



Interview with:  
**Rafael Morón**

*Head of Facility Management of Airbus, Spain*



Today we interview Rafael Morón Aparicio, Head of Facility Management Real Estate of Airbus, Spain. This entails the management of all infrastructures, services and Real Estate affairs which Airbus is involved in within Spanish territory, Airbus Operation S.L., Defence & Space and Helicopters.

**1. You were appointed as head of Facility Management relatively recently. When did this occur and what short-term goals and objectives do you expect to meet?**

Yes, I was appointed quite recently. My starting date was July 1st, 2017, although I had started working unofficially in March this year in order to become familiar with FM activities.

Regarding short-term objectives, there's a project everyone is familiar with called Gemini o Géminis, as we say in Spanish, which needs to make gains on an annual basis, although the deadline isn't until the end of 2019. The agreements have been clearly defined, and assessed fundamentally as savings in order to facilitate and boost the company's profit and loss account.

**2. When did your collaboration with Airbus start?**

I started working for Airbus in 1986, when the division of civil aircraft was about to materialise. From then on, I have occupied a number of different positions in different locations. I've worked abroad for a long time, one could say that I'm not a newcomer, but I've still got a long way to go.

**3. You are therefore experienced at an international level, having worked in other countries.**

I was head of the engineering department in Toulouse for over five years, and at that time, Airbus commercial services basically worked on the A300, A310, A320 and A330 programmes. I also worked in Defence for several years, and was responsible for the Spanish part of Eurofighter, as far as the integration of systems and testing equipment was concerned, and later in other departments such as programmes, production control and planning.

**4. Considering your professional career, could you explain Airbus' current business model and how it affects Facility Management and all the other areas it's made up of?**

Currently, as we understand Airbus and in particular with regard to my work, we strive to achieve maximum yield as cost effectively as possible, prioritising

innovation and development.

One of the key steps we're taking in this part of the project is **integration**. We are one of the completely integrated functions to have been included since July 1st. As in other areas such as finance, human resources or IT, the priority is to optimise processes, facilitate decision-making and above all, find rapid solutions to particular interventions which focus fundamentally on business development. Facility Management is not only a function which aims to back our stakeholders, our clients, it also has a strong commitment to enhancing the company's profit and loss account.

#### **5. How has the Facility Management department in your organisation evolved since its consolidation and what is its current state?**

In Spain, thanks to the work of Enrique Baena, my predecessor, we detected the need to change the way of working by sharing processes, procedures, looking for synergies and avoiding biasness whenever possible, regardless of the type of product being manufactured on our premises.

We'd already taken the first steps in that environment but not much came of it until the Airbus tour management at the beginning of July, when each country was set to have its own department, its own Facility Management Real Estate organisation and we'd benefitted from those initial changes which came about in 2016.

Nevertheless, this continued developing and divisions such as Airbus Helicopters were included. Strategies and ways of working which were in line with the latest trends and Airbus' new values and more importantly its objectives, were incorporated. We are aware of the challenges ahead regarding the A400, A320, A350 and A380 programmes, and consequently we now have a dynamic organisation, which embraces constant change and development and which seeks total engagement as an integrated function in order to continue contributing towards the achievement of Airbus objectives.

**Integration** is the key word which defines ones of our main objectives since July 1st and which we aim to meet by the end of this year - we have very little time left.

#### **6. Therefore, integration could be considered to be one of the most complicated challenges when it comes to achieving the best model for Facility Management.**

We're talking about integration, staff management, project management; we're talking about the future. We have exceptionally attractive projects, like "Proyecto Carpetania", which entails centralising the whole of Airbus in Getafe. We're talking about digitalisation projects which don't only affect comprehensive areas but also affect service control processes and facilities where we work. We're talking about integration and people, because people are a key factor. Fundamentally, we are clearly looking at the way to further professionalise our existing organisation.

#### **7. How are resources distributed among the various Facility Management activities: offices – white collars, and industrial activity – blue collars?**

We have people from our organisation in every division. Currently, we're responsible for eight plants or facilities in Spain. In each plant one representative of the

organisation interacts directly with the person responsible for industry. We call them **OSMs** or **on site managers** because they're in charge of coordinating with the head of the plant, who acts as a focal point and channels all our industrial needs, services or future development which might be necessary to meet their objectives.

In addition, in each plant, there are departments like maintenance, energy, general services or environment which satisfy all the requirements which crop up every day.

**8. You've answered my following question which was about the structure of the team and its main functions. Could you add anything else?**

I'd like to recap on all the areas within FM, since all are of equal importance.

