

Industry leaders come together to develop first practical guide for cobotics implementation in FM and cleaning

New guide launched as majority of FM leaders state that cobotics can accelerate re-entry to buildings during COVID-19

22nd September, London – Leaders from across the European facility management and commercial cleaning industries have come together to develop the world's first practical guide to implementing cobotics.

Launched today, [the Practical Guide to Implementing Cobotics in FM](#), provides FM companies and cleaning contractors with detailed, practical measures to ensure a smooth and seamless integration of cobotics into their operations.

The Cobotics Guide is published as the cleaning industry faces huge pressure to improve standards of hygiene and cleanliness in the wake of COVID-19, in order to reassure end users of buildings, both workers and customers, around the safety of their workspace.

A poll conducted as part of the study behind the Guide found that 52% of FM leaders believe that the introduction of cobotics can accelerate re-entry to buildings post COVID-19. This is critical in enabling businesses to re-open and kickstarting an economic recovery.

Co-ordinated by the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) and SoftBank Robotics, the Guide includes contributions from some of the leading thinkers within the European facility management and commercial cleaning sectors.

Peter Ankerstjerne, Chairman of the Board at IFMA and Global Lead FM & Experience Services at JLL, and a contributor to the Guide, said: "Cobotics can play a big role in delivering the higher and more consistent cleaning standards required to ensure people feel comfortable and confident at their workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. As with any major technology project, organisations need to take a strategic approach and think beyond the technology itself. Cobotics requires significant upskilling, cultural and behavioural change and a shift to new operating and resourcing models. FM and cleaning industry leaders need to develop robust, holistic plans in order to achieve the full range of benefits that cobotics can deliver."

The [Guide](#) covers a wide range of organisational and operational factors that need to be considered within a cobotic strategy, from early stage planning and proof of concepts through to training programmes, servicing agreements, commercial models and measurement.

Nils van der Zijl, VP Sales & Marketing, SoftBank Robotics EMEA, said: “Cobotics is an entirely new approach to innovation within the sector so it’s important for industry leaders and innovative early adopters to come together to drive best practice from the outset. This Guide will be a useful reference point for any business starting out on their cobotics journey. By following the 12 steps we have identified as critical to successful implementation, FM providers and cleaning contractors can avoid potential pitfalls, minimise their risk and reduce the time it takes to deliver ROI and wider benefits to staff and clients.”

Cobots are collaborative robots which work alongside frontline teams to drive efficiency, performance and productivity. Cobots undertake repetitive and strenuous tasks such as vacuuming large areas of floor space, improving performance and consistency, and freeing up time for cleaning teams to focus on other tasks, such as the deep sanitisation of hard surfaces and high-touch areas, such as door handles and lift buttons.

Van der Zijl concluded: “We’ve seen a marked acceleration in adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic as forward-thinking companies recognise the potential for cobots to meet heightened demand for cleaning services whilst managing cost. This is set to increase further as contractors look to future-proof their operations and take advantage of new opportunities in a highly dynamic marketplace. Contractors can’t afford to delay any longer – they need to embrace cobotic technology and new operating models now or else they risk being left behind.”

The Guide was created after consultation with a range of senior leaders from European FM and cleaning, from all corners of the industry. These included:

Peter Ankerstjerne - Chairman of the Board at IFMA and Global Lead FM & Experience Services at JLL

Nils van der Zijl - VP Sales & Marketing at SoftBank Robotics EMEA

Dianna Steinbach - VP International Services at ISSA

Alexander Granderath – Director at DRG Consulting

Elke de Jong - Innovation Specialist at CSU

Sascha Hartmann - Head of the Competence Center Experts at Dussman Service Deutschland

The Practical Guide to Implementing Cobotics in FM is available for download [here](#).

About SoftBank Robotics EMEA

SoftBank Robotics EMEA delivers innovative automation and cobotic solutions to a range of industries in the EMEA region. Our cobots (collaborative robots) are designed to support and empower people in their work, removing the strain of repetitive and time-consuming tasks and enabling staff to focus on higher value activities which makes a real difference to clients. Within the facilities management and commercial cleaning industries, our automated cleaning products enable contractors to adopt a smarter, more sustainable approach to service delivery, through new technology and agile business models. Our products are

designed to free up cleaning teams to focus on added-value tasks, whilst driving greater performance and consistency in specific areas of service delivery.

SoftBank Robotics EMEA is part of SoftBank Robotics Group, a worldwide leader in robotics solutions. SoftBank Robotics is constantly exploring and commercializing robotics solutions that help make people's lives easier, safer, more connected, and more extraordinary.

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About IFMA

The International Facility Management Association (IFMA) is the world's largest and most widely recognized international association for facility management professionals, supporting more than 23,000 members in more than 100 countries. This diverse membership participates in focused component groups equipped to address their unique situations by region (142 chapters), industry (16 councils) and areas of interest (six communities).

Together they manage more than 78 billion square feet of property and annually purchase more than US\$526 billion in products and services. Formed in 1980, IFMA certifies professionals in facility management; conducts research; provides educational programs, content and resources; and produces World Workplace, the world's largest series of facility management conferences and expositions. To join and follow IFMA's social media outlets, visit the association's [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#) and [Instagram](#) pages. For more information, visit www.ifma.org.

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