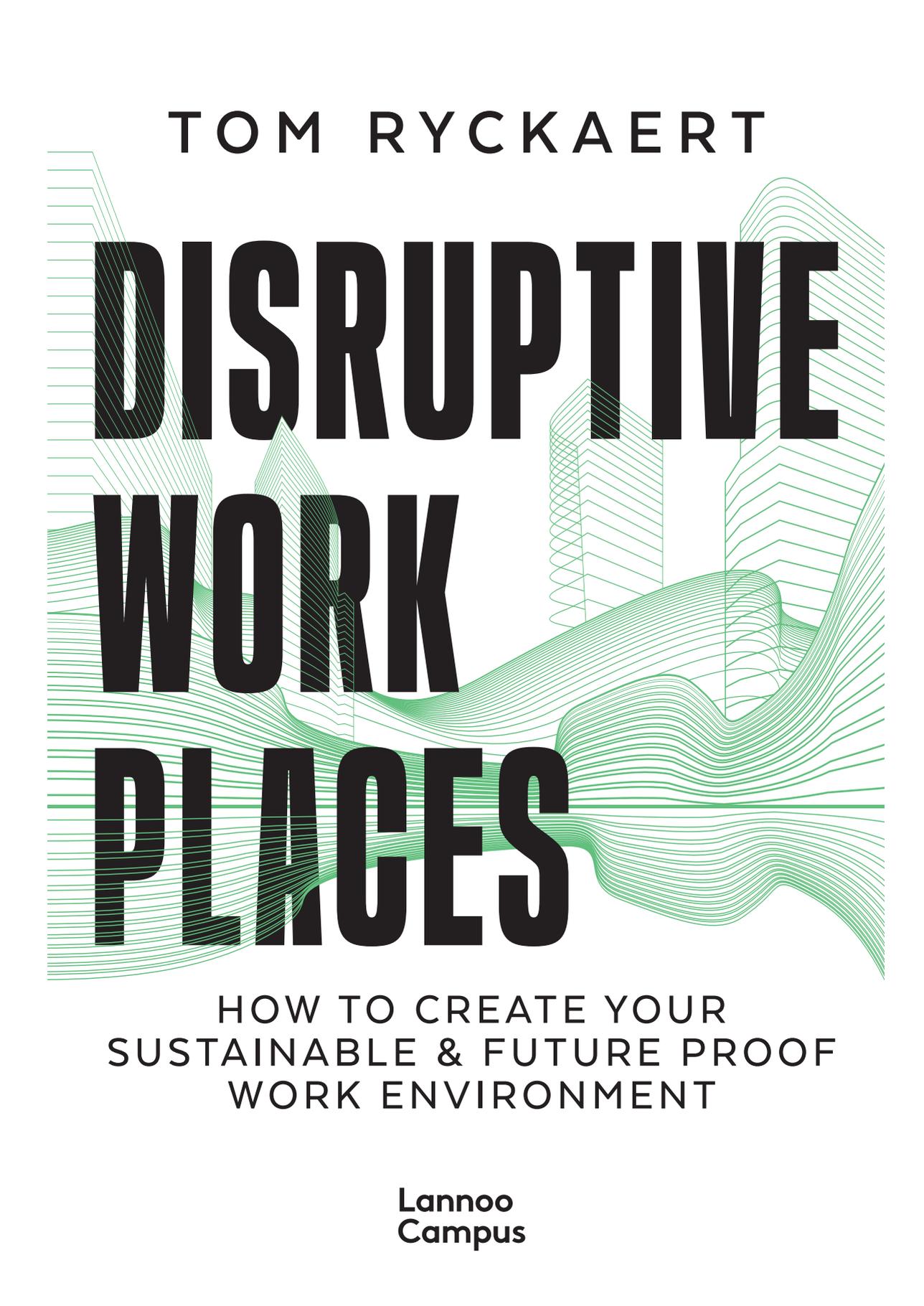




TOM RYCKAERT

The background features a complex, abstract design of thin, light green lines. These lines form a series of overlapping, wavy, and geometric shapes that resemble a stylized cityscape or a digital landscape. The lines are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is modern and tech-oriented.