There's the area of Building & Construction, or in other words, the construction of new buildings. It's an exceptionally important area which we're not only working on in Spain; we collaborate with other Airbus plants in places like Belgium, China and the Middle East. Another department is called Performance & Improvement, which acts as a driving force that helps us become promoters of our own change, adjust our processes, optimise time, reduce expenses.... When I talk about savings, I'm not only referring to the financial aspect, but to time; in order to make other people's lives easier and above all, to show our clients to what extent FM is an added value.

Customer Relationship Management is another department, responsible for client relations. The position is held by a deputy manager who all OSMs report to, in other words, each person in charge of a plant depends on her. She integrates and channels all the requirements or recommendations which arise at all Airbus plants in Spain, carries out internal comprehensive management processes and deals with requests, development, interviews and investments in Toulouse.

Likewise, I'm directly responsible for the Environment and Waste Management departments and I'm on the Facility Management executive board. The activities of these departments are key in the development of Airbus activities.

We mustn't forget to mention the Services Management department, perhaps better known for the visibility of its deliverables.

In the same way, there are departments which collaborate and form part of the FM family, such as Real Estate, Finance and Human Resources.

**9. With respect to the area of client relations, does this organisation only exist in Spain?**

Yes, in Spain, CRM is a mobile position, its mission is to go through the different facilities and make sure their different interactions with industrial interlocutors work correctly.

For further clarification, I'd like to add that the Service department is perhaps the most extensive and visible (transport, canteen, cleaning). However, there are others like Energy Accounts, Industrial Maintenance and Facilities Maintenance which employ between 50 and 60% of Facility Management in Spain. Finally, there's Environment and Waste Management, which I mentioned previously, which basically and first and foremost have to comply with regulations and be extremely rigorous with directives and the environment.

**10. Are all Airbus plants, in this case the eight sites, managed in the same way or are there exceptions depending on the business area or geographical location?**

No, what the concept of integration is actually striving to do is to match the same methods, processes and procedures in the different Airbus plants. This coordination of processes seeks to make any process in any plant work in the same way, as well as applying measures to reduce times, cycles, costs and deadlines. We are also optimising contract management procedures, so that there remain one, two or three high quality suppliers in order to minimise lead times and interlocutors.

**11. Could you tell us what your most important achievements have been since you started with Facility Management?**

Without a doubt, one of the main activities is the regrouping of the A400-M programme in Getafe. When I started, I was informed of a requirement by the president of the company, Fernando Alonso, who expressed his wish to have a single workplace in Getafe where colleagues from Bremen in Germany could come to coordinate work on the A400-M programme and meet its challenges.

Officially, I started in July. We had committed to manufacturing and delivering a three-storey modular building so that our colleagues from Bremen could come and work here every week. It's been a hard intense job but the building is ready and is being used as a set.

We are now immersed in the second phase of this regrouping in different buildings and we hope to have finished and delivered the project by the beginning of March 2018.

**12. So, are there indicators which show what has been achieved?**

Indeed, there are, and actually, communication is one of the activities which we are highlighting the importance of. Facility Management Real Estate, is, in my opinion, a function which despite being valued by the various industrial managers, since they all recognise and value all the active members, is all the same a function which should be more visible to all employees.

In order to improve this visibility, we are preparing information about all the activities related with the maintenance of Airbus Spain's industrial activities. We want to let the public know how vital time frames are when it comes to resolving incidents which arise on a daily basis in order not to interrupt industrial activity. For instance, as a result of being our own water supplier, what happened in Barajas a few months ago when a water pipe burst and employees didn't have any water even for personal use, heating incidents in industrial units or an incident in an inflatable hangar, when response time is essential in order to continue working on the different programmes. We have a clear objective, to inform internally of everything we do. For this purpose, Airbus has an Internal Communication Department, which through the various communication channels for employees, is in charge of transmitting information about we have done and what we want to continue doing.

**13. What is your assessment from an ethical and compliance point of view? What is Facility Management's commitment?**

In this respect our commitment in ethics and compliance is total and absolute; it is a value that under no circumstances nobody can lose. I am extremely rigorous when it comes to my duties in the management of contracts, activities and service suppliers, I am absolutely strict in terms of compliance with Airbus ethical and compliance standards, which are also very strict. These standards include a series of procedures applicable to each possible case under investigation in terms of ethics and compliance, which ensures that all company employees know and abide by those rules of ethics and compliance.

