



Facilities Management Survival Guide 2024

What you need to know to stay ahead of the curve
and drive peak performance at every location.

Table of contents

Introduction	3
Q&A: What should my priorities be this year?	5
Q&A: How can I shift my maintenance program from proactive to reactive?	9
Q&A: What technology is worth investing in to attain peak performance across my facilities program?	10
Q&A: How can I effectively source, manage, and ensure peak performance from my service providers?	13
Q&A: What should I be doing to get better performance out of my asset fleet?	15
Q&A: How can I go about getting more budget to fund my facilities program?	16
Q&A: What do I need to do to become more sustainable and stay compliant?	17
Our most popular resources and blogs	19
Additional educational and social resources	20



Introduction

Every year seems to bring a new wave of change and unpredictability, yet facilities managers are continually tasked with finding ways to raise the bar. You have to make sure the business thrives while facing heightened consumer demands. You're expected to prevent downtime while dealing with labor shortages.

At the same time, FMs must also juggle their programs cost-effectively while adapting to an industry landscape that has seen rising supply and labor prices. On top of that, sustainability requirements are also increasing. And while the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated for business leaders the importance of a pristine customer experience, that hasn't always translated to more budget for facilities.



We've repeatedly heard from the facilities industry that there will likely be more changes in this space in the next 5 years than we saw in the last 50. Keeping up with the demands of today while preparing for the future is a lot.

We salute your hard work!

In 2023, nationwide facilities spend was 31% higher than in 2019, with inflation playing a big part in that lift. This is being seen across industries from retail to quick service restaurants to grocery stores; we are all experiencing these growing pains. The most successful facilities teams will find ways to adapt quickly and partner with Operations, rather than playing catch up to the business strategy.

In 2024, facilities programs still experiencing labor and supply shortages. Of course this leads to longer lead times, higher prices, and more inconsistent quality service.

As of Q4 2023, service costs nationwide have continued to ascend YoY from 2022, climbing by 8%. More work to be done, with the same or less resources. With the labor market stretched so thin, effective facilities managers will find ways to work smarter rather than harder. It's possible!

But keep in mind, there has never been more exciting opportunities for facilities as a function to thrive. For one, this era of rapid change has acted as a catalyst for unprecedented growth and evolution in new technologies. Cloud platforms, data-driven analytics, and AI all offer facilities managers the opportunity to amplify the performance of their repair and maintenance programs to cut costs and keep customers happy and coming back. Plus, consumers are spending 3.2% more than they did in 2022, despite inflation.

Now facilities managers are being pressured to run the most streamlined facilities management program their companies have ever known. Fortunately, in 2024, there are even more opportunities to innovate and excel. We look forward to watching as you seize the day!



3% Increase in total facilities spend YoY in Q4 2023

Q: What should my priorities be this year?

#1 Improving brand uptime

Boosting your brand’s uptime should be one of the top priorities for every facilities manager this year. What’s brand uptime? It’s the measure of how well your physical infrastructure is supporting your ideal customer experience.

Strong facilities management strategies ensure minimal downtime for your business-critical assets and help keep up brand standards KPIs across every location. Brand uptime directly impacts company performance, and you are the star player.

The experience your customers have at your brick-and-mortar locations is the most important brand impression they get. Even superior product quality and pricing won’t overcome the negative impact of a poor experience in a customer’s eyes. A Nielsen study found that 83% of customers say they would stop using a brand after just one bad experience, yet it takes a brand 12 positive experiences to make up for just one unresolved negative experience.

There’s more of a direct link to your job and your company’s bottom line than many people outside of facilities really understand. So, with a focus on preventative maintenance to properly care for your assets and equipment, and by working with top-performing service providers (and not just the ones with the lowest hourly rate), you can be the driver of valuable brand uptime.

83%
of customers say they would stop using a brand after just one bad experience



#2 Becoming adaptable

All of us, as consumers and employees of businesses, are facing an era defined by rapid change. As companies evolve their business strategies, facilities does not have to simply play catch up. You can be a strategic partner that helps enable growth and manage change.

The pandemic showed the world how important facilities are to a safe and welcoming customer environment. It also put demands on facilities teams to need to rapidly adapt what they were doing, and those lessons are ones that we should be taking with us.