DISRUPTIVE WORK PLACES

HOW TO CREATE YOUR
SUSTAINABLE & FUTURE PROOF
WORK ENVIRONMENT

Lannoo
Campus

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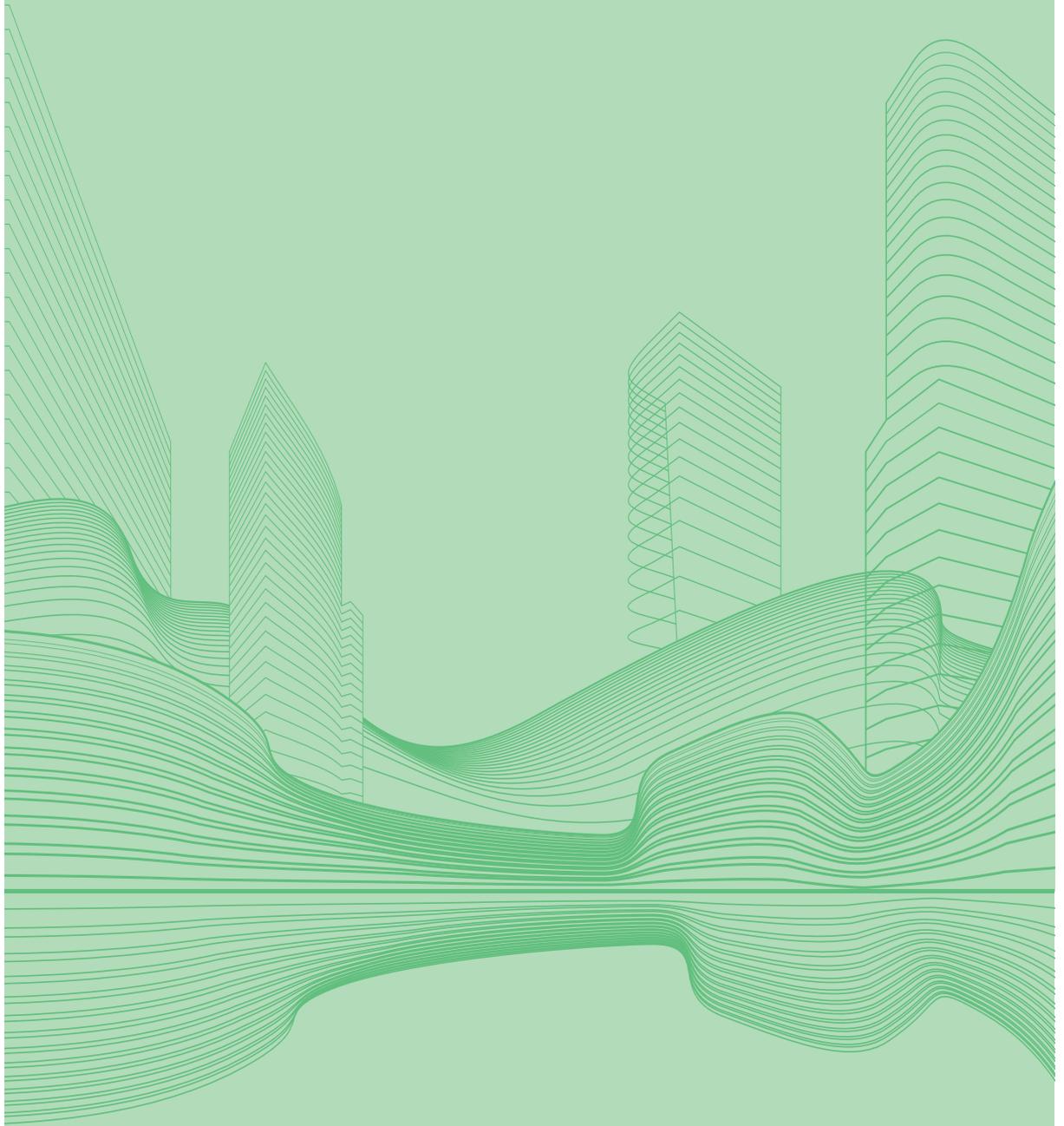
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WHY THIS BOOK?

When I announced that I wanted to write a book about Facility Management (FM), I often received – alongside the necessary encouragement and support – the question: “Why?” This is understandable, because many books have been written about FM. But I always felt unsatisfied: either they were too theoretical, focused too much on one country or region, or highlighted only one perspective. Then I thought: “If you’re so dissatisfied with the current offerings, why not do it yourself?”

