

Guide

A Shopper's Guide to Evaluating CRE Property Management Systems

5 Old Ways of Managing CRE Operations that You Should Change

Most – if not all – property managers have a process in place for managing CRE operations. But many of the techniques are antiquated and won't keep up with the evolving expectations of tenants and building owners. The CRE industry is rapidly changing.

If you are using technology instead of manual processes quite often the tools may not be up to par. investment.

In a recent study of CRE technology trends conducted in partnership with BOMA and Building Engines, we found that the highest-performing CRE companies try the latest technology as soon as it's available (65%). These firms also see their tools as a competitive advantage, reporting that technology directly affects their customer service and brand image.

Ensure your tools are not outdated, siloed, and they are created with end users in mind (in this case, your property managers, tenants and building engineers.)

If you are managing operations with the following approaches, it may be time to re-evaluate the following:

1. Manual Processes

The Problem: Using paper, email or Excel-based spreadsheets to complete manual processes like inspections, preventive maintenance and other operational tasks, is inefficient. Even worse, they easily let problems slip through the cracks and hide operating inefficiencies, operational risks, maintenance oversights and other unexpected issues.

2. Build-it-Yourself Solutions

The Problem: Homegrown systems typically aren't developed by industry experts who incorporate process-specific industry best practices into their commercial systems. You will also find yourself with heavy, ongoing expenses to keep the system up to date.

3. Accounting System Add-On Modules

The Problem: These systems are made for accountants, not property managers. At best, they offer only limited work order, inspection, preventive maintenance and other capabilities that are important to property managers.

4. Legacy Systems

The Problem: Legacy systems are often outdated and difficult to use. Additionally, these vendors typically spend more time updating old versions of their software rather than innovating to keep up with the changing CRE industry.

5. Siloed Facility Management Tools

The Problem: Facility management tools are primarily designed to solve challenges related to engineers rather than overall property operations which impact property managers and tenants. These systems can also lack cross-functional dashboards and reporting, making them tedious to use.

While each of these approaches may appear to have advantages, each has major disadvantages as well. To compete in this industry today, CRE organizations must use a modern property management solution that connects all processes and people involved in operating your building or portfolio. This will improve tenant satisfaction and engagement, enhance operational efficiency, mitigate risk, and help make well-informed operational decisions to improve asset value.

Unlike the approaches above, modern property management platforms:

- ✔ Are easy to use for all end users
- ✔ Manage the entire property management process from end to end
- ✔ Have deep tenant capabilities designed to improve the tenant experience
- ✔ Are SaaS (Software-as-a-Service)-based for rapid deployment, scalability and reliability
- ✔ Have the ability to log into the system from different locations

Feature Assessment:

Do you have the right property management platform?

Today's property management solutions should encompass specific functionality (listed below) to give your CRE organization a competitive advantage.

This checklist is based on the features provided by Building Engines' software, which was developed over 15 years of working directly with thousands of CRE properties to better manage millions of square feet of space.

It will walk you through the most important aspects of modern property management software. This is a helpful baseline for determining what functionality you need, what your current system might be lacking, and identifying potential process gaps. For each of the functionality points, ask yourself "does my software (or process) include these features and help solve challenges associated with them?" Answer, yes, no, or not sure.

From there you'll be able to determine what to do next.

[Check boxes for yes, no, not sure for each item]

Fully Connected People and Processes

Keep on top of all aspects of building operations, quickly pinpoint problems, and monitor performance against set goals.

Yes No Not Sure

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Platform and Database: One central platform for all stakeholders including tenants property managers, engineers and vendors.

Yes No Not Sure

☐ ☐ ☐

Home Screen Dashboard: At-a-glance dashboard so users can quickly check the pulse of buildings, pinpoint trouble spots, and quickly drill down for additional information.

Yes No Not Sure

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Operational Performance Management: Ability to measure performance over time against service level targets, in order to improve service.

Tenant Satisfaction, Engagement and Retention

Streamline interaction with tenants to save time when it matters most. Measure and monitor tenant satisfaction and sentiment on an ongoing basis to proactively identify and fix issues.

Yes No Not Sure

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Tenant Portal: Web portal for tenants to submit work, resource, and visitor requests; receive broadcast messages; and securely review documents.

Yes No Not Sure

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Tenant Mobile App: Dedicated mobile app that encompasses all tenant portal capabilities to make requests on the fly.

Yes No Not Sure

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Broadcast Messaging: Tenants can receive urgent, promotional, and informational broadcast messages with images on both the web portal and mobile app.

