

Implementation is key to the success of your Cafm system. Here **Mark Kirkham** of Service Works Global suggests 10 steps toward achieving the ideal introduction



**HOW
TO**

Implementing Cafm

If your company has made the decision to install a computer-aided facilities management (Cafm) system, or is in the process of making the decision, the chances are you are fully aware of the benefits it can bring: a reduction in costs; improved productivity; and increased staff retention.

Also, helping companies to meet legislation, keep track of their assets and carry out risk assessments. But what about the implementation process itself? Here are the 10 areas most deserving of long and careful consideration.

1. Objectives

The starting point when installing a Cafm system has to be setting clear objectives for what you want the software to achieve. What are the priorities for the new system? (For example, improving customer service, tighter financial control, increased efficiency, etc.)

What are the key issues and objectives that need to be addressed? Define business processes and work flows, plus decide the measures and reports that you want the system to achieve. Also consider if you need to link up with other departments such as HR. Look at information that is needed for strategic decision making.

2. Gathering information

If in doubt, your Cafm consultant can help to define the information that is required. Do you need to integrate your Cafm application with third party software or indeed import data from other applications into your Cafm system? A formal review of any additional software that might be required for the system to work effectively should always be undertaken.

For example will there be a requirement to fax or email contractors with worksheets? If the worksheets are going to be faxed, does the Cafm software have integrated fax capabilities or will it need to interface with

an existing internal or an alternative fax system? In addition, ensure the system is compatible with any essential third-party applications (ie email).

3. Expectations

Remember to only input the amount of information that can be efficiently maintained. Manage your own and other's expectations of what the software is actually able to do. Although Cafm can greatly improve processes, it can't actually do the work for you.

4. Define

Define the standards for data terminology so that the same terms are used throughout the system. Look at the hierarchies that you wish to report to and the codes that are going to be used to categorise asset and service faults. These should be clear and recognisable.

5. Information accuracy

Limit the amount of people entering information into the database to ensure consistency and check for accuracy. Define the timescales for the implementation of the new system and the associated administrative and training tasks that have to be scheduled. Check that all data is correct and updated, prior to loading.

6. Online integration

Decide whether the system will be stand-alone or networked. How many users will need access to the system, and will they all be full users or will some just require read only access? Also consider if any users need web access to the system and what functionality web users require.

7. Staff Access

If there is a requirement for varying levels of access, then the system's security options will need to be reviewed. Perhaps establish

a dedicated project team/group within the organisation.

8. Staff training

Success or failure of a Cafm system depends on the people that use it. Some staff might demonstrate reluctance to new working practices and changes in the workplace. People must feel they are getting personal gain from the software and that it is improving the quality of their job.

Training is essential; it may be useful in many cases for the Cafm supplier to set up two sets of data on the system; one for training purposes and another for live data. This will allow the staff to practise on the system prior to going live, without impacting the live data.

9. Managing the process

Look at the timeline of going live. Consider whether the whole system goes live at once, or is it going to be phased. It is often worth piloting the implementation in a controlled environment or having a trial run of the new system before announcing or launching it across the entire organisation.

10. Future

Keep your system up to date. Archive information when no longer in use and look to the future for opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction. This will secure the product's initial and future success and positively reflect on the facilities department.

Mark Kirkham is director at Service Works Global

For more information see www.swg.com
A complimentary copy of a white paper on the topic, *Best practices for implementing a Cafm system*, is available upon request by emailing info@swg.com