the editorial and the scientific board and the supporting universities ensure that the articles are not only having a high scientifically quality, but also that practitioners can put them into practice easily.

I also want to thank my team, especially Larissa Locsmandy und Mag. Barbara Gurdet. Without their personal engagement, the journal would not be available in this high quality.

I wish you all the best from Vienna, an enjoyable read, a lot of input for your research and/or for your daily work. I look forward to a lot of new abstracts and papers for the next call for papers for the 14<sup>th</sup> IFM congress 2021.

Stay healthy,

Alexander Redlein

Head of Editorial Board

To my family: Barbara, Caroline Sidonie und Alexander David