

A Blueprint for Better FM: How Responsible Practice Becomes Your Competitive Edge

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“The evidence shows a strong link between ESG performance and financial performance... A strong ESG proposition correlates with a higher equity valuation... and can also translate into higher returns on capital.” The CEO Guide to ESG, McKinsey & Company, 2023

In facilities management, sustainability is no longer a separate initiative—it’s a core component of operational excellence. It’s about finding smart, strategic ways to reduce your environmental impact while also improving efficiency, saving costs, and enhancing service delivery.

At JR&Co, our practice has always been rooted in care: care for our people and care for the quality of our work. Yet, we knew we needed to do more. This conviction spurred a holistic overhaul of our practice, which has since delivered measurable results and recognition, earning us:

- Two (more) Green Apple Awards
- A highly coveted Environmental/ESG Award from BICSc
- Team of the Year at the National Sustainability Awards
- Approval for SBTi for carbon reduction goals

- B Corp certification.

Our success shows how, with a unified approach, FM professionals can achieve their own sustainability goals while delivering a more efficient and reliable service for their business. Here's our blueprint for marrying responsible practice with operational efficiency.

1. Taking Action: Our Holistic Approach

Our journey towards a more responsible business began with a fundamental belief: that we could achieve a big impact by combining big projects with small, consistent actions.

We started with two simple questions: how can we address our largest environmental impacts, and where are our greatest operational inefficiencies?

A study led by our ESG expert, Vânia Borges, helped us collect data and identify where we could make the most impactful improvements. This led us to three interconnected projects:

- A transition to digital site files, which reduced our paper consumption carbon footprint by 82.4%;
- A move to 100% renewable energy at our head office;
- The electrification of our vehicle fleet, which ahead of its completion in May 2025, had already achieved a 75% reduction in our fleet's carbon footprint.

We've even overhauled our waste management at head office, with assistance from Recorra, introducing multiple waste streams. We now recycle everything from coffee grounds to batteries & vapes to flexible plastics, helping to increase our overall recycle rate and drive behavioural change.

This unified initiative hasn't just delivered multiple awards; it's delivered significant results, demonstrating how connecting all areas of the business can drive meaningful, company-wide change and operational benefit.

2. Building the Foundation: An Objective Framework for Long-Term Improvement

While we're driven by an internal legacy of care, we knew we needed an objective framework to provide a clear path for continuous improvement.

We chose to pursue B Corp certification because it is a wide-ranging standard that looks beyond just the planet to also consider our people, our community, and our governance. Becoming a certified B Corp gave us a benchmark against the high standards we set.

This rationale is also why we sought approval from the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) for our carbon-reduction goals: to reach Net Zero by 2040. This commitment will guide our progress for years to come. It's a challenge, but given the progress we've made already, we know it's not insurmountable.

3. Sustaining Success: The Heart of Our Project – Our Team

A crucial part of this journey was our people. Change can only happen with buy-in from the whole team. We focused on bringing everyone together through a range of initiatives that fostered a sense of

togetherness that has become embedded in our practice.

This includes comprehensive training and head office open days, as well as regular lunch and learns with external experts who help us improve our own and our clients' practices. We celebrate the different cultures that make up our workforce, and our teams regularly engage in volunteering days with The Felix Project to end food poverty in London and litter-picking in our local area.

We also started the Henry Garden Project, a fun and sustainable initiative where we grow vegetables in decommissioned Henry Vacuum cleaners to feed our team. More informal approaches, such as fun games to sort waste, are highly effective in making sustainability a collective, rewarding effort for everyone.

This culture is nurtured by the team at head office, who contribute so much to making it a great place to work.

The Value Exchange: Responsible Practice as Your Competitive Edge

The greatest advantage of our approach is that the benefits are shared directly with our clients. Our operational improvements—such as our paperless system and electrified fleet—actively reduce the carbon footprint of the services we provide, which demonstrably assists client's own ESG reporting and targets.

We further support client goals by sourcing product options that combine quality, affordability, and ethical choice without compromising effectiveness. These include Odorbac Tec 4 (a fully biodegradable cleaner), and products from the social enterprise Amplify Goods, proving that responsible sourcing can even deliver superior results.

As a business with a long history of care for quality and our people, our commitment to responsible cleaning flows naturally, providing clients with further assurance that we are a business that acts with the utmost care.

For Facilities Managers committed to ambitious ESG targets, a similarly integrated approach, built on a commitment to quality, will allow you to drive significant, measurable progress and naturally help your service stand out in a crowded market.

Looking Forward

We're well aware that responsible practice is a continuous journey, and we're committed to this path. By sharing our blueprint, we hope to inspire other businesses to join us. This isn't about competition; it's about leading the way in responsible cleaning and making the sector better as a whole.

Ultimately, our commitment proves that what's good for ESG is unequivocally good for business. Responsible practice has been a powerful driver of business value for us, and we're confident it can be for you, too.

If you're interested in learning more about our blueprint and how it can give your business a competitive edge, please get in touch - laurenhanley@juliusrutherford.co.uk - www.juliusrutherford.co.uk - 020 7819 6700.