Making better workplace decisions using data

iwfm

Institute of Workplace
and Facilities Management

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2. Why workplace decisions are important

The first Guidance Note in this series, 'Introduction to Workplace', explained what workplace is, how it relates to facilities management (FM) and what it means for you as a facilities manager. You can download it from www.iwfm.org.uk/better-workplaces.

Let's begin with an example. A few years ago, an investment bank decided to modernise its global headquarters in the City of London. The bank's senior leadership team had decided that they needed to keep up with their competitors by adopting 'new ways of working' and creating a workplace that befitted a respected financial institution.

This, the second guidance note in the series, focuses on the role that decision-making and data play in creating better workplaces. Workplaces are the result of many different decisions and the quality of those decisions influences how good those workplaces are for the people who work in them.

This guidance note will look at what leads to good or bad workplace decisions and the practical steps you can take to make better decisions about the workplaces you're responsible for. It will encourage you to reflect on how you and your organisation make decisions and how those decisions could be improved.

Data is one thing that influences decision-making. A lack or absence of data can lead to uninformed decisions and uninformed decisions are essentially guesses. The aim of this guidance note is to help you use workplace data to help you and your organisation to make better decisions.

WORKPLACE AND WORKSPACE – A QUICK REFRESH

This is how we use the terms 'workplace' and 'workspace' in this guidance note:

- workplaces are the social places where people use the tools available to them to get their work done - a workplace contains and involves people
- workplaces can be fixed (for example hospitals and offices) or flexible (for example a work van or a temporary place of work)
- workspaces are the physical spaces or environments available for people to work in - spaces are empty and they become places when they have people in them

Remember that words can be defined in different ways. These aren't the only definitions of workplace and workspace, but they are the ones that we believe allow FM to make the best contribution to organisations.

The bank appointed a firm of architects to come up with a design for their new workspace. The architects worked closely with the bank's leadership team to create a high-quality workspace that would impress clients and allow the bank's staff to work in a more agile way.

The bank's staff were invited to a 'town hall' event, where they were told why their workspace was changing and shown images and a virtual walkthrough of what their new workspace would look like. Some staff expressed concerns about the design of their new workspace, but these concerns were brushed aside by the bank's senior leadership team and the architect, who were confident in the decisions they had made.

Three years later the bank's staff are largely working in the same way as they did before the changes, despite the 'agile' environment. Most staff still spend most of their time sat at their desks. This is mainly because managers expect to see staff at their desks and staff don't have the technology required to work any differently. Many staff agree that the changes were not just a disappointment but also a missed opportunity.

ACTIVITY
Pause for a moment and reflect on how the bank approached the changes to its workplace:
- do you think they approached it the right way?
- what did they do right and what did they do wrong?
- how could they have approached it differently?

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The example described above is actually quite typical of how organisations make decisions about their workplaces. Workplace decisions are often made by a small number of individuals (usually senior leaders and/or workplace professionals), announced to the rest of the organisation and then defended from criticism.

This decide, announce, defend (DAD)[1] approach means that staff have limited involvement in the decisions that affect them. This can leave them feeling 'done to'. In these circumstances it's not uncommon for staff to push back against the decisions imposed on them, rightly or wrongly, and look for ways to undermine the decisions.

Not involving staff in decisions about their workplace can also mean that the solutions being implemented won't meet their needs. It's very easy for organisations to fall into the trap of making assumptions about what their people need rather than taking the time and effort to genuinely understand their needs.

It's also worth noting just how emotive workplace changes can be for many people. As well as making assumptions about staff needs, organisations often fail to recognise the very real emotional role that workplaces play, including making them feel valued and included.

Decision makers can also fall into the trap of looking for 'off the shelf' solutions to their workplace problems, without considering how those solutions might work in their own unique organisation. The latest human resources (HR), technology or workspace fad may seem very appealing and convenient but may be completely inappropriate.

