

## HELP DESK AND COMMUNICATION

The profession of facility management has received much public attention in the last several years. One of the most important reasons for the existence of facility management is the increasing *complexity* of organisations. Each employee needs a workstation. This workstation must meet many requirements laid down by the organisation or by law (e.g., laws about working conditions). In order to be productive employees must have the proper facilities.

In small organisations the same person can perform all these help-desk duties. But for organisations of 200 employees and up, the activities are usually so complex that more people must share the responsibilities. For anything larger than the small business it becomes important to have an integrated approach to housing and housekeeping.

### *Why an integrated approach?*

Competing interests abide in larger organisations and loss of productivity, cost and even conflict could result. A typical example; the company restaurant may want to attract as many people as possible, perhaps even guests from outside the organisation, while the security department would prefer to limit the number of visitors to the premises. Another example: the building manager has arranged with an external service provider to clean a certain room twice a week. Immediately after the cleaning has been done, the IT department, or the phone company, wants to install a cable in the ceiling. It clearly would have been better to leave the cleaning until after the cabling was completed, but that would require coordinating the different processes. Coordination requires an integrated approach.

Another (and perhaps the most important) justification for facility management is financial: the facility cost per average office employee amounts to approximately R95, 000 per annum in Europe and North America! This includes office accommodation, office supplies, cleaning, security, catering, etc. Although this is a substantial amount, it is often treated as a hidden cost and hence often overlooked as expenditure.