Whether it's adding new locations in new regions or adapting your retail space to allow for more takeout orders or digital experiences, the most successful facilities leaders are moving quickly when change is needed by managing smarter, not harder. That means they lean on technology for support.

They are moving away from manual processes, away from any legacy systems that can't enable real-time tracking and communication of repair and maintenance processes. If priorities need to be shifted in real-time to adjust to customer expectations, they can program that into their digital source of truth, often a SaaS platform, instead of lagging behind. The facilities leaders that are succeeding rely on data, not guesswork, to make their decisions. They use performance data, rather than guesswork, to source and rank the top service providers, so they can identify the right skills for their locations' evolving needs.

A facilities program that can rapidly adapt and grow with a company, partnering with operations to use effective technology, will deliver customer experience excellence, ultimately driving revenue.

[Learn how the facilities team at leading QSR brand Lemonade rapidly adapts to the brand's evolving business strategy ›](#)



#3 Applying data analytics for peak performance

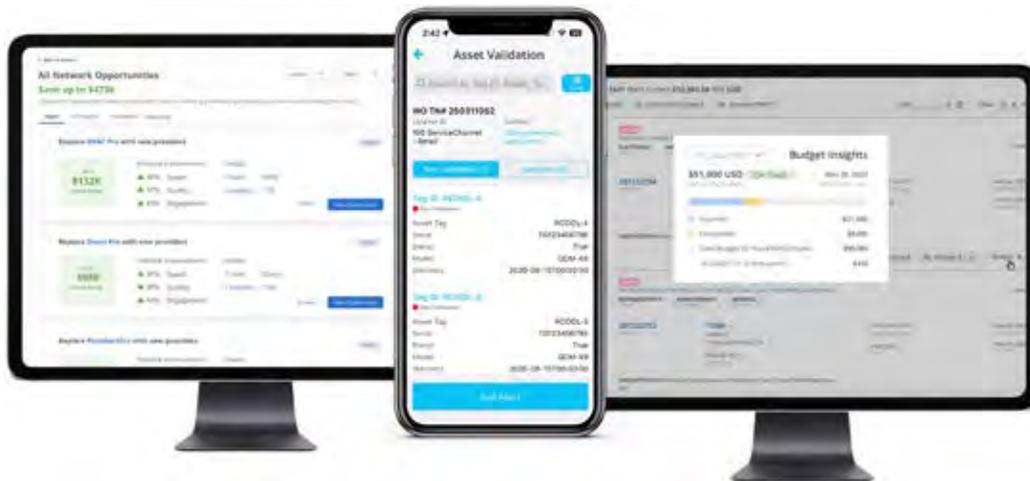
The use of data analytics is the next critical evolution in facilities management. The changes in connectivity and technology, partially brought on by the pandemic, have opened up a world of possibilities that allows for facilities to be digitally transformed and data driven.

Think about all the different types of data that can be collected that tells the story of your facilities program. There's energy consumption data, foot traffic data, repair spend data, asset performance data – and that's only the tip of the iceberg. Data analytics applies algorithms to all this information to identify key trends, patterns, and recommendations. These insights will give you the power to identify and execute on strategies for delivering higher performance in cost-effective ways.

For example, a trend that shows year-over-year increases in HVAC energy consumption across multiple geographies may indicate that these assets have begun to decline in performance and are in need of replacement.

By allowing your data to take center stage in your facilities management strategy, you allow for unprecedented growth and evolution that will save you time, money, and resources.

[See how you can incorporate data into your facilities management program >](#)



Q: How can I shift my maintenance program from proactive to reactive?

#1 Implement a preventive maintenance schedule for assets

Most facilities programs spend about 60% of their budget on reactive repairs vs 40% on proactive maintenance. To reduce downtime and total cost of operation, proactive maintenance should become the dominant practice in your program. We find that top performing programs strive for a ratio closer to 75% proactive vs 25% reactive. Preventive maintenance schedules that avoid unplanned outages and extend asset lifespan have a transformative impact on your team’s productivity and your company’s operational excellence.

A facilities management team that lives by reactive maintenance is constantly needing to put out fires, always responding to issues, rather than foreseeing and preventing them. Your team likely feels like they can’t get ahead. Reactive maintenance tends to feature battles against rising costs and an overall feeling of constant disruption.