Finally, the example of the bank illustrates how workplace decisions are often made in silos, without consideration for how one component of workplace can influence another. In the case of the bank, there was a desire to create a workspace for 'agile working', but no thought had been given to the changes in culture or technology that would be needed to bring this about.

Footnote:
[1] Walker, P. (2009). Dinosaur DAD and enlightened EDD—engaging people earlier is better. The Environmentalist, 71, 12-13.

The consequences of 'bad' decision-making will vary from situation to situation. It may mean an organisation wastes valuable time and resources on a workplace initiative that fails to deliver the desired outcomes. It may even make matters worse. The organisation may then have to invest more time and resources to undo these problems and deliver the originally intended outcomes.

ACTIVITY
Now think for a moment about your organisation or a client organisation:
- how does it make decisions about its workplaces?
- does it do some of the things described above?
- how could its approach to decision-making be improved?

HOW ORGANISATIONS MAKE DECISIONS

There are many different models and frameworks about decision-making and how individuals and organisations make decisions. One particularly useful but not widely known model is the Integrated Decision Framework by Fuchs and Wolf (2009)[2]. The Integrated Decision Framework suggests that there are four types of influences on organisational decision making:

1   Rational influences (including businesses cases, analytics and modelling, risk assessments and cost/benefit analyses)

2   Non-rational influences (including 'gut' instinct, intuition and emotion)

3   Cultural influences (including values, beliefs, ideology, organisational identity and ethics)

4   Political influences (including rank, power, status, turf wars and incentives)

These four influences aren't mutually exclusive – all four may influence a decision at the same time. However, the relative influence of these factors will vary from organisation to organisation and from situation to situation.

What's really useful about this simple model is that it enables frank and honest conversations about the things that actually influence organisational decisions. It isn't unusual for organisations to convince themselves that they are operating rationally, even when the evidence suggests otherwise. For instance, who doesn't know about a situation where a business case needed to be shaped to support a decision that had already been made? How 'rational' does that actually sound?

Now think about how decisions are made about workplace in your organisation or your client's organisation:

• which of these four factors have the most or least influence?

• what evidence have you used to help form this opinion?

• what are the implications for the workplace in question?

SOME DECISIONS MATTER MORE THAN OTHERS

Regardless of what level you're working at, decision making will play a central role in your work. Every day you make decisions yourself, you help others to make decisions and you implement decisions made by others. Some of these decisions will be 'big' and others will be 'small'.

The decisions you make (or implement on the behalf of others) can influence how you go about your job and how you are viewed by other people. For instance, people may question your professional knowledge or competence if they think you have made (or been involved with) a 'bad' decision.

The pressure to make the 'right' decision can result in risk aversion. This means people may delay a decision, spend too long deciding or opt for a conservative outcome.

Addressing this issue in a now famous 2015 letter to shareholders[3], Jeff Bezos, the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Amazon.com, distinguished between:

• type 1 decisions that are not reversible - he called these 'one-way doors' because you can't go back if you don't like the consequences

• type 2 decisions that are reversable - he called these 'two-way doors' because if you don't like the decision, you can always go back

Bezos' point was that the time and effort spent on making a decision should reflect the type of decision being made. He argued that type 1 decisions should be made '...methodically, carefully, slowly, with great deliberation and consultation'. Whereas type 2 decisions 'should be made quickly by high judgment individuals or small groups.'

He also suggested that as organisations become larger they tend to apply type 1 decision-making processes to type 2 decisions, which can lead to slowness, a lack of experimentation and stifling of innovation.

Now think about the workplace-related decisions that you or your organisation have made recently:

• which ones would you say were type 1 and which ones were type 2?

• did the time and effort spent on the decision reflect the type of decision being made?

• if not, what were the implications?

