



A history with FSI Concept

FSI's Concept technology forms part of the DNA of BAM FM Ltd. Concept has been used by the business since its inception in 2000. BAM FM is now part of BAM Construct UK (which has a construction and property services focus and turnover in 2016 of over £1.0bn). The UK company is part of the Dutch-headquartered Royal BAM Group.

BAM FM's Strategic Development Director, Reid Cunningham, has been with the business since 2000. He has seen the evolution of FSI's Concept range used by BAM transition through its lifecycle from Concept 300 to 500 to Concept Evolution - which the company implemented in 2013/14. Having lived with the system throughout, Reid is happy to testify to Concept's ability - and adaptability - to serve as both a vital part of the company's delivery of its day-to-day operational obligations to clients and increasingly as a tool for the overall strategic management of the business.

BAM FM offers an integrated approach to facilities management from its bases in Glasgow, Manchester, Bristol, Birmingham, London, Cardiff, Leeds and Hemel Hempstead. The company combines a direct workforce of FM operatives and engineers and works with a range of subcontracted specialist supply chain partners to deliver total FM services. These include:

- Hard services to support the maintenance and performance of facilities and the full range of technologies used to run them.
- Soft services from cleaning, catering and landscaping to security and room booking/management.
- Sector-specific understanding.

"BAM FM's origins, within a construction-focused parent company, were in the provision of FM support services for long-term public sector PFI contracts," Reid explains. "Initially these tended to be large, single site operations. FSI's Concept solution allowed us to run an efficient Helpdesk and demonstrate to our clients an audit trail to justify service levels and the performance we were achieving.

"The nature of PFI evolved, particularly towards a trend for regional estates of healthcare or educational sites to be bundled together as a single contract. Providing FM services across dispersed locations introduced new complexities to ensure maximised efficiency and

delivery to required service levels. Sensible resource management made it necessary for some of the manpower involved to be mobile, to work between the sites. The complexities this adds for administration and management of a contract and performing the day-to-day work finds a natural solution in IT. Concept was there with the capability to handle this change when we needed it."

A strategy for growth

In 2014 the business acquired one of its supply chain partners which operated primarily as a mobile FM engineering services provider with 300 shorter term contracts in the public and private sectors including commercial office, manufacturing and retail customer contracts.

"This move gave us a valuable, in-house mobile resource that we could use across our entire customer base," Reid says, "along with enhanced credibility for new business potential outside of the public sector. However the logistics of integrating it into our service operations, and administratively, posed some significant challenges.

"FSI's Concept has played its part. Concept Evolution and its 'extensions' (Concept Reach, Concept Connect, FSI GO) have proved to be in the right place at the right time as we have needed them," Reid continues.

"Our new acquisition's operations required a high rate of supplier and customer transactions compared to our concession services. We have adapted, with the support of FSI, to handle the logistics of both the highly reactive nature of directing mobile resources and suppliers, plus the associated demands of managing WIP and invoicing for this.

"The business we acquired used an IT system that had been internally customised so we were keen to transfer this to a consistent and supported system. Fortunately Concept Evolution was ready and waiting.

"The ability to integrate asset lists, PPM schedules, (electronic) timesheet data and the invoicing tool have proved their worth in the new administrative digital business processes that we have developed. As we accumulate digital operational data Concept gains in effectiveness as a strategic management tool."

BAM FM employs over 900 staff in mobile engineering and resident roles in positions such as caretakers, porters, drivers, cooks and leisure attendants, as well as management roles.

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Support across the business

“FSI GO (the mobile extension of Concept Evolution) was initially, and naturally, rolled out to the mobile workforce of technicians and engineers,” says Reid. “And we are now beginning to find its comprehensiveness increasingly work for us among the ‘static’ staff too.

“By way of example: the default Helpdesk function allocated a janitorial task to a site such that it could appear as an allocated ‘to do’ on several mobile devices. This led to confusion over who was responsible but FSI support pointed us to a ‘Supervisor’ function, so that the task can be specifically allocated by a local supervisor to an individual device at the site level.”

Room booking and leisure activities scheduling at BAM FM-managed sites are all managed via Concept Evolution’s ‘room booking’ module and is particularly heavily used at educational sites in the portfolio. BAM FM’s Helpdesk operators have the necessary access rights to set-up and coordinate room bookings for annual timetables, and site staff have the necessary instructions for room set-up, hospitality and support.

