



Hot property: how Telereal Trillium used BIFM group membership to develop its staff

Trillium was formed in 1997 to acquire the Department of Work and Pensions' 2.5 million square metre property portfolio. Purchased by Land Securities in 2000 and renamed Land Securities Trillium, it went on to acquire or manage the property portfolios of Aviva, Barclays, BBC, DVLA and Royal Mail. Telereal followed a similar path: it was set up in 2001 as a joint venture between William Pears and Land Securities to acquire the property portfolio of BT. William Pears took 100 per cent control of Telereal in 2005, and the company went on to acquire 62 Royal Bank of Scotland properties, in partnership with PruPIM, and work with clients including Birmingham City Council.

In 2009, the two organisations became Telereal Trillium when Land Securities sold Trillium (excluding the Accor Hotels portfolio) to Telereal for £750m. With more than 8,000 properties nationwide and a customer base of private companies, local authorities and central government departments, it is now one of the UK's largest property companies with three distinct, but complementary areas: property services, property investment and asset management.

Bringing the two organisations together provided an opportunity to look at the FM function with fresh eyes, says Steve Castle, managing director for FM services, who joined Trillium in 1998. "We saw real potential to take the best aspects from two strong and successful businesses and during the first 12 to 18 months of the combined business, this was one of our priorities."

The outcome is a strong FM organisation where facilities professionals work hand-in-hand with their property counterparts.

"Telereal Trillium is different from many FM companies because its contracts are typically in the region of 20 to 25 years and cover the whole property lifecycle and ownership. This gives our FM team and service partner organisations the confidence to take a long-term, holistic approach," says Castle.

Part of the transformation involved the supply chain, with a move from several national suppliers for each facilities stream to a single national supplier for each. This was completed in April 2011. There were also changes to the internal structure, which have further enabled and empowered the FM team.

"By improving technical skills and management ability, our frontline FMs can make informed decisions and take greater responsibility for effective service delivery and customer service, drawing support from Telereal Trillium's central functions where appropriate," says Castle. These internal changes were completed in May 2011 and involved considerable investment in the training and development of staff.

With a renewed focus on improving employees' professional career development and professionalism, Telereal Trillium became a group member of the British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM), the professional body for facilities management in the UK. Trillium had joined as a group member in 2007.

The BIFM Group Membership Scheme encourages a high level of engagement with the BIFM and provides the tools to support an employer's commitment to professional development through providing individual membership to employees at the relevant membership grade for their experience and qualifications. Group members are recognised by BIFM as Investors in FM Professional Development.

According to Castle, taking group membership was a natural development. "We wanted this because it is important for our FM people to feel part of the facilities management sector, to feel involved in the profession. We wanted to give the facilities professionals within Telereal Trillium an FM identity."

Pauline Ledford and Steve Castle



By conducting a survey with all Telereal Trillium's FM staff, BIFM established that almost half had some level of membership, but there were some quite surprising gaps. Pauline Ledford, Telereal Trillium's general manager, national commercial estate, says, "We wanted our FM employees to feel part of the wider FM industry, and affiliation with BIFM was a key part of that."

BIFM worked with Telereal Trillium to create an internal membership drive, completed in stages by region, to encourage employees to become members. This resulted in the number of members within the organisation doubling to around 190 people.

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As these staff were located across the UK, the organisation recruited eight regional BIFM champions who could spread the word locally about the importance of BIFM membership; explain the benefits on offer; and encourage people to make the most of their membership by attending local and national events and training courses, gaining knowledge from the BIFM website, good practice guides and FM World magazine.

"We liaise with our main point of contact at BIFM regularly so they can talk to us about BIFM and how our employees can benefit from the latest developments and offers," says Ledford.

One of those BIFM champions is Nick Duckworth, a portfolio manager at the firm, who quickly became involved in hosting and organising BIFM events and even speaking at one himself. "Regional events have allowed me to see how FM works in other businesses and bring those lessons back to Telereal Trillium."

BIFM has also worked with Telereal Trillium to conduct surveys to find out what employees consider to be the key member benefits. "The key benefit was an increased sense of professionalism, followed by individual products and services such as training, FM World magazine, good practice guides and the information on the website, as well as the ability to network with peers, share knowledge and innovation," says Ledford. This valuable feedback tells BIFM what benefits Telereal Trillium employees would like to see in the future.

Being a group member also provides administrative benefits, such as one invoice rather than 190, says Ledford. "Rather than the previous fragmented approach, we can see exactly who is a member, and how they are using their membership." The company is about to start another drive to ensure that new recruits and recently promoted individuals are aware of the Group Membership Scheme and are signing up as BIFM members.