BEWARE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Decisions can have both positive and negative consequences. Some of these consequences may be foreseen and intended, but others may be unforeseen and unintended. Plus, to complicate matters further:

• some of the consequences of decisions may not occur immediately – it may be months or years before the consequences of a decision become apparent

• the costs and benefits of decisions may be felt by different stakeholders in different ways – some stakeholders may benefit from a decision, but others may lose out

When making decisions, decision-makers tend to focus their attention on short or medium-term intended consequences – the immediate changes or benefits they want to bring about. They may try to mitigate or eliminate any anticipated negative consequences, although some costs may be seen as necessary (particularly if the decision-maker doesn't have to bear these costs!)

Decision-makers tend to be less good at identifying potential unintended consequences, especially if those costs occur further into the future and are borne by different stakeholders. This is human nature, but the result is that decisions made with the best intentions may have unintended negative consequences. In some cases they may actually make the overall situation worse.

Let's bring this to life with a simple workplace example. To save costs (and therefore potentially jobs) an organisation decides to improve the utilisation of its office space by closing a floor of its building and squeezing more (and smaller) desks into the remaining floors, with all but the most senior managers coming out of their spacious offices to join everyone else.

The organisation tries to justify and sell this decision to its staff by explaining that financial sacrifices are needed to protect the company's current and future performance. It also explains how bringing everyone closer together will actually promote better interactions and help the company to be less siloed.

The table on the following page identifies some of the potential consequences of that decision.

Now think about your own organisation or client organisation and the decisions they have made about their workplaces:

• can you think of any decisions that have had negative unintended consequences?

• could these unintended consequences have been foreseen?

• if so, how could these consequences have been mitigated or eliminated?

	BENEFITS	COSTS
ANTICIPATED	Reduction in property costs Improved communication Less hierarchical behaviour	Costs of restack Increase in ambient noise and distractions Heavier impact on workspace facilities
UNANTICIPATED	Some staff start working elsewhere Improved business resilience Greater awareness of other teams	Increase in internal email traffic Reduction in staff engagement Increased staff turnover

3. The role of data in workplace decisions

Imagine for a moment that you're looking to buy a car. Where would you start? You could go to the nearest car showroom and buy the first car you see, but that's probably highly unlikely. After all, you could end up buying a car that doesn't meet your needs. You could ask the people at the showroom for a recommendation, but how do you know you can trust them and that they have your best interests at heart?

In all likelihood you would do some form of research before deciding which car to buy and where to buy it from. For instance, you might read reviews online, compare prices and test drive different models. These research activities would provide you with the information required to make a more informed decision about which car best meets your needs.

Data, in the form of information, plays a critical role in how we make decisions, but we often take this for granted because information is now so ubiquitous and accessible in our everyday lives. We use information to make more informed decisions in ways that we were unable to do before the advent of the internet, even for decisions that are relatively inconsequential.

Decisions made without access to relevant and timely information are essentially guesses, or 'leaps of faith'. They may be based on gut instinct, past experience or by copying the actions of others. In many everyday situations making decisions this way is completely reasonable and necessary. We're hardwired by nature to operate this way, otherwise we'd get so bogged down in details that we'd never make it through the day!

However, for more important decisions this approach is potentially risky because you may not make the 'right' decision. It's worth noting that being more informed does not necessarily lead to the 'right' decision, but it probably means that the 'right' decision is more likely. You'll only actually know if you've made the 'right' decision after the event.

We typically make 'wrong' decisions due to a combination of:

• not having all of the required information
• the information being misleading or inaccurate
• misinterpreting some or all of the information
• ignoring some or all of the information
• the circumstances surrounding the decision changing

Sometimes our in-built biases or past experiences mean we decide to do one thing, even if all of the information available to us suggests we should do another. For example, our previous car owning experience and brand loyalty may have a strong influence on our choice of car – or which cars we'd even consider – regardless of what other information we uncover through our research.

ACTIVITY
Think about a time when you made the 'wrong' decision (it might be painful to admit but be honest with yourself – you now have the benefit of hindsight!)
• why was the decision 'wrong'?
• what led you to the 'wrong' decision?
• what else would you have needed to make the 'right' decision?