Indeed, I had several clear ambitions for the book. I wanted to provide space for universal issues linked to FM and the workplace. I wanted a book that does not stop at a physical border between two countries but offers examples from all over Europe and the Middle East. It had to be a practical and relatable book, which is why I collected a lot of use cases. And that’s what this book is really about: sharing knowledge and experience, not just from myself but directly from the market. And look, two years later, the result is on the shelves of bookstores and now also with you, dear reader. This practically conceived guide, with a clear step-by-step plan and lots of concrete tips and stories for you as a reader to reflect on, can, I hope, inform and also inspire you. After reading, you should be able to create (even) more impact within your company.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

This book is not only aimed at Facility Managers but at everyone who – especially with the new approach to FM in today’s workplace – deals with the subject from near or from afar. The speed at which changes have come upon us is unprecedented. It’s about the ‘disruptive’ (disrupted) workplace itself as well as the many disruptions that have and will continue to have an impact on our workplace in the future. But above all, this book is a guide to help you create a sustainable and future-proof work environment.

The focus is on providing a practice-oriented approach across the various topics you deal with today. And what better way to do this than with state-of-the-art use

cases and by letting market experts speak? In most of the conversations I've had for this book, the same questions kept coming up: "Does hybrid working really work? I want to see how I can set this up at my company." "Technology: is too complex for me, I've never seen it work anywhere." "What more can I do for sustainability than make my vehicle fleet electric?" "How can I use my FM Service Provider in a more flexible way?" "I want to approach FM strategically, but how do I get a seat at the director's table?" And so on.

Well, in this book, you will find the answers.

Allow me to start with a disclaimer. In this book, we mainly deal with the corporate working environment, the traditional office environment. Well, traditional might not be the best-chosen word, as we will discuss how strongly that workplace is subject to change. But it's important to realise that we are starting from such a work environment. I am aware that, for example, an industrial environment and a hospital environment differ significantly from an average office environment, and they perhaps deserve their own book. At the same time, I am convinced that a number of the factors we discuss here can also be applicable to those other environments.

WHY ME?

Why did I feel called to write this book? How did I actually end up in the field of FM and the workplace environment? I sometimes wonder myself, but one thing is for sure: by now, it's not so much a job or a sector for me, but a real passion. I always wonder how I can add value to 'my' beloved sector. More than 20 years ago, the head of the Facility Management programme at Odisee University College came to give an information session at my high school. My friend Michel Liessens and I found this interesting. It was varied and seemed to offer different perspectives for a future job. The earlier ambitions to follow a marketing education were discarded, and I chose an FM education.

Explaining this to my family and friends at the time was quite a challenge. "What are you studying now? What will you do with that?" I always had a standard answer ready: "Imagine a car factory; what is their core process? Producing cars, indeed. Well, FM is everything surrounding it that helps to support this core process. Taking care of the building, maintenance, cleaning, catering, etc., so that others can focus on producing cars." People then nodded eagerly, but didn't go further into it. All this was seen as a given.

In the meantime, I have built a beautiful career and had the luxury of being able to work at quite a few international companies. You will also notice my love for technology and innovation in the book, partly stemming from my professional years at some market leaders in the integrated workplace management system (IWMS) market. Here, I also learned to align software and processes, and especially to dare to question existing processes. This has shaped my process thinking and project-based approach to what it is today.

In addition, I spent a significant part of my career at an FM service provider, Facicom, and this is probably where I learned the most, with special thanks to Claudine Decorte, who was my manager for almost 15 years. She taught me a no-nonsense approach where the customer always comes first. When she couldn't go to a commercial appointment once, I was asked if I could take over. I did this with pleasure and thus ended up in the commercial field, and immediately felt at home. I love it. Every day is different; you visit so many diverse companies and try to match the right facility solution to them.

During the writing of this book, I was active at PROCOS Group. Here, the world of workplace strategy and design – an essential part of how we deal with our workplace environment – opened up further for me. In March 2023, my wife Kathleen Louckx and I founded our own consultancy and advisory firm, 2nRich. We focus on enriching yourself, your team, and your organisation through training, workshops, and coaching sessions, always with an eye on 'happiness' and well-being in the workplace. Kathleen's passion is in work happiness, from an HR perspective. I have learned a lot from her and been able to apply that knowledge. I write this book from our company as part of our ambition to contribute by sharing knowledge, alongside keynotes, workshops, and strategic guidance for companies in their facility and workplace challenges.

