9 Tips to Successfully Manage and Maintain Your Church Facility

By Tim Cool, Cool Solutions Group

How do you track and process Work Requests and Facility Management tasks at your facility? Do you use a legal pad? Excel spreadsheet? Post-it Notes? Cross your fingers, then hope and pray?

Let's explore the options for tracking work orders, service history, equipment inventory, capital improvements, vendor logs and much more. We will investigate the needs of most churches to track service requests and work orders as well as being proactive on tracking capital improvements to assist in your annual budgeting process.

To keep this all in perspective let's not forget that our ministry facilities are large complex commercial structures with lots of very expensive moving parts that need to be maintained, serviced and repaired. These facilities have been **ENTRUSTED** to us, so let's do our part to steward them.

1. **Be Intentional:** There is a quote that most of you have heard: *"People do not plan to fail, we fail to plan."* Having a proactive system that will serve as your "reminder" for these items will not only save you time, but assist you in being intentional with the care and maintenance of your facility.

2. **Central Database:** Do you have a spreadsheet here…a post-it note there…an e-mail requesting work to be done…a legal pad full of ideas… your computer calendar with dozens of reminders? Unfortunately, this is more the norm than the exception. So, what happens when you lose one of these items?

3. **Hit by a truck:** What would happen to all of your data, plans, procedures, systems, process, etc. if your key person at the church was (heaven forbid) hit by a truck? Would you lose all of the data that is squirreled away in their head?

4. **Long Term Capital Improvement Planning**: We have been pretty surprised by how many churches do not have an active "sinking fund" or some form of capital improvements process. When we ask them about their planning process for major capital expenses (i.e. replacing flooring, replacing HVAC equipment, resurfacing parking, etc), the common answer is, "we wait until it breaks and then replace it." OUCH…does not sound like planning.

5. **Prioritize work:** Does the "urgent" take precedence over the important? Does that last e-mail or call take you off task? Well, you are not alone. Trying to keep all of this in your head or on a legal pad will only increase the stock value for Advil.

6. **Manage Vendors**: Who is approved to work on your site? How do you track their names, address, e-mails, phone numbers, etc? How do you dispatch work to the vendors. Most good facility

management software solutions will at the very least provide a section to list all of the pertinent data about your vendors and subs and provides a means for assigning work orders to vendors.

7. Historical Data: I have been using the P90X workout series, and the trainer keeps reminding us that we need to write down what weights we use and how many reps. He uses a cute little phrase to say "if you don't know what you've done, how can you know what you need to do?" That same applies to our building management and maintenance

8. Asset Database: Do you know the make, model, serial number and filter size of each piece of equipment at your facility? Do you know what kind of light bulbs you have and how many fixtures in the facility use that type bulb? Now, I would not expect you to know all of this off the top of your head, but could you, with a few clicks, get to this data?

9. Warranty Tracking: Have you ever paid for a service call to later find out that it was under warranty? How did that make you feel? Were you able to get a full refund? Knowing what the warranty is for your major components can save you a great deal of money in the short term and long term.

These are just a few of the items that churches should be concerned about in order to be good stewards of their organizations. Be proactive and take the time to plan ahead. It will benefit you and your church in the long run. Investigate the best solutions to manage your facility and it will surely pay off in the end!

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software. Cool Solutions Group assists churches and ministry-driven organizations to develop the right solution for their facility stewardship.

Tim has also just released his first book, SUCCESSFUL MASTER PLANNING: More Than Pretty Pictures which is available on Amazon http://www.amazon.com/Successful-Master-Planning-Timothy-Cool/dp/1450221971/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1273695193&sr=1-1 .

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