As consumers we've become accustomed to being able to easily find out what other people think about the products or services we're thinking about buying. Those other people may be 'experts' who have tried and compared the product or service with alternatives, or they may be customers who have purchased and used it. Either way, these first-hand experiences are likely to influence our purchasing decision.

In contrast to the 'information rich' world we inhabit as consumers, organisations are often 'information poor' when it comes to making decisions about their workplaces. Most organisations don't tend to share their experiences of workplace change initiatives and, if they do, they tend to just focus on what went well rather than what went wrong. If your organisation invested in new technology for its workers and that technology didn't deliver the expected benefits, is that something it would talk about publicly? Probably not.

Workplace decisions are often rare, 'one-off' decisions that require specific data that isn't readily available or collected by the organisation as a matter of course. Indeed, such decisions often highlight how little an organisation knows about that particular aspect of its workplace because it's not previously been seen as important. For instance, how many organisations carry out a survey of their staff prior to making changes to their workspace and then never undertake one again?

Rather than going to the effort of collecting the data required it can be tempting for organisations to take short-cuts. They may simply copy what other organisations have done, because there's a feeling of security and reassurance in following the example of others (it's worth remembering this the next time you're looking at a workspace 'case study'). Or they may take the (sometimes unfounded) claims of suppliers at face value, because they are deemed to be the subject matter experts who have helped to implement similar changes elsewhere.

Organisations also often appoint consultants to help them to collect the data required to make important workplace decisions. This makes sense if the organisation does not have the required expertise or resources in-house and/or because they want an 'independent' viewpoint. But it can also have its downsides, not least because the organisation may not take ownership of the data and resultant decisions or develop the data collection and analysis capabilities in-house.

Workplace decisions are often rare, 'one-off' decisions that require specific data that isn't readily available or collected by the organisation as a matter of course. Indeed, such decisions often highlight how little an organisation knows about that particular aspect of its workplace because it's not previously been seen as important.

ACTIVITY
Think about a time when your organisation or client made a significant change to its workplace. The change could be an FM, IT or HR led change.
- what data was collected to help make the decision?
- in what way did the data influence the decision?
- what other data could have been collected to improve the decision-making?

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DATA AND INFORMATION?

The terms data and information are often used interchangeably, but it's important to understand not just the difference, but also the implications.

Perhaps the best way to highlight the difference is to start by stating that data is 'raw', whereas information is 'processed' in some way. By 'raw' we mean unorganised facts that don't have any context. For example, the numbers 21.5, 12.3, 23.7, 15.9, and 28.2 are data. But what do they mean?

Well, if we tell you they are measurements in degrees Celsius, taken using a thermometer, we can recognise them as temperature readings. Then by adding that they are readings from a warehouse operating throughout the year, they become information that we can 'process' to inform us about the warehouse's working conditions.

But this information only gets us so far – it tells us what the temperatures are in the warehouse, but it doesn't tell us why they are like that, or indeed what significance they might have. This is where both theory and experience come in, to help us not just gather information, but also to make sense of it. This sense making takes us beyond the information we have, toward the knowledge (and hopefully wisdom) to act upon it and make informed and appropriate decisions.

Adding more information can provide further context and help us to make sense of the information we already have. For example,

health and safety regulations in the UK[4] say an employer must maintain reasonable working temperatures, stating a minimum of 16 degrees but no maximum. So, we now know that at certain times of year the working conditions in the warehouse are definitely questionable. If you've ever tried to work in conditions lower that 16 degrees, you may know from your own experience how this feels.

But what about the 28.2 degree reading – is this acceptable? In the absence of statutory guidance about a maximum temperature, it's necessary to gather different kinds of information, for instance by talking to the people in the warehouse about their working conditions and the FM team to understand how they manage such temperature extremes.