Professional associations play an important role in elevating the maturity of the field to the next level. Since the beginning of my career, I have always been fond of IFMA (International Facility Management Association). They are the world's largest and most recognised association for Facility Management professionals. Through my engagement, I am a board member at the IFMA Belgium Chapter, responsible for marketing and communication, as well as being the technology and innovation lead. The FM community in Belgium is powerful in itself, but you really benefit from the global IFMA network when you can share knowledge and experiences with countless like-minded people around the world. With my experience and network, I set to work, and this practical guide came into being. I am convinced that everyone will find tips and tricks in it. I wish you much reading pleasure!



CHAPTER 1

**WHERE ARE
WE TODAY?**

To start our journey together in creating a sustainable and future-proof work environment, it is worth outlining the current situation and the challenges the market is facing. Throughout my career, I have never seen so many changes in the way we work happen in such a short period. And this, of course, means that you have to approach the management of it, Facility Management (FM), in a new way. In this chapter, you will notice that I have spoken with various market leaders to hear their vision on how they view FM and the workplace environment, now and in the future. They are on the front line every day in their region and are, in my opinion, ideal discussion partners. Furthermore, we will define FM, get to work with the 4 Ps of the work environment, delve into history, and see how we need to consider external factors to better frame FM. And we will briefly examine corporate culture because the workplace environment will contribute to how your company is perceived.

WHAT IS FACILITY MANAGEMENT?

Since it pays little to reinvent the wheel, I like to refer to the definition set by IFMA (International Facility Management Association), the world's largest professional organisation for Facility Managers (see box). In this book, we will generally use the abbreviation 'FM' when referring to Facility Management.

IFMA's definition of Facility Management

“Facility or facilities management (FM) is a profession dedicated to supporting people. It ensures the functionality, comfort, safety, sustainability, and efficiency of the built environment – the buildings we live and work in and their surrounding infrastructure. As defined by ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and adopted by IFMA: “FM is an organisational function which integrates people, place, and process within the built environment with the purpose of improving the quality of life of people and the productivity of the core business.”

The mention of ISO is noteworthy in this definition. When an ISO standard is developed for a discipline, it certainly means it is a crucial part of any comprehensive corporate policy. The standard ‘ISO 41011:2017 – FM’ not only illustrates the importance of FM but also suggests that it is a field with complex interactions and procedures – a suspicion that is, of course, entirely justified. The definition also refers to the built environment and places; in this book, we will focus on the workplace and work environment in a ‘corporate office’ environment. Naturally, many things are also applicable to other sectors and environments. The facility manager has the important task of contributing to the workplace and the environment. He/she is central and can create an impact on a multitude of domains, as you will see in the illustration below.



Figure 1.1: The facility manager is central.

THE DIMENSIONS OF WORKPLACE AND FACILITY MANAGEMENT (ALSO KNOWN AS THE 4 Ps)

In discussing all facets of the workplace and FM, the so-called 3 Bs (bricks, bytes, behaviour) have been used since the rise of ‘The New Way of Working’, to which 2 Bs (balance and belonging) and 1 S (sustainability) were later added. Because we’re talking about the ‘disruptive workplace’ in this book, where literally everything is questioned, I’ve also allowed myself to trade these 5 Bs for a new set of letters, namely the 4 Ps. This, in my opinion, best sums up the different dimensions of FM.

They stand for:



PEOPLE

This is mainly about the ‘workplace experience’ – how employees experience the workplace. This is not just a rational story of how our behaviours are influenced by the workplace, but also an emotional one: you want to create a work environment that appeals to the hearts of employees and gives them a sense of belonging. But you also want to offer a good overall experience, where the balance between home and office work is optimally respected, where collaboration between colleagues and between generations is supported as well as possible, and more. In short: you want to create a work environment where employees can feel happy.



PLACES

Here, I refer to the different physical workplaces – in the office, on the move, at home etc., the buildings and their surroundings, and the services that FM provides to manage and maintain these buildings.



PERFORMANCE

Not only are the buildings themselves central, but also aspects of the workplace that contribute to employees being able to function optimally. In this book, I will, for example, go into detail on the role of software and technology: how they contribute to better management of the workplace on the one hand, but also how they make those workplaces more efficient to use by employees on the other.



PLANET

Also, the last P is getting an increasingly prominent role in FM. Buildings must be made as energy-efficient as possible. Not just for the lower energy bill, but also because sustainability and environmentally conscious action are increasingly at the top of the priority list in corporate strategy. And not only to focus on the E (energy) of ESG, we will also approach the other themes. How can it have an impact on social issues, diversity, inclusion, and equality?

