

4 KEY PRACTICES FOR SUCCESSFUL FACILITY SERVICES MOBILIZATION DURING A PANDEMIC

Enabling teams
to deliver complex projects
when the rules have changed

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COVID-19 has been enormously disruptive, and for Facilities Management professionals, it set off a chain of new challenges resulting in the necessity for key decisions to be made daily, *if not hourly*. Additionally, new strategies that enhanced workplace safety and employee experiences became high priority.

By adapting quickly, enterprises are shifting their focus from remote working solutions to *return-to-work* protocols, while simultaneously deploying newly developed policies and procedures across their facilities' maintenance and service model.

Read on for an overview of four key practices that make it possible for teams to mobilize significant changes in practice across multiple properties during a pandemic.

4 KEY MOBILIZATION PRACTICES DURING A PANDEMIC

At Compass Group, we provide facilities services and solutions to many large blue-chip organizations, all of whom occupy millions of

square feet of corporate, manufacturing and controlled spaces across a wide geography.

Planning and implementing new facilities solutions under the cloud of COVID-19 pushed our clients and mobilization teams to think and act differently.

1 BROKERED PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A successful transition results in tangible change. Traditionally, the execution of two adjacent integrated project plans (one client, the other service provider) function in harmony, where logistics are predictable and skilled resources readily available.

Furthermore, any effective change, while itself complex, requires a strong joint commitment to the desired performance outcomes.

A very effective solution is the **broker management model**. Recognizing this as a key catalyst, Compass Group's Strategic Projects team, is a necessary resource infrastructure to ensure the realized ROI of any large mobilization project.

Compass Group and our clients have direct access to retain our Strategic Projects team. The magic ingredient is this team of specialist is not a delivery arm of either client or service provider team; their mission is to effectively manage complex projects on behalf of both parties as a trusted broker third party.

Why this works so well:

- Transparency and accountability of all team members' deliverables.
- Common language, tools and reporting.
- Frictionless facilitation.
- Virtual logistics coordination. The elimination of air travel and in-person meetings gave rise to the new art of Virtual Logistics. Practicing objective *active listening* is one of the critical success factors in a COVID-19 era.

2 UP THE EQ FACTOR

Behaviors have changed. Adjust your teams' empathy levels.

Business intelligence and emotional intelligence do not always go hand in hand; nonetheless, with the pandemic affecting people's lives in ways that are unimaginable, we find ourselves navigating new paths to building rapport, trust and commitment.

Recognition of the stress, anxiety, and the uncertainty present in one's daily lives is critical.

What we do:

- Encourage the sharing of personal stories. The commonality of these stories quickly builds rapport and sense of community.
- Schedule enough time to communicate freely.
- Make allowance for aberrant behavior. It will happen.
- Provide a safe space for team members to regain balance. This can include support from trusted champions of the project in either organization, validation from leadership and/or flexibility in working conditions.

3 CHANGE MANAGEMENT SIGN OFF ON THE FRONT LINE

Priorities will change. Prepare to be flexible.

The pandemic all but eliminates the benefit of face-to-face communication. Non-verbal signals are lost, replaced by an overabundance of calls and virtual meetings. This creates a lot of noise in message transfer, *akin to listening to short wave radio in the 80's*. Therefore, it is key that all stakeholders be on the same page across all deliverables. This is nowhere more important than at the front line of service delivery.

The solution is simple and highly effective. A weekly gate. A multi-level peer-to-peer sign off is mandated that clearly certifies both the client's and provider's commitment for the week were met in full.

The key change driver is this:

Sign off is jointly owned, and until all signatures are received, team members from both parties remain accountable for the outcome.

Why this works so well:

- Transparency of each teams' KPIs.
- Clarity of ownership and accountability.
- Commitment to an agreed process and result.
- Pain share/Gain share breaks down the barriers to change.

4 BE THE EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Change, as in any business, always includes *People, Process and Tools*, however nothing can be more important than deploying qualified, motivated, skilled personnel.

Because Compass Group self-performs the majority of the scope of work, eighty-five to one hundred percent of the service delivery team are employees of the company. So why is this important?

Each year, Compass Group ranks as one of the top 50 employers of choice in the world. Our commitment to Safety, Diversity, Inclusion, and Employee Development, underpinned by our culture of Hospitality, is unique.

Relationships with clients and employees in the facilities management industry are all too often overly transactional. This is not a good practice at the best of times, and least of all under the strain of COVID-19.

Why deploy your own employees:

- Regular one-on-one employee contact. Everyone needs extra communication *and positivity* during COVID-19.
- Cultural alignment across all services. From the barista to the electrician, a hard-wired foundation of hospitality and client-centric service.
- Employees embedded from transition to long-term operations maintain the continuity of practices and local knowledge.
- Frame the narrative around the deliverables important to the client, start with "why."

This pandemic is in no way a crutch or excuse for sub optimal performance. In fact, COVID-19 challenges us to break down traditional models of working, to be creative in communications, and learn to lead more than manage. More trust, more listening, more collaboration, and more flexibility. We should feel confident that what we learn during these challenging times, no matter our role, makes us even better.