Perhaps the 28.2 degree reading was due to a rare heatwave or maybe it's a regular occurrence that makes work uncomfortable and hazardous. These two situations would lead to very different decisions and actions. The former might involve inviting a local ice-cream van onto site and allowing staff time to enjoy the unusually hot weather. The latter might involve investing in clothing and air conditioning equipment.

This example might seem simple – it started with just five pieces of numerical data – but it illustrates the important role that context plays in helping us to make sense of and interpret data, and how this influences our decision-making.
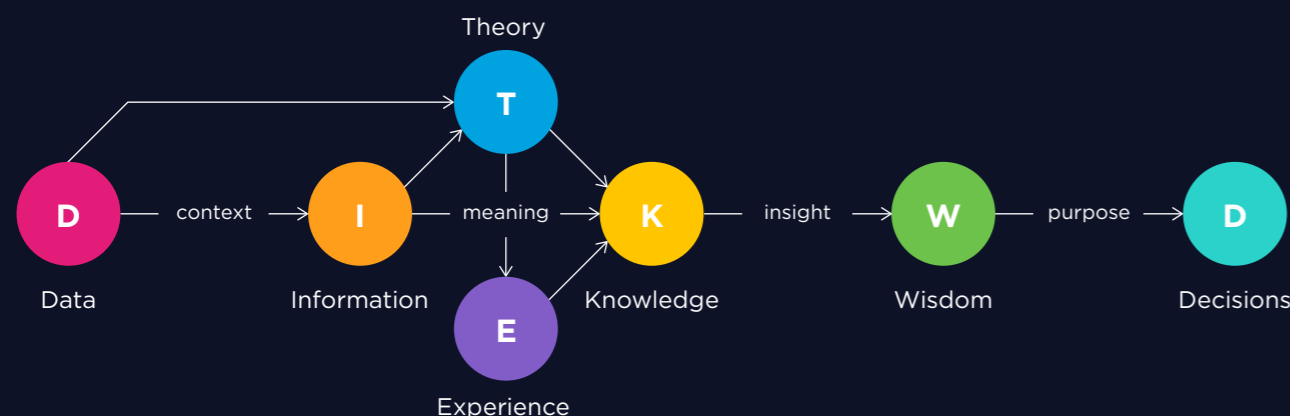
Adapted from Michael Ervick (2012)

Footnote:
[4] The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

WHAT ARE BIASES AND HOW DO THEY INFLUENCE DATA AND DECISION MAKING?

Most people like to think of themselves as 'rational' decision-makers. We carefully weigh up our options and base our decisions on the information available to us. However, decades of academic research have shown that our decisions are often anything but rational, even if we like to see them as such afterwards.

Our decisions are heavily influenced by what are known as cognitive biases. In everyday language the word 'bias' is used to describe a prejudice for or against a particular party or outcome. For example, when a football supporter accuses a referee of being biased, what they are implying is that the referee favours the other team and is making decisions accordingly.

Cognitive biases are systematic errors in our reasoning or judgement. Examples that you may be familiar with include:

• confirmation bias – favouring information that supports your pre-conceived ideas or preferences and ignoring information that contradicts them

• sunk costs – continuing with an activity because you've already invested significant time or resources into it, even though you know it's the wrong thing to do

• optimism bias – underestimating the time or resources required to complete an activity, such as a project

• discounting – showing a preference for an immediate outcome over one that will occur later, even if the later outcome is more favourable

It's not difficult to see how such biases can influence workplace decisions. For instance, an organisation may embark on an IT transformation programme that runs over time and budget. It continues investing in the programme, even though the technology in question is now out of date, and ignores information that might contradict this approach.

We are all susceptible to cognitive biases – it's part of being human – but a key aspect of being a more critical thinker is spotting where they might be creeping in and pausing to consider what to do about it.

Now think about where your organisation or client organisation has made decisions about its workplace:

• were any of the above cognitive biases evident in the decision-making?