With proactive maintenance, you can make data-backed decisions and address issues that could cause a disruption before it occurs. Your team can look ahead, feel in control, and make the best repair or replacement decision for your facility based on costs, seasonality, and availability. You have more choices in how much you pay for parts, who will do the maintenance work, and when it is done. This allows your entire facilities program to operate at a much higher level, with more value for the money you spend.

Top Performing Facilities Programs Strive For

75% vs **25%**
proactive maintenance reactive maintenance

#2 Promote a culture of taking initiative

How do you build a proactive maintenance program? You'll need to first promote a culture of taking initiative. Start by talking with your team and leaders about how working reactively is hurting your facilities.

The steps to get going include:

1. Track your revenue-generating assets in your facilities management software. This system of record allows you to monitor the condition and spend on your assets and execute your maintenance plans.
2. Start by analyzing your most critical assets to assess what type of regular care they should get to prevent breakdowns and why failures happen.
3. Set a plan and schedule for preventative maintenance activities in advance
4. Ensure that you have service providers that are trained in proactive maintenance, rather than reactive repairs
5. Track and analyze the performance of your assets. Using the data will help you track patterns, predict issues, and continually improve your proactive approach.

Go proactive, get the most out of your assets, and save your time, money, and sanity.



Q: What technology is worth investing in to attain peak performance across my facilities program?

#1 Analytics

Analytics is used to identify key data trends, patterns and insights within facility data. Facility teams gain broader and deeper visibility across their operations through the information gleaned through analytics.

This enables data-driven decision making, and allows for proactive strategic planning. For many facilities programs still tracking work and assets manually, it's a game changer, and the value extends across the org, to operations, finance, and the executive level. Implementing data analytics into your facilities management program has a very high ROI, and with the right cloud platform, can be smoothly integrated to your existing technology and operations, and customized to your business needs.



#2 Service automation

Service automation, often enabled by leading CMMS platforms, streamlines processes like validating work performed in the field, managing risk, keeping track of all planned and demand service requests, and completing proposals and invoices across all trades, categories and locations.

For facilities managers this technology helps organizations manage repair and maintenance at all their locations from a single dashboard. The efficiencies that service automation delivers can enable Operations and FM departments to resolve facilities issues as quickly as possible to limit cost overruns and unnecessary spending.

#3 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the process by which machines or software mimic human behavior and intelligence, with an ability to both acquire and apply knowledge.

This allows for automation (basically, decision-making) within the machine or software without human intervention. AI can be used in conjunction with an IoT system, allowing these devices to make adjustments according to learned user preferences or an analysis of historical trends.

For example, when you implement IoT sensors into your facility bathrooms you can receive insights into how that bathroom is used. From traffic and occupancy, toilet usages, and collecting user feedback on cleanliness levels, this information is fed into your AI to provide insights to your cleaning team about when and where they are needed allowing for the most efficient use of their time and effort.