In fact, we're reminding all employees of the importance of ethics and complaints within Airbus values and require them to attend certain courses. Currently, 95% of the courses have been completed. On the other hand, ethics and compliance standards are available in the appropriate communication channels with employees, who can consult them in case of doubt and who can also contact the company's experts in this field.

**14. As far as relations with other Airbus plants in Europe, what is rapport like between Spain and other European sites?**

We have coordination meetings; we're a fully integrated organisation. What exactly do I mean by that? Well, it's possible for me to fulfil my role in Spain, France, Germany or the UK. We have monthly coordination meetings through the person responsible, in which different activities are carried out. One of the latest, which might illustrate or give my answer further visibility is what we call the business partner review or the reexamination of annual interviews we conduct with our clients, in this case, in Spain, where we interview those responsible for the plants and their functions. These are face-to-face interviews during which each functions manager is asked about 40 questions. The results are entered into a database and compared to those of our colleagues abroad. Our results together with the Germans' were the best in terms of assessment and perception. This doesn't mean we can relax, we still have a long way to go, but reaching a high level of satisfaction among our clients suggests that Facility Management is on the right tracks and that we have to continue in the same vein.

**15. In your opinion, has Facility Management been an undervalued department in the structure and organisation of the company?**

I think it was in the past. As far as I'm concerned, I've spent all my professional career in in different Operations divisions in different countries, and our perception of Facility Management was that if everything went according to plan, it hardly contributed any benefits, and if things went wrong it stuck out like a sore thumb – a dreadful mistake on our part. A company like Airbus wouldn't exist without Facility Management.

In addition, our staff's level of training in the past was adjusted according to the requirements we had at the time, but this has changed. Now we look for talent, managers, people who speak different languages and are trained to manage

different environments. We certainly didn't have these employees five or ten years ago.

### **16. What advice would you give a company who wants to introduce Facility Management?**

Firstly, I'd recommend adopting a more personal approach, building very close relations with the clients they're providing the services to. Secondly, I'd highlight the famous win-win level of involvement, in which both interlocutors understand what their role consists of. It's important for both parties to understand each other's way of working and for them to be aware that they have to continue accepting minimum basic applicable standards; to make it clear that these are support functions which are of great value.

Proximity, work, perception, sense of belonging.... One of the things we have agreed on with the Executive Board is that members of Facility Management participate in each and every executive board of the plants or areas of responsibility we're interested in. This constitutes a more active member of the executive board; someone who contributes not only to his own area but to any industrial activity under discussion at that time. We have a lot to contribute, whether it's concerned with increases in production rate or financial assessment of the impact of the use of space.

### **17. And what does Facility Management need in the market to gain more recognition?**

Not long ago, I participated in a forum with a number of companies which are dedicated to this type of activities and I think that in our case, this recognition exists. The problem is that we don't take time to inspect an aircraft factory because of how aeroplanes are made, but because of what the manufactured planes are like, how they fly and how they safe they are. Here, Facility Management is a function just like any other vital support for industrial activity and development in any business area. In the forum entries I mentioned, the conclusion was that recognition is there although it's less well known because it's associated with the service sector and the deliverable is less tangible – it's not visible or usable, it's something you see and feel, like having clean offices, a well-maintained building, adequate heating and cooling, staff showers and changing rooms in perfect conditions, heating and electricity which works correctly, etc. I'm talking about services, but we must also remember the development of new units in construction and industrial development which cost hundreds of millions of euros.

### **18. Do you think a company's success is partly thanks to Facility Management?**

Here in Spain, over one hundred people are engaged in functions. At Airbus, on a worldwide level, there are over a thousand of us in Facility Management and the budgets we work with at Airbus are exceptionally high.

Facility Management is indeed partly responsible for our success, together with the rest of support functions, such as HR, Finance or IT media management. If one fails, we all fail. Support functions are equally significant, and we are undoubtedly very, very important.

**19. One last question. Is there anything you would personally like to see or read about regarding Facility Management?**

One of my challenges is to make it an attractive function and to hear people say “I want to work in Facility Management because I know its function, because it appeals to me, because it challenges me, motivates me and satisfies me”. I wasn't like that before, and I have to admit that on more than one occasion employees from other areas have stopped me to tell me that they want to work with me. This is something that fills me with pride and satisfaction.

Needless to say, I'd like to end the end interview by thanking the fabulous Facility Management team made up of great professionals and the impressive job they do in the execution of their everyday work. Their engagement, dedication and good results make it possible for us to successfully meet our objectives.