• was it the 'right' decision, in hindsight?

• how could the decision-making process have been approached differently?

4. Types of workplace data

Data used in decision-making can take two different forms: it can be quantitative (numeric) or qualitative (non-numeric).

We encounter both types of data when making decisions in our everyday lives. For instance, when we're looking at a product on a website, we may look at:

• what rating the product has been given by people who have purchased it previously - this rating is usually a number on a scale between 1 and 5. If more than one person has reviewed the product an aggregate score will be shown. The score is quantitative information.

• what comments have been made about the product by people who have bought it previously. The comments may focus on what people like or dislike about the product. The comments are qualitative information.

We'll tend to use both types of information to make a judgement about whether or not to buy the product. We might start by identifying the products rated 4 or 5 stars and then read what people have said about each one. We might also then use another piece of quantitative information – perhaps the prices of the products or the estimated delivery time – to help make our decision.

As an FM practitioner you will constantly be receiving information in relation to the decisions you make in your work. Being able to think critically about that information is a key part of your job.

HOW DO WE KNOW IF SOMETHING IS 'TRUE'?

Think for a moment:
• how do you know if something is true?
• what criteria or methods do you use to determine whether something is true or not?

We go through our lives relying on information provided to us by other people. Sometimes this is from people we know, but usually it's from people we've never met or even heard of. Even so, most of the time many of us tend to believe that much of what we're being told is 'true'. But how do we know if the information we're being given is correct?

We may try to check to see if the information is valid and accurate, but in most situations that simply wouldn't be practical or cost-effective. Instead we might rely on our past experience to judge whether the information sounds credible. For instance, if a bar bill for two drinks came to £18 in a village pub in Yorkshire, you'd probably query the price. But if you were in a nightclub in London, you'd most likely begrudgingly accept it.

Our judgement that something is correct may be based on the source of information being received. We tend to trust certain sources, even if we don't know those sources first-hand. Examples might include 'reputable' companies, media outlets, government bodies or professional experts, such as doctors or surveyors.

However, every now and again controversies arise that make us question our trust in third-parties and the credibility of the information we're basing our decisions on. Recent examples include the Volkswagen 'dieselgate' scandal in the automotive industry or revelations about fake reviews on websites such as Amazon and eBay.

Such controversies highlight how information that we assume is 'objective' and 'factual' is often anything but. People decide what data is collected, how it is collected, how it is analysed and how it is presented - even in our increasingly digital world. An algorithm may seem neutral, but algorithms are created by people for particular reasons – in some cases reasons that might not be in our, or certain peoples', best interest.

As an FM practitioner you will constantly be receiving information in relation to the decisions you make in your work. Being able to think critically about that information is a key part of your job. This is particularly important during workplace change initiatives, when colleagues, consultants and suppliers may be making (sometimes competing) claims based on their own experience, information and interests.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data is often seen as essential to 'good' decision-making in business and government because it provides us with a means of 'measuring' what's going on in the world. Indeed, the notion that "what gets measured gets managed"[5] is ingrained in management thinking, particularly in a digital world awash with data. Quantitative data is seen to be objective, robust and reliable.

However, quantitative data is very much influenced by human subjectivity and bias, to varying degrees. Humans influence what data is collected or ignored and the methods of collection. They influence how the data is analysed, interpreted and presented. But in many situations the influence humans have on quantitative data is disregarded or hidden from view.

In addition, while quantitative data can be good for establishing what's going on in a particular situation, it's often less good at telling us why something is the way it is. Think again about the product review website referred to above – the 4 and 5 star ratings tell us that people like the product, but they don't tell us why they like it. We need to explore the qualitative data – the reviewers' comments – to potentially find out why.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data can provide us with a richer picture of what's going on in a given situation. For instance, a space utilisation study may show that people in an organisation rarely use a particular work setting – say an informal seating area. You may make (possibly incorrect) assumptions about why that is the case, but only by asking people why they don't use it can you come to understand the actual reasons why.