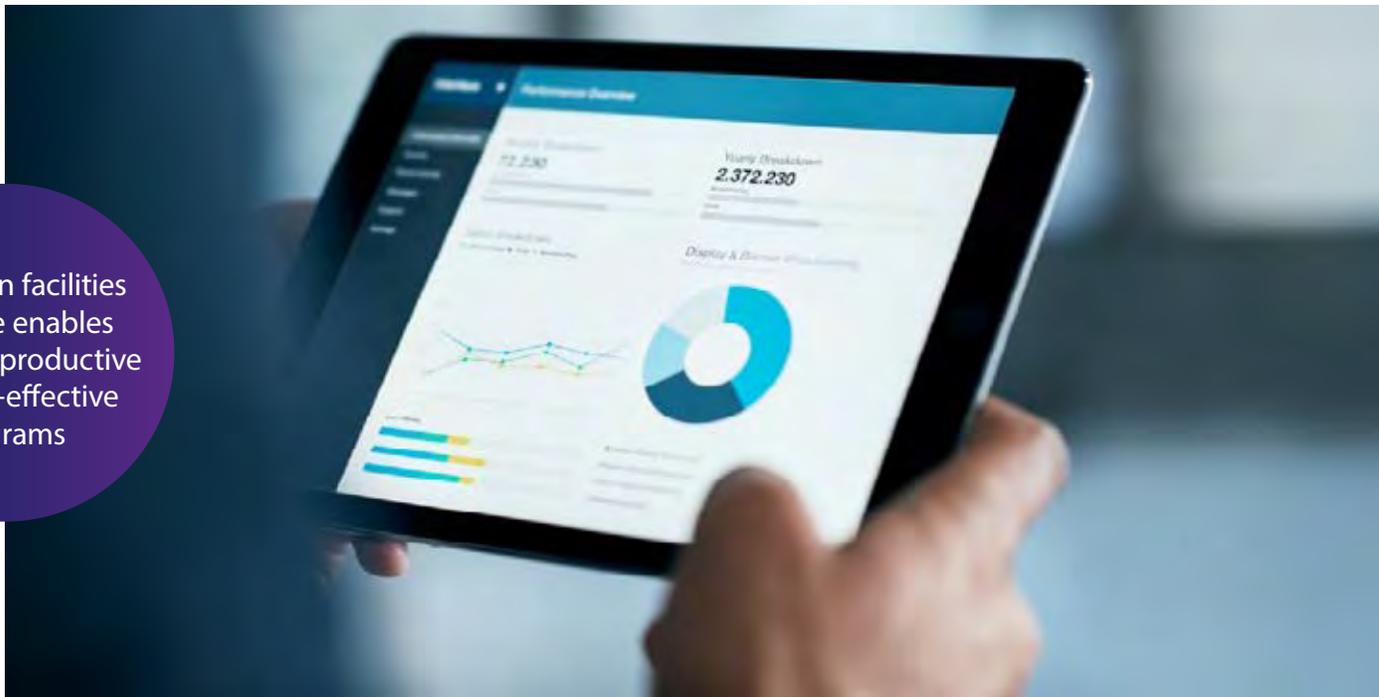
#4 Machine Learning (ML)

Machine Learning (ML) is often confused as a synonym for AI when it is actually a technique for realizing AI. Specifically, it refers to the process by which a machine acquires knowledge or skill. Machine learning-enabled facilities capture historical data of previously accepted or rejected proposals and work orders and then analyze and evaluate that data.

The system produces an actionable approve or reject recommendation for a specific proposal based on a reasonable confidence level.

For example, machine learning technology can identify when processes aren't operating at optimal levels and predict process failures. The self-monitoring benefit of machine learning helps facility managers be proactive, by saving time and money by handling potential problems before they manifest and grow in complexity and cost.

Machine learning can also help facilities managers automate processes. When a machine alerts facilities managers of an action to take, the machine over time can learn to automatically perform the action on its own. An example could be noticing that a piece of equipment is on track to break and independently ordering a replacement part.



ML-driven facilities software enables proactive, productive and cost-effective programs

Q: How can I effectively source, manage, and ensure peak performance from my service providers?

#1 Build the framework for a strong provider network

The traditional methods of sourcing service providers don't really give you the full story on provider performance. Brokers tend to focus on finding subcontractors with low hourly rates so they can mark up the cost, often regardless of the quality of work. Googling for providers doesn't offer any metrics on how they perform either.

You may have providers that include you on their Christmas mailing list, but are they a top performer? These avenues could be leading to more downtime and higher costs, but you don't have a way to find out.

The state-of-the-art approach to provider sourcing is using objective performance data to assess and make data-backed decisions on which service providers to use.



For example, ServiceChannel uses a standardized [Contractor Scorecard](#) to assess business-critical metrics and KPIs to quantitatively measure the performance of every service provider. The scorecard provides objective measurements and is transparent to both contractors and their clients to enable objective, data-based dialogue.

For an effective facilities management program, it's not only important to source top performers, but also to have an effective contractor management program in place. Workflows, invoices, communication, and relationships can fall through the cracks without a platform that tracks and makes it all visible. Multi-site facilities management teams today can't operate at the highest level with lean budgets without support from technologies such as service automation that revolutionize how they manage their service providers.

With [ServiceChannel's Provider Marketplace](#), you'll find the most comprehensive search and recommendation solution for service providers across trades and geographies. It's the only one in the industry with objective performance data. From our platform you can source, hire, and manage top performing service providers for each of your locations.



Q: What should I be doing to get better performance out of my asset fleet?

#1 Automating how I track assets

Asset management covers the processes, software, and services organizations rely on to maintain and control their asset fleet. By optimizing the use of assets throughout their entire lifecycle, you can increase your level of productive uptime in your facility while reducing your overall operational expenses.