The system operates using a single, hosted database which spans the entirety of the BAM FM customer estates and which staff have access to for the parts of the estate they are involved with. With FSI’s support a small in-house expert user team monitor the Concept installation to perform housekeeping/tidying-up duties that ensure that redundant and out-of-date data is not allowed to interfere with the system’s optimal performance.

BAM FM has opted for its Concept Evolution system to be cloud-hosted directly via FSI web services, which provides the security of assured, timely software updating and ensured hardware compatibility.

Concept Reach has been introduced to allow specific customers to have access to customised dashboards, which display data about the status of tasks on relevant operational functions and performance levels.

Concept Connect has been introduced to bring individual members of the supply chain into the loop and provide suppliers with data, action and reporting requirements appropriate to the service and maintenance disciplines and sites they have responsibility for.

Reid notes that BAM FM’s subsidiary, BAM Energy Ltd, has been created. It is looking to leverage benefits from the eSight Energy web enabled suite of integrated maintenance and energy management tools which operates via an FSI partnership providing Concept compatibility.

From the administrative perspective of the corporate parent of which BAM FM is part, Concept’s connectivity with the SAP enterprise resource planning/accounting system is essential. All invoices prepared in CE pass digitally through the corporate system to receive a SAP-coordinating identifier coding before being issued.

The future is happening

Looking forward to what the business can do next to derive further benefit from its investment in Concept’s capabilities, Reid points to the increasing convergence of building management technologies and new solutions in various initial stages of implementation. He highlights: linkages and integration between Concept and BIM (Building Information Modelling) tools, the internet-of-things (IoT) and FSI’s workplace community FM apps (Concept Advantage).

BIM

As part of a construction group, and with public sector involvement, BAM FM is experienced in working with BIM and Soft Landings. This is the movement to standardise digital representation and asset data of all aspects of buildings/building services from their construction and throughout their useable life, so all suppliers involved in construction and building management have a coordinated viewpoint and base to work from. The UK government has legislated on this from the perspective of maintaining the quality of the public sector property estate.

“BIM for FM represents a natural convergence from the perspective of taking a building’s fabric and services forward through its life,” says Reid. “It’s amazing how much vital technical paperwork and service record-keeping still exists in relation to plant and equipment running in basements. We are already seeing a big difference having it all digitally at our fingertips.”

IoT

“Automated monitoring and intelligent response to the condition of buildings and their systems stands to turn planned maintenance scheduling and the operations of FM providers on its head,” Reid enthuses - but with a caution.

“This new opportunity is a vast, uncharted territory. Expertise needs to be developed before users such as ourselves make client-wide commitments. There are myriad providers of internet-connectable sensors of varying credibility, data transmission modes to decide on, and questions of where all this extra data can sensibly be ‘injected’ into a CAFM system. FSI’s ‘IoT hub’ approach is at the core of addressing this issue. They are working with us to determine best-of-breed sensor partners, together with appropriate transmission and CAFM integration techniques. Our two, initial trial areas involve real time micro-managing of building environments and water treatment.

“And I eagerly anticipate machine-to-machine interaction with a fleet of robot vacuum cleaners recently installed at a prestige client site!”

Workplace Community Apps

“With the launch of FSI’s single function, consumer-style FM apps [Concept Advantage], aimed at the smartphones of workplace employees at sites overseen by Concept, I anticipate a radical transformation, specifically in the role of the Helpdesk and generally in the appreciation of FM.

“With apps such as ChatLog the workplace community is socialised. Building users are in effect in contact with each other in addition to the FM support service over issues such as ‘It’s too hot/cold here!’. The ability to instantly canvas opinion across the workforce, make announcements, calls to action and room bookings, makes FM more immediately perceptible. This presents a challenge to FM personnel, who will need to adapt to a more millennial approach to communication - less phone conversations and emails in favour of messaging - and the expectation of a more immediate, on-the-spot response to those they serve.

“Much of this represents truly ‘disruptive’ as well as smart technology,” Reid concludes. “And we are working to ensure that we are at the forefront of agile FM businesses, with a well-thought-through business strategy to exploit this change. Looking forward, this is a further reason why FSI’s Concept Evolution solutions represent a valued corporate asset to us.”

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