

A Six-step Approach to Facilities Planning:

Step One: Management Overview

The management overview, aimed at identifying the corporation's strategic vision, focuses on vision, mission, long-term direction, key business objectives, and organizational topics such as leadership, style, business climate, and communication.

Step Two: Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions are open discussions that take place with selected employees and revolve around four topics: organizational issues, business direction, client/stakeholder expectations, work flow and workplace assessment. Focus groups allow people to freely discuss where their business/business unit is going, what their clients/stakeholders expect, and how the workplace performs for them.

Step Three: Individual Assessments

Individual assessment surveys are given to all employees. These questionnaires ask for information about how time is spent in the office, how individuals work with their computer and with one another, and how the workplace hinders and/or enhances their productivity. Sometimes it makes sense to reverse steps two and three to allow the focus groups to consider in more detail the key issues identified in the surveys.

Step Four: Space Utilisation

A space utilisation study can be conducted by an individual who observes and records how the space is actually being used in practice and over what time periods. This study involves a number of observations at specific locations within the office, conducted at regular intervals over a specified period of time.

Step Five: Documentation

Site documentation enables a verification of existing conditions in the space and includes an assessment of workstation and other equipment/furniture use and requirements.

Step Six: Design Translation

Design and translations are then combined with universal planning concepts and reuse of inventory to design floor plans to meet the long-term business direction, acknowledge work patterns and work styles, address productivity blockers, and use space flexibly and efficiently. Combining this exercise with the development of operating guidelines and post-occupancy evaluations helps ensure further success and continual improvement.

This approach, while seemingly emphasizing space planning, does it within the context of the primary business plan. Steps are taken to see that any recommendations or changes are evaluated against the overall plan.