What if I am already tracking my assets in a spreadsheet? Well, companies whose facilities programs are still running on spreadsheets lack the ability to track assets in real-time. One of the biggest drawbacks of manual tracking is the time required and difficulty in keeping the information accurate.

Implementing an asset management system allows your facilities to see what's happening with every asset in real-time, so you can plan your operating and capital spend to the penny and ensure compliance to avoid painful government fines. This birds-eye view also means that you can optimize your assets throughout their lifecycle ensuring that they are always properly maintained. When assets are properly maintained, businesses will increase ROI simply by extending the life of the equipment they invest in and eliminating duplicate costs, unnecessary purchases, and maintenance overspend.

A facilities management platform with asset tracking is a fundamental tool for organizations looking to improve the ROI of their physical assets and gain a competitive edge. After all, it's hard to visualize each phase of an asset's life cycle without referring to data – and no good decisions were ever made blind.

[Learn more about what ServiceChannel can do to support asset validation >](#)

Q: How can I go about getting more budget to fund my facilities program?

#1 By using data to build a use case

Healthier brands are the ones that invest in their preventative maintenance programs, it's as simple as that. When companies are trying to preserve cash by withholding the necessary budget from facilities, they inevitably lean on reactive repairs, suffering the consequences of increased downtime and unkempt appearance.

Brand downtime diminishes customer loyalty. Meaning you'll have to work at efficiently communicating to decision makers that investing in preventative measures, such efficient asset management, is a straight line to taking care of your customers.

Downtime is costly even beyond the customer experience. Reactive facilities programs, as opposed to better funded and strategized proactive ones, end up with systemic issues that drive up repair costs. Underperforming assets lead to lost product. This kind of revenue leakage adds up.

Your best ally in advocating for more budget is to leverage data to build your use case. The stakeholders that are making decisions about budget in an enterprise or commercial organization will respond to numbers showing the investment is well spent. Quantify what it's costing you in hours, recurring annual spend, customer satisfaction, anything that can prove your case. Make your case even stronger by adding in emotional and visual impacts too. Tell about the time that one of your store managers should have been focused on the customer experience but is instead trying to fix a leak, faulty lighting, or business critical equipment on the floor, which more preventative maintenance budget could have avoided completely.

*Your best ally in advocating for more budget is to **leverage data**.*

Q: What do I need to do to become more sustainable and stay compliant?

#1 Create a plan to support sustainable facilities

A greener facilities footprint is better for not just the planet, but your business too. Sustainable facilities management practices can ultimately decrease costs, improve operational performance, and deliver on the expectations that customers have for their preferred brands today.

There are several ways facilities can help their company get and stay compliant and reduce their environmental impact, including

- Using data-driven insights to improve energy efficiency and boost asset performance
- Track and reduce the impact of refrigerant and other chemicals and stay ahead of environmental regulations
- Lower your carbon footprint by decreasing truck miles traveled by working with service providers with a higher first time completion rate
- Maximize the lifespan of your equipment and materials through proactive maintenance strategies
- Finding innovative ways to reduce food waste, such as source reduction and waste tracking, or reusing food instead of wasting either through donations or animal feed
- Investing in onsite green energy sources such as solar panels

[Learn more about solutions to help facilities leaders in their sustainability efforts here ›](#)

#2 Implement routine compliance audits

Sustainability and compliance have become increasingly more intertwined in recent years. The EPA aims to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and a key component of that is regulating the chemicals commonly used in air conditioning and refrigeration.

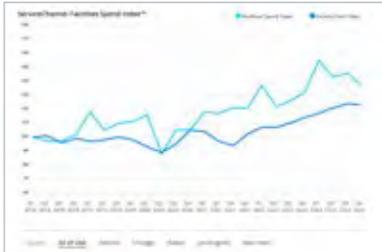
In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) outlines regulations for managing refrigeration and air conditioning equipment so companies can avoid releasing ozone-depleting substances (ODS) from appliances. Section 608 of the Clean Air Act describes exact procedures and protocols for servicing, maintaining, and disposing of refrigerant. In California, there are additional CARB regulations for HCFC use and production. This outlines how facilities can control refrigerant leaks through better detection and monitoring, as well as what steps facilities must take to address any refrigerant issues that arise. While the CARB regulations have been around the longest, many other states are following suit with guidelines of their own to help minimize greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to a more sustainable tomorrow.