In a workplace context, organisations rely on both qualitative and quantitative types of data to help make day-to-day decisions. Often this data is collected as a matter of course for entirely different purposes, but it can provide insights into how well a workplace is working. For instance, the comments people make in an exit interview might provide insights into the suitability of an organisation's workplace or technology. Equally, access control system data used to keep a building secure can also contain clues regarding workspace utilisation.

During a workplace change initiative, organisations may collect additional data to help inform their decisions. The types of data collected and the methods used to collect the data will depend on the needs of the organisation. For example, if the organisation wants to know:

• how efficiently they're using their workspace, they might analyse existing headcount data, floorspace data and occupancy cost data - they may also undertake or commission a space utilisation survey

• how engaged their staff are compared with those working elsewhere, they might purchase an off-the-shelf online survey that enables them to benchmark their results with other organisations

• whether their workplace reflects their organisation's brand, they might interview or survey representatives from clients, suppliers or partner organisations and compare their feedback with their brand values

However, if organisations don't ask the right questions at the outset, they may spend time and resources collecting the wrong data. Which in turn may lead them to make the wrong decisions. This isn't about whether one type of data or research method is fundamentally better than another, it's about what's appropriate in the circumstances.

Let's return to the example of the investment bank that we introduced at the beginning of this guidance note. To avoid the problems they subsequently encountered, the bank's senior leadership team could have asked how the bank's employees will need to work in the future and what workspace and technology they will need to enable this. They could have also asked how ready their employees are to work differently.

They could then have sought answers to these questions by engaging with their employees using some combination of, for example, an online survey, interviews and workshops. Engaging with their employees in this way would have shed light on their needs, aspirations and concerns. But it would also have been a first step on the path to leading effective workplace change, a topic that will be explored further, later in this series of guidance notes.

Footnote:
[5] A phrase coined by Peter Drucker, the management consultant and author.

WORKPLACE DATA AND ETHICS – DO NO HARM

A key principle of academic research can be summed up in three words: do no harm. This simple tenet encourages researchers to think about how their work will impact on the people and organisations in their study (including themselves). The researcher will be required to explain how they will prevent their research from harming others.

It's easy to see why this is critical in clinical research. Doing harm in this field may lead to illness, disability or a loss of life. But it's equally important to think about the harm organisational research can cause, including the professional and mental wellbeing of anyone who may be involved or affected by the outcomes.

As well as thinking critically about the quality and credibility of the data available to us, being able to think through the ethical implications of our data gathering is an important skill to develop.

There are a number of ways to collect and use workplace data in a more ethical manner, including:

• ensuring that participants are taking part in the research of their own free will

• allowing participants to opt out of the study, even if this is later in the research

• anonymising data so that individual participants can't be identified

• providing participants with full information about what the research is about and why

• being honest about the types of data being collected and why

• explaining how the data will be stored and for how long, and who will have access to it

• offering to share findings with participants when the time is right

These tactics are particularly important when you're asking people for their opinions, because they will result in better quality data. People will be more honest with you if they feel safe and aren't fearing repercussions.

Additional ethical challenges can arise when collecting workplace data using new digital technologies. Such technologies often trigger the strongest and most emotional responses. For instance, using cheap sensors instead of expensive people to gather space utilisation data might seem like an attractive and sensible option, but if not handled carefully it could lead to accusations of 'big brother' type monitoring.

As well as thinking critically about the quality and credibility of the data available to us, being able to think through the ethical implications of our data gathering is an important skill to develop.

5. What should I do next?

We recommend that you:

1 Give this guidance note to colleagues (including clients and senior managers) who you think might be interested in it. And then make sure to have a follow-up conversation about it and what it means for your organisation or your client's organisation.