The icons will be used later in the chapter to indicate where the focus lies in the various topics covered.



LARA PAEMEN

Managing Director of IFMA (International Facility Management Association) EMEA.

“As the head of IFMA’s entire EMEA region, I notice daily that even within Europe, it’s difficult to speak of a homogeneous FM landscape. Non-Europeans sometimes find it hard to understand, but the diversity within this one region is immense. Each country has its culture and education level, and this has a deep impact on their FM reality. So, there isn’t one overarching FM for Europe. However, you can distinguish some homogeneous regions within Europe. In the Nordics, much attention is paid to well-being, soft services, the experience of the work environment. In Eastern Europe, there’s a strong focus on BIM (Building Infor-

mation Modeling) and other forms of digitalisation. For example, in the Czech Republic, all new government buildings must be made in BIM. In Southern Europe, the emphasis is on technical aspects, on operations and maintenance. Only companies with an international focus are strategy-oriented there. It’s a less mature market, although there are young startups in prop tech in Spain that are betting on this. The Benelux region, finally, is strongly influenced by the Nordics, but also remains very technical and sometimes misses the boat in certain areas.

The past years, the pandemic and the resulting ‘agile’ way of working have questioned many certainties. How many square metres do you need, and how do you use them? How do you serve your employees when they’re not in the office? How do you make the workplace attractive for current and new employees? What needs does Generation Z have, and how do you address them? Also, the increasing digitalisation of buildings, assets, and more forces the FMer to retrain and redefine the job. Attention must also be paid to cybersecurity, for the more you digitalise, the greater the chance of leaks and breaches. Risk analysis becomes a full part of FM: weighing the cyber danger against the possibilities that digitalisation offers.

Facility Managers may well be a bit less modest when it comes to their contribution to the company's ESG strategy. FM plays an important role here, and you should not let yourself be cornered into the technical and operational. Strategically positioning FM will also contribute to the profession's appeal. Professional associations have a significant role to play in this. The old infrastructure poses many challenges in terms of sustainability, and it is often easier to opt for new infrastructure. But countries like Italy, with a rich past and heritage, are not in favour of this. This is a delicate balance where the government will have to play a big role, – but also professional organisations like IFMA, especially in finding innovative solutions. Here, we must learn to look at other countries and regions, so we don't always start from scratch.

“BE THE MONKEY ON THE ROCK”

In Southern and Eastern Europe, the return to the office is almost complete. In other regions, it's not moving that fast. The most important thing is not to impose it but to

build a work environment to which employees wish to return. The old FM is dead; long live the new FM. This new FM is driven by disruptive technology, forcing us to look at things differently. The operational will largely be automated, giving the FMer more time for analysis and the experience factor. For this, we will also need training and new talents. Facility manager, be the monkey on the rock. Tell your stories, make your impact clear. This way, you can claim your rightful place in the organisation. We as a professional association are happy to contribute to this awareness that FM is a true pillar of the organisation.”



THE WORKPLACE THROUGH THE AGES

To understand why the current changes in FM are called ‘disruptive’ and revolutionary, we must look back at how the workplace was considered and managed in the past. Not only does this put everything into perspective, but it also helps avoid repeating past mistakes. Therefore, I invite you to look back with me before we resolutely turn our gaze forward. From ancient times through the Middle Ages to today, the work environment has always played an important role in our society. Of course, the workplace has evolved over the centuries. Especially during the Industrial Revolution, in the 18th and 19th centuries, we saw the first significant change. Large factories were built to enable production at scale, with hundreds or thousands of workers in the same building. With the arrival of these large factories in growing cities, there was also an increasing need for efficient management of these industrial buildings. In response, ‘plant engineers’ and ‘factory supervisors’ appeared on the scene: they had to ensure smooth operation on the work floor, but also maintenance and safety in the workplace.

The attention to the worker as a person was still limited then. They were mainly seen as a pawn in production, not so much as a full person. Also, for office or knowledge work, which claimed its place in the wake of factories, we saw the same attitude. The focus was on maintenance and upkeep of buildings. Even though there was somewhat more attention paid to the well-being of office workers, the focus was largely on productivity and efficiency, and on the human as a link in the big network. This then shifted more towards other services such as cleaning, catering, and security, to create an ideal work environment for the employees.