Group membership has also helped to support the organisation's training and developments plans. Telereal Trillium conducted a detailed review of skillsets and training needs and job titles. Working with BIFM, the business changed job titles to give them a more FM focus. 'Business service manager' was changed to 'facilities manager', for example, to ensure the job descriptions matched industry standards.

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“We wanted our employees feel that they are part of a wider industry and that their skills are transferable,” says Ledford, who is a previous winner of the BIFM FM of the Year accolade. Training and development was also a key focus and, with support from BIFM, a comprehensive training programme covering induction, refresher, management, technical and non-technical training was set up for FMs. The programme incorporates internal and external training courses.

One of the most important aspects of the group membership has been the networking opportunities through regional and national events. “We felt that we should start promoting the work of Telereal Trillium and share good practice, but also collaborate with others in the sector and learn from their experiences,” explains Ledford.

The business has hosted a few events, two of which were an introduction to Telereal Trillium focusing on the DWP contract, and an event showcasing the return on investment of the new CHP boiler in Quarry House, Leeds. Through the regional champions, it actively encourages employees to attend events.

“We are at the forefront of FM but we mustn’t rest on our laurels – we have to get out there and see what others are doing and share our experiences, and BIFM regional and national events allow us to do that,” adds Ledford. “They are also a great learning and networking opportunity for our people.”



Castle argues that group membership allows the business to demonstrate to its people that it cares about their career development and advancement. “It is a key recruitment and retention tool,” he says.

Duckworth agrees. He joined the business in 2005 to work in the customer service centre, which gave him valuable insight into all the contracts and aspects of the business. After nine months he moved into an administration role in the business service support team and worked his way up to become business services manager, now classed as a facilities manager. This year he was promoted again, to portfolio manager. “The fact that Telereal Trillium is a group member of BIFM shows me that they genuinely care about my continuing professional development,” he says.

“By organising and speaking at BIFM events, I have gained a lot of confidence. It has also helped me to demonstrate my achievement when I went for promotion. I wouldn’t have got my current role without the Group Membership Scheme and the opportunities it offers both on an individual and corporate level.”

The London Wall, built by the Romans in the second century to protect what was then Londinium, stood for 16 centuries before it was demolished to make way for the developments of 18th-century London.

But fragments still form part of the walls and foundations of London’s modern structures, and between the Museum of London and the Barbican Estate, substantial remnants appear to stand guard over the lower entrance to number 140 London Wall – the home of Telereal Trillium.

It seems particularly apt that a property company that invests in and manages and maintains structures should have its headquarters so close to what was one of the largest construction projects carried out in Roman Britain and that remained in active use as a fortification for more than 1,000 years.

Today, London Wall’s legacy is largely consigned to the eponymous road that runs along its north border and its ruins are dwarfed by city skyscrapers and by Telereal Trillium’s own impressive property portfolio.

BIFM Group Membership Scheme

The BIFM Group Membership Scheme is designed to help employers to recognise, reward and support the professional development of their facilities management staff; helping to build strong and effective FM teams.

Through the scheme, employers can nominate team members to become individual members of BIFM. This investment supports the professional development of FMs in their organisation.

Employers can benchmark the competence of FM teams using the membership grading system and the BIFM professional competences. The BIFM membership grading system establishes a pathway for personal development for FM professionals. It gives a framework to ensure FM skills and competences reflect business needs and requirements.

The employer becomes a BIFM Investor in FM Professional Development, which recognises their commitment to FM excellence and business improvement through their people.

Benefits for the company

The scheme is about driving business improvement through employee development.

- > Develop and progress your FM team's collective and individual professional expertise and knowledge
- > Assists in recruitment, development and retention
- > Ensures that FMs' skills and knowledge are up to date
- > Creates an atmosphere where development is encouraged
- > Keeps staff up to date with FM news, developments and trends
- > Professional recognition for your FM teams, internally and externally
- > Become a BIFM Investor in FM Professional Development
- > Gain an additional discount on BIFM Training courses for group bookings.

British Institute of Facilities Management

Number One Building
The Causeway
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire CM23 2ER
T: 0845 058 1356
E: info@bifm.org.uk

www.bifm.org.uk



Benefits for FM staff

Professional membership of BIFM supports FMs to learn, develop, network and progress. Members gain:

- > Professional recognition of skills, experience and qualifications
- > Opportunities for ongoing professional development and training
- > Networking opportunities
- > Access to a full range of member benefits and resources to inform, update and encourage good practice.

The BIFM facilitates the scheme through account management, ensuring it runs as smoothly and effectively as possible.

If your company is interested in finding out more about the Group Membership Scheme, contact the membership team on 0845 058 1358 or via email at membership@bifm.org.uk. Or find out more at www.bifm.org.uk/investors