2 Talk to colleagues in other workplace functions. Find out about what workplace data they collect, how they collect it and why. You might find it helpful to think about the data your function collects before having these conversations.

3 Complete the workplace data and decision-making health check for your own organisation or a client organisation. This will give you a high-level indication of where your organisation stands in terms of its approach to workplace data and decision-making.

WORKPLACE DATA AND DECISION MAKING HEALTH CHECK

This thinking tool has been designed to help you reflect on your organisation's or client organisation's approach to workplace data and decision making. It will help you to identify things that you do well or less well and identify areas for improvement.

As with any health check, this tool requires you to reflect on your own situation critically and honestly. Remember, sometimes honest truths can be uncomfortable!

You might find it helpful to complete this health check individually within your team or as different functions and then come together to discuss your responses.

To complete the health check, read each statement and pick a point on the corresponding scale that feels about right for your organisations or client's organisation. Try not to overthink the statements!

Let's take statement 4 as an example. You might think that your employees have some say in decisions about their workplace, but not enough of a say. In which case you might pick a point somewhere around the middle of the scale.

Once you've put a mark on each scale, draw a line down through the marks so that you can see the profile of your responses.

Then take stock of the overall picture and ask yourself:

• what does it tell you about the organisation's current approach to workplace data and decision making?

• is the organisation's approach to workplace data and decision making helping or hindering what you are trying to achieve?

• are there any obvious areas for improvement?

• who are the key people beyond FM who you need to talk to about this?

Decision making

Strongly disagree — Strongly agree

1   We spend an appropriate amount of time on workplace decisions

2   We involve other functions in our decision making, where appropriate

3   The decisions we make about workplace are open and transparent

4   Our employees have a say in decisions about their workplace

5   We consider potential unintended consequences of our decisions

6   We review our decisions and identify lessons for improvement

Data collection and analysis

7   We use data to make informed decisions about workplace

8   We know what data we need to make the right workplace decisions

9   We have the capabilities to gather the right workplace data

10   We gather and use workplace data ethically and considerately

11   We have the capabilities to analyse and make sense of workplace data

LEARNING MORE ABOUT WORKPLACE DATA AND DECISION MAKING

There are a number of ways you can learn more about workplace data and decision-making through IWFM.

Academy training, available as face to face, online or in-house options, includes:

• Making better workplace decisions using data

• Digital technologies in workplace

• Maximising value from your FM data to encourage lean principles

• Presenting numerical data

We also have a Level 6 Diploma in Workplace Leadership, Insight and Change, which we have developed in partnership with workplace specialists 3edges.

To find out more about our courses or to book a place, visit **www.iwfm.org.uk/professional-development/academy**

We have a number of good practice guides and guidance notes, including:

• Selecting FM Software GPG

• Benchmarking GPG

• Space Planning and Management GPG

• Internet of Things guidance note

These are available at:
www.iwfm.org.uk/insight

The Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management (IWFM) is the body for workplace and facilities professionals.

We exist to promote excellence among a worldwide community of over 17,000 and to demonstrate the value and contribution of workplace and facilities management more widely.

Our Mission: We empower professionals to upskill and reach their potential for a rewarding, impactful career. We do this by advancing professional standards, offering guidance and training, developing new insights and sharing best practice.

Our Vision: As the pioneering workplace and facilities management body, our vision is to drive change for the future. To be the trusted voice of a specialist profession recognised, beyond the built environment, for its ability to enable people to transform organisations and their performance.

The IWFM was established in 2018. It builds on the proud heritage of 25 years as the British Institute of Facilities Management.

To find out more, please visit
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This guide has been produced as part of a partnership between IWFM and Ricoh.

About Ricoh
Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services enabling individuals to work smarter. For more than 80 years, Ricoh has been driving innovation and is a leading provider of document management solutions, IT services, communication services, commercial and industrial printing, digital cameras, and industrial systems.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group operates in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2019, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,013 billion yen (approx. 18.1 billion USD).

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