[Learn more about sustainability regulations here ›](#)



Resources

Our most popular resources



Facilities Spend Index



ServiceChannel Webinars

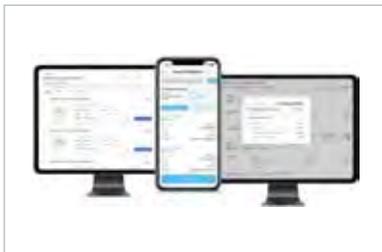


Grocery Benchmark Report



Restaurant Benchmark Report

Trending blog articles



Get Insights to Hit Your Budget, Boost Service, and Track Assets



How to Implement an Autonomous Maintenance Program



Understanding Maintenance Strategies for Optimal Facility Management



Make Smarter Capital Planning Decisions with Validated Asset Data



Building Training Programs for Maintenance Staff

Additional educational and social resources

Podcasts

Elevating Brick & Mortar

A show for multi-location brands in the retail, restaurant, grocery, convenience, banking, or wellness industries. Packed full of industry insights for leaders in operations, facilities, sourcing, procurement, construction, and finance – to find out how to accelerate that advantage and drive revenue.

[LISTEN HERE](#) 

Facility Management Times

Podcast covering topics at intersection of Facilities Management, Digital Transformation and Blue Collar Workforce. Micro episodes, macro trends and topics that hope to inspire an inclusive change in the FM industry.

[LISTEN HERE](#) 

The Modern Facilities Management Podcast

The Modern Facilities Management Podcast hosts facilities management professionals and discusses new trends, strategies, and insights in the industry.

[LISTEN HERE](#) 

i-FM Evolution

Facility Management Evolution explores the trends, innovations, and advancement in the facilities management universe.

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Workplace Innovator

The Workplace Innovator helps corporate real estate, facility management, IT, and HR leaders design incredible “friction-free” workplace experiences that fuel employee productivity, tech innovation and optimal space utilization, today, and tomorrow.

[LISTEN HERE](#) 

Additional educational and social resources

Blogs

Facility Executive

Podcast covering topics at intersection of Facilities Management, Digital Transformation and Blue Collar Workforce. Micro episodes, macro trends and topics that hope to inspire an inclusive change in the FM industry.

[READ HERE](#) 

FMLink

FMLink is a comprehensive, online, facilities management (FM) publication. They blend information from their own sources with those from many others, including leading magazines and associations in the field.

[READ HERE](#) 

i-FM

i-FM is the first online source for information about facilities management. They help you understand it and prosper in it – whether you're an in-house practitioner, a service provider or a newcomer to the whole strange business. With two decades of accessible and searchable archives, no other resource is as comprehensive or as authoritative.

[READ HERE](#) 

ServiceChannel

Official corporate blog for ServiceChannel covering a variety of topics and issues important to the facilities sector including customer success, product innovations, best practices, and technology trends.

[READ HERE](#) 

Additional educational and social resources

Books

“The Complete Guide to Facility Management” by Dan Lowry

Explains exactly what is required of a practicing facility manager in today’s built environment through personal stories and examples. Ideal for practicing FMs of all backgrounds and education levels.

[BUY HERE](#) 

“Mission-Critical Facilities Management: For the Non-Engineer” by Eric Woodell

Delves into the secrets to successfully operating mission-critical facilities including discussions about the people, policies, procedures and strategic planning.

[BUY HERE](#) 

“Total Facilities Management” by Brian Atkin

Overview of all key topics FMs should consider before embarking on a particular plan including the link between FM practice and an organization’s business objectives.

[BUY HERE](#) 

Social Media Accounts

Facility Management Journal (FMJ)

A monthly magazine providing industry specific intelligence to FM and property professionals in the private and public sectors.

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Facility Executive Magazine

Facility Executive keeps facility management professionals up-to-date on the latest practices, products, and services in the field.

