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THE KEYS TO "QUALITY ASSURANCE"

Resolving the self-performing vs. subcontracting debate. | **Martin Benom**



Martin Benom,
 CEO, The Resource
 Collection

For many purchasers of multiple site and retail facility service, the issue of hiring only self-performing vendors as opposed to those who subcontract (or partially subcontract) appears to be a simple, clear-cut decision — either it “mat-

ters very much” or it “does not matter at all.” One facility service provider claims, “We self-perform all of our work!” Others boast that they subcontract all phases of their field operations. Yet another hints at self-performance citing its nationwide staff of nearly 20,000 employees. Wow! Other facility service providers work hard to avoid the question altogether. Is one choice really better than the other? Must you settle for one extreme or the other? Can you be confident you have selected the best solution for your company? Is there a measure or rule for determining the “right mix” of facility service vendors who self-perform and/or those who self-perform and subcontract when necessary and/or those who only subcontract?

In order to adequately address these questions, each facility manager needs to step back and view them through a filter that addresses his or her company’s overall mission. The reality is that neither exclusive use of self-performance nor of subcontracting can be the complete answer. No company has self-performing capabilities in every discipline or facilities



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in every city in America and Canada. Try as they may, facility service vendors who expect to meet the requirements and geographic reach of multiple-site facilities and retailers must include subcontracting local partners. If our plumber is busy on an assignment and you have a broken water line at a different facility, can you really afford to wait until he finishes his current task or would you prefer your water to be shut off instantly by a local subcontractor before it can do even more damage?

A professional facility service vendor will determine your desired national standard and will require its service partner’s management to understand your needs and expectations and ensure that all personnel are properly informed prior to beginning a service call. It is partially for these reasons that a hybrid model or

composite approach utilizing the best of both options is nearly always the best solution for multiple site facility managers and their maintenance providers. One caveat, however: the successful delivery of this hybrid model hinges on the service provider having a strong management framework supported by a comprehensive quality assurance (QA) program.

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As the backbone of this and future discussions, quality assurance is understood to be the combination of overriding objectives pervading a company, which results in predictable and repeatable delivery of the highest quality products and

