

How AI can enhance user experience in FM.

Whitepaper

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Introduction

Modern organizations recognize the importance of employee well-being, satisfaction, and productivity for success. For facility managers, this means shifting the focus from buildings to employee needs. This requires a thoughtful approach to the work environment, where meeting rooms, workspaces, and services such as catering and cleaning are tailored to employee requirements. This approach not only promotes a pleasant work experience but also increases productivity and efficiency. Facility managers who invest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) now are ensuring a future-proof, enjoyable work environment for employees.

In this whitepaper, we will address the question:

How AI can enhance user experience in FM?

This whitepaper is intended for facility managers who recognize the importance of user experience and want to leverage AI to not only increase efficiency but also optimize the experience for employees and visitors.

Challenges faced by Facilities Managers

The challenges discussed in this whitepaper are key concerns within facility management that hinder an optimal user experience. While these are not the only challenges faced by facility managers, we believe AI can play a significant role in addressing these issues.

Information overload: users can't see the forest for the trees

End users are often confronted with an overwhelming amount of information. For example, detailed guidelines for reserving meeting rooms: who can book certain rooms, how many people are allowed in a room, and what conditions apply for catering? This information is often difficult to find, leading employees to contact the service desk for assistance. This not only increases the workload of the service desk but also results in inconsistent answers depending on who handles the inquiry and how the rules are interpreted.

*"According to a Forrester study, **63% of employees struggle to find the right information**. This results in significant time wastage and a decline in productivity within organizations."*

Forrester Consulting. (2020). The Modern Workplace Demands a New Approach to Knowledge Management. Forrester Research.

Dependence on physical support: reduced autonomy for users

Users want to be independent and handle tasks on their own. However, they often still depend on the service desk for issues like complex reservations or technical problems. This is not only inefficient for the end user but also creates a negative experience, especially when they have to wait for answers or when processes do not run smoothly.

Facility Management remains reactive

Many facility processes are still reactive: action is only taken when a problem arises. However, as a facility manager, you have access to a wealth of data that can enable proactive management. Consider maintenance needs or efficiently utilizing spaces based on usage patterns. The challenge, however, is to leverage this data in a scalable manner.

Clicking until you drop: why simple tasks are still too complicated in 2024

Despite technological advancements, end users in 2024 often face too many clicks and steps for simple tasks. For reporting issues, employees frequently have to navigate complex forms and answer unnecessary questions. The same applies to booking spaces, where users spend a lot of time finding a suitable room and time slot. Even simple tasks like reserving parking spaces or requesting access badges become time-consuming due to excessive input fields, even though most information is already available in other systems. These overly complicated processes lead to frustration and inefficiency, which contradicts the expectations of technology in 2024, which should be simpler and faster.

AI as the personal assistant of the end user

We believe that AI can be utilized within facility management as a personal assistant that helps users navigate their workday efficiently. AI is not just a convenient tool but an extension of the user. It provides support at the moment the user needs it and ensures that their experience is seamless and intuitive. This goes beyond simple searches; AI can actually perform the right actions, make recommendations, and even learn from the user's preferences.

The right information at the right time

Instead of users having to search for answers themselves, an AI assistant provides the information they need immediately. Whether it's finding a suitable meeting room or arranging technical support, AI can act as a personal assistant where users ask questions and receive direct answers based on current guidelines and information. Users often don't know which questions to ask or what information they might be missing. For example, when booking a room, AI can automatically consider relevant rules regarding capacity, catering options, and usage conditions without requiring the user to search for them. This way, users always receive the right information at the right time, reducing confusion and making their interaction with facility services more pleasant.

Insight at every step: How AI continuously gathers feedback during processes

A major advantage of AI is its ability to recognize where users encounter difficulties or struggle to find information, providing immediate insights into areas where processes or information delivery can be improved. Instead of relying on occasional surveys or manual feedback, AI continuously and automatically gathers data on users' experiences with facility services, such as cleaning, catering, and space usage. Users can provide step-by-step feedback during each process, helping to identify and resolve issues in a timely manner. This facilitates continuous optimization of processes.

By integrating and analyzing fragmented feedback, AI offers facility managers a comprehensive overview of user needs and satisfaction. This enables them to respond not only reactively but also proactively to the changing expectations of end users, resulting in higher satisfaction and quality of service.

Less work pressure, more job satisfaction

Repetitive tasks, such as booking spaces or reporting technical issues, are often perceived as tedious by users. By delegating these tasks to an AI assistant, there is more room for meaningful work, contributing to job satisfaction. Additionally, AI can provide personalized recommendations. For instance, if an employee has entered their allergies into the system, when a colleague selects catering for a meeting, AI can proactively advise avoiding products that are unsuitable for those allergies. This ensures that users feel more supported and can work more efficiently.

