FMBusinessDaily

Is increased remote monitoring capability removing the need for on-site engineers?

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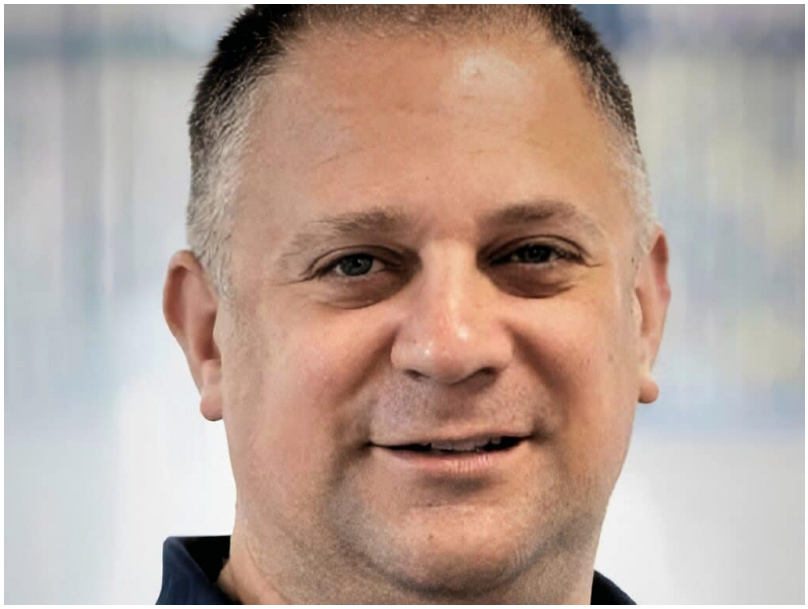

Insight from Paul Bullard, SFG20 product director

The growth in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its potential to replace humans with machines is one of today's biggest social debates with dramatic Armageddon type scenarios butting up against tech evangelists who think it will save the planet.

All kinds of jobs from pilots to doctors could, in theory, be done by AI tools, according to the tech community, but what about FMs?

As we move deeper into the age of digital FM, it becomes increasingly apparent that rather than replacing on-site engineers, the technology can help make the case for using them more.

One of the biggest problems facing building owners and managers is that they need to improve their energy efficiency and reduce carbon footprint, but lack the data to create an effective strategy.

The Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) recently published a study which showed that UK businesses and homeowners were missing out on over £3bn worth of easy energy savings. It found that 14% of businesses have either never had a boiler service or have not had one in the last five years, despite three-quarters of owners saying they wanted to make their heating system energy efficient. 20% of business owners admitted they had not had an energy efficiency audit for more than five years – many had never had one.

Diagnostic

Yet, carrying out this kind of diagnostic task has become much easier in recent years thanks to the

availability of digital systems – not least remote monitoring (often driven by AI) that allows engineers to build up a more accurate picture of what is going on inside buildings and their services. And far from removing the need for human activity on site, the resulting upgrading and retrofitting work requires specific and skilled physical intervention – work that is simply not happening in many buildings due to lack of data/information.

Improved monitoring of systems and data gathering can help building managers deploy on-site teams in the most effective (and cost-effective) way guided by an accurate and up-to-date asset register created by tools such as SFG20's Maintenance Management Software.

SFG20 advocate blending maintenance strategies according to the types of assets found in a building and the impact that each presents if they were to fail. We fully support the augmentation of digital systems for the ongoing monitoring of critical facilities in between planned preventative maintenance visits.

Armed with this powerful information, 'human' FMs can tackle work that was previously too difficult – and equally importantly avoid over or under-maintaining assets so buildings operate more efficiently and remain legally compliant.

Digital tools can also provide the necessary analysis to address carbon footprint and help FMs understand the difference between embodied and operational carbon, develop a sustainability plan, optimise equipment performance, and even embrace the circular economy.

At SFG20, we believe the best solutions come from harnessing the increased data produced by our digital systems to guide expert 'human' engineering and a great example is our new free to download tackling carbon through effective building strategies guide .

For more information go to: www.sfg20.co.uk