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IFMA

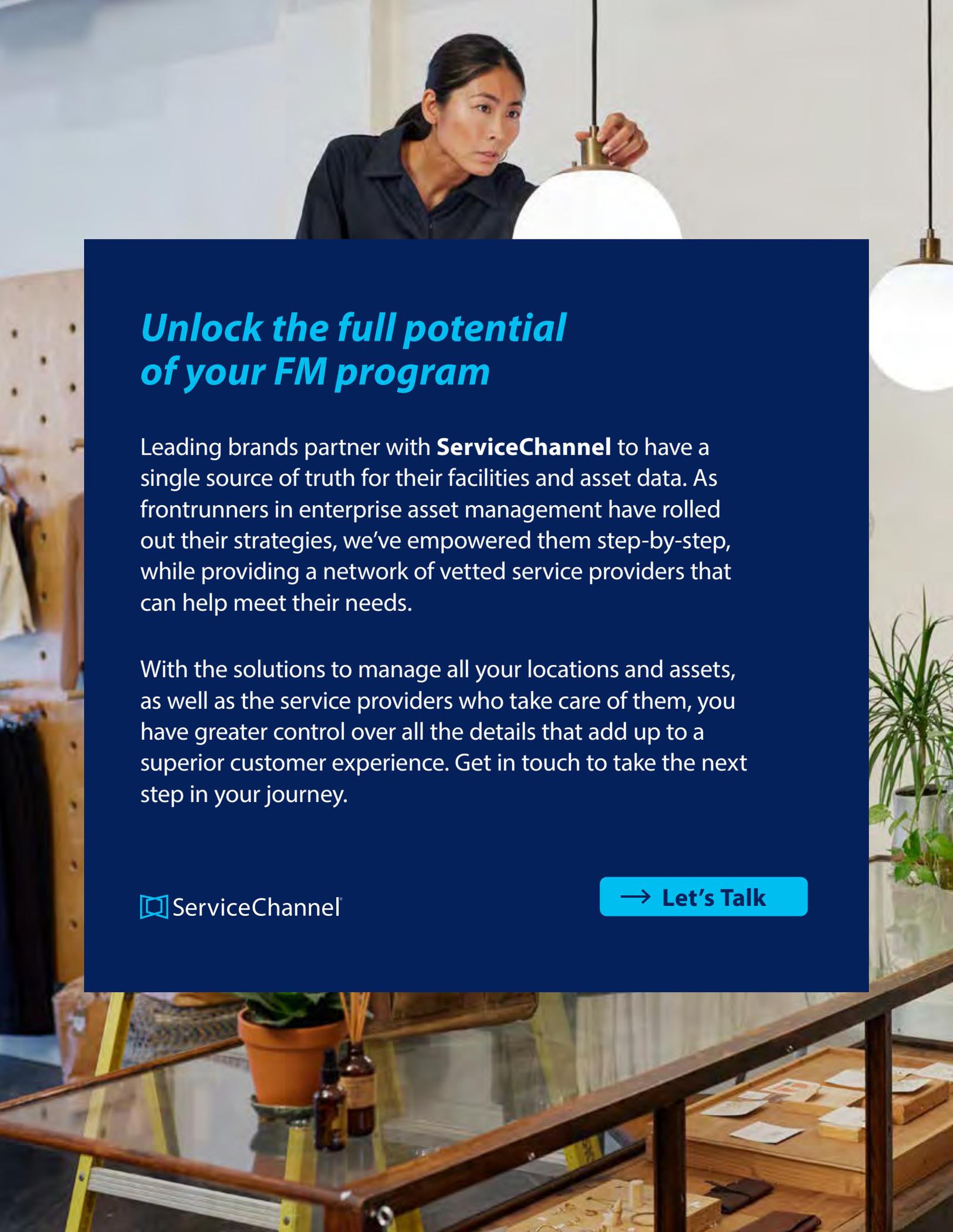
IFMA helps you advance personally and professionally in facilities management through career development, learning, networking opportunities and leadership skills.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#) 

RFMA

The only association created by and for Restaurant Facility Management Professionals.

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Unlock the full potential of your FM program

Leading brands partner with **ServiceChannel** to have a single source of truth for their facilities and asset data. As frontrunners in enterprise asset management have rolled out their strategies, we've empowered them step-by-step, while providing a network of vetted service providers that can help meet their needs.

With the solutions to manage all your locations and assets, as well as the service providers who take care of them, you have greater control over all the details that add up to a superior customer experience. Get in touch to take the next step in your journey.

 ServiceChannel

→ **Let's Talk**