Fewer clicks, more autonomy

AI not only provides answers but also performs actions. Whether it's making a reservation for a space or registering a visitor, AI can handle these tasks for users. At Gfacility, we want users to no longer navigate through complicated forms and processes but simply indicate what they need, after which AI takes care of the rest. With an AI assistant, users can submit their requests through a short chat or voice message, for example: "I'm on the second floor and there's a large stain; I'd like to arrange cleaning." The AI assistant automatically creates the report without further user intervention.

Gfacility also has an ambitious future goal: one-click booking. In this vision, users can easily voice their requests with one click, such as: "I want to book a meeting room for 10 people tomorrow at 10 a.m." The AI assistant gathers the necessary information, checks availability, and completes the booking. This approach lowers the barrier for users, speeds up processes, and makes the experience more intuitive and personalized, while significantly increasing efficiency.

As end users are no longer dependent on others for support, their autonomy increases. This leads to greater satisfaction, as users have access to the information and services they need at any time, without delays or external assistance.

The role of the **servicedesk**

The servicedesk has always played a vital role in supporting end users by quickly and efficiently resolving issues. However, with the implementation of AI, this role will change significantly. AI will take over routine tasks such as bookings and simple inquiries, allowing the servicedesk to focus on more complex, strategic matters.

This shift enables service desk staff to work more proactively and concentrate on tasks where they can add human value. This can enhance their job satisfaction while further improving the quality of service for end users. Thus, the servicedesk remains a crucial hub in increasing overall satisfaction.

Recommendations

The question is no longer whether AI will play a role in facility management, but rather when you will implement it. Especially when you notice that current software no longer meets the end user's requirements, it's time to consider the transition to AI. With the right AI solutions, you can drastically enhance the user experience while simultaneously optimizing your own processes.

Define clear use cases for AI

A successful AI implementation begins with well-defined use cases. The possibilities are endless, so if you don't limit this, you won't see the forest for the trees. It is therefore important to determine which specific problems AI should solve. At Gfacility, the focus of AI is clearly on supporting end-users and facility departments, as opposed to broader AI tools like Copilot or Gemini. By defining clear use cases, AI is deployed in a targeted manner and remains "fit for purpose" within the organization.

Define goals and KPIs

Before AI use cases are implemented, it is important to establish measurable goals. By setting specific objectives, the progress and impact of AI solutions can be effectively evaluated. Defining relevant KPIs helps in monitoring performance, allowing you to determine whether the AI systems meet expectations and where further improvements are needed.

The basis of AI starts with data

The power of AI in facility management strongly depends on the quality of the available data. Many organizations already possess valuable information, and what makes AI special is that it also works effectively with less complete or inconsistent data, allowing you to realize benefits more quickly. Better data translates for users into a more personalized experience.

Don't make it too big, start small

AI may sound grand, but it is relatively easy to implement. Involve partners you trust for the implementation of AI and start with use cases where you expect the most positive impact for end users. Gather a test group and extensively test AI applications before rolling them out across the entire organization.

Risks & precautions

AI technology has existed for a long time, but has recently become more accessible and applicable within organizations. This understandably leads to a cautious approach to the implementation of AI. While caution is certainly warranted, with the right steps and preparation, you can safely and effectively integrate AI within your organization.

Use the right software

Just like with any software implementation, it is crucial to know how the AI solution handles data. Transparency about data processing is essential, especially when it comes to sensitive information. Make sure to choose a solution that complies with privacy and security guidelines, such as the GDPR, so that end-user data always remains secure.

Set clear boundaries

AI works best within well-defined frameworks. At Gfacility, for example, the AI assistant is limited to facility-related questions and takes into account the user's rights structure. This way, users only have access to the information they are entitled to. By setting clear boundaries for what AI can and cannot do, you maintain control and minimize risks.

Test thoroughly

Although AI is capable of working with less complete or inconsistent data, it is important to thoroughly test the technology before fully implementing it. Test how the AI solution handles different scenarios, check the accuracy of the responses, and ensure that the user experience remains consistent. This way, you can ensure that the solution performs well under varying conditions, which is crucial for end-user satisfaction.

Monitor and continuously improve

Make sure you continuously monitor and improve once you have implemented AI. The implementation is not the endpoint, but the starting point of a process of continuous development. Think of it as an employee with whom you regularly have a meeting to follow up on the development.



brainstorm?

Jasper is looking forward to engaging in a discussion about the opportunities that AI can offer your organization.

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