

# The Pros and Cons of Outsourcing Facility Management Tasks

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It's common practice to outsource many facility management processes, including waste management, energy management and janitorial services. Working with independent contractors instead of in-house teams has its advantages, but facility managers should be aware of the potential issues that come along with outsourcing.

To help you decide whether or not you should outsource FM tasks, here are a few key benefits and risks.

## Pros

### Resource savings



Having contractors handle facility operations can yield savings in time, money and energy - this is one of the key motivations that push managers to outsource work.

*One company gained 18.1% in direct cost savings(or \$5.8 million) through outsourcing alone.*

Contractors have made investments in their own tools, staff and training, allowing you to take on these services as operating expenses while spending more of your time and capital elsewhere. They'll also likely take on more risks and liabilities such as equipment failure or personnel issues, which can help you avoid sudden or unpredictable costs.

### Specialized expertise

An external team can provide specialized services such as L.E.E.D compliance or building renovations, which might not justify full-time in-house employees. Many FM contractors also offer integrated facility services, packaging several options together under one provider. These bundled services mean you can communicate with fewer contacts, making the process much simpler and more convenient to manage.

### Strategic focus



Overseeing all facility operations through your in-house team might force you to take focus away from key business or facility drivers to handle smaller, lower-priority tasks. Outsourcing work to contractors can free up your team and their resources to take care of more important responsibilities.

Standardized tasks like routine cleanings and equipment repair are good choices for outsourcing, in addition to duties that fall outside of your core competencies, as long as you maintain consistent communication with your contractors.

## Cons

### Less control



One of the biggest downsides to outsourcing a task is the reduced amount of control you have over the process. Your contractors will determine how they deliver their services and handle their personnel. This is why relationship management and contract agreements are crucial. Establishing expectations about performance, rules, reporting, payment and communication early on allows you to get the most out of their services, even as you relinquish some control.

### Inefficiencies

Outsourcing parts of your facility management can increase your workplace's efficiency, but it isn't a guarantee. Managers must still put in a considerable effort to keep contractors coordinated and ensure that the facility is receiving efficient service.

Employing independent contractors has the potential to create more complicated processes, duplicated work efforts and fragmented communication. A lack of proper management can

lead to critical mistakes or lost/mishandled facility data. These issues can make outsourcing an inherently costly matter, but if you're able to find a reliable, quality contractor and establish clear grounds for termination, you can reduce the risk of incurring more expenses than benefits.

### Slower change management



Changes related to your facility's operations and finances may take longer if they have to include action or input from your contractors. New policies like work hours or resource availability will have to take contractor agreements into account, which may ultimately conflict with your proposed changes.

*These service providers may also take longer to respond to change requests, depending on their own workload and communication practices.*

Outsourcing the right tasks can help facility managers run their operations more efficiently while focusing on more crucial responsibilities. However, you'll need to develop clear communication and expectations with your contractors in order to realize these benefits.

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