Yes No Not Sure

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Tenant Resource Scheduling: Tenants can reserve conference rooms and other resources. Properties can charge for these services.

Yes No Not Sure

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Tenant Work Order Request: Tenants can submit a work order that is seamlessly routed to the appropriate person for follow up.

Yes No Not Sure

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Tenant Service Level Agreements (SLAs): Managers can keep on top of tenant service level agreements and track performance against targets.

Yes No Not Sure

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Tenant Satisfaction and Sentiment: Ongoing measurement of overall tenant sentiment using in-app mobile and web tenant surveys.

Mobile Property Manager Application

Arm property managers with the information they need, when they need it, to make more informed decisions.

Yes No Not Sure

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Information Access On the Go: Property managers can access tenant satisfaction data, COI status metrics, tenant contacts, maintenance history and other important information from their mobile device before and during tenant meetings.

Yes No Not Sure

☐ ☐ ☐

Taking Action from Anywhere: Property managers can send urgent broadcast messages with images; submit incident reports; and enter and track work orders.

Mobile Engineer Applications

Yes No Not Sure

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Working from Anywhere: Enable engineering staff and vendors to save time, doing work in the field instead of the office. Provide specific geolocation coordinates to save time and avoid errors. Engineers can access and complete their assigned work orders, inspections, PMs in both online and offline modes; attach and annotate photos; obtain tenant signatures for completed work; and enter and view incident reports.

Yes No Not Sure

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Geolocation: During work order creation, users can capture location using a map or the mobile device's location. Users can navigate to the issue location through the mobile app.

Work Order Management

Use automation to prioritize work, have visibility into all work orders, and lessen property administrator workload.

Yes No Not Sure

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Work Order Prioritization and Scheduling: Add and complete scheduled and recurring work orders on web and mobile. Automatically assign priority and response time service levels by issue type, location and requestor.

Yes No Not Sure

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Automated and Manual Dispatch: Work orders can be routed to individual to dispatch manually, assign automatically, or notify group, and can be sent to outside subcontractors for assignment.

Yes No Not Sure

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Work Order Tracking and Workflow: Track individual and overall performance of work orders as they progress through workflow stages including acknowledgment, arrival of vendor to location, completion of task, closure following review, cancelation, and hold; track additional details as well.

Yes No Not Sure

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Vendor Support: Vendors can accept all assigned work, update status, work hours and material expenses.

Maintaining Asset Value

Save time and resources with pre-populated and automated inspection and maintenance schedules.

			Inspections:
Yes	No	Not Sure	
☐	☐	☐	Inspections can be automatically created based on based on predefined questions in stacking plan.
Yes	No	Not Sure	
☐	☐	☐	Work order automatically created when an item doesn't pass inspection.
			Preventive Maintenance:
Yes	No	Not Sure	
☐	☐	☐	Pre-populated GSA (United States General Services Administration) schedule of preventive maintenance. The schedule provides government-recommended standards for timing and maintenance of equipment, and can be edited so that organizations can set up preventive maintenance schedules in less time.
Yes	No	Not Sure	
☐	☐	☐	Automated preventive maintenance scheduling that allows engineers to access warranty info, manuals, and required equipment from their mobile device.
Yes	No	Not Sure	
☐	☐	☐	Engineers can scan QR codes to see scheduled tasks for each piece of equipment.

Risk Mitigation

Stay on top of vendor and tenant certifications of insurance to avoid potential liability.

Yes	No	Not Sure	
☐	☐	☐	Certificates of Insurance (COI): Track all COIs and send automatic reminders to tenants and vendors prior to expiration.
Yes	No	Not Sure	
☐	☐	☐	Incident Tracking: Capture all information related to building incidents and configure alerts for certain people based upon incident specifics and types.
Yes	No	Not Sure	
☐	☐	☐	Impairments: Configurable impairment alerts and notification to specific people/groups, such as fire department when turning a piece of equipment on or off.
Yes	No	Not Sure	
☐	☐	☐	SOC 2 Compliance: Software solution provider is SOC 2 compliant.

If you answered “no” to 20 of the above, chances are your processes or technologies are outdated and won’t be able to keep up with the needs of modern tenants and employees, or the overall evolution of the CRE industry. When looking for a new solution or improved processes, take each of the above points into account. This will help you find a property management software that will meet your needs and serve as a resource to not only be more efficient, but gain a competitive advantage in-market.

We're here to help.

If you are using technology instead of manual processes quite often the tools may not be up to par. investment.

Building Engines provides the commercial real estate industry's most innovative web and mobile property management platform, providing building teams with the data and insights they need to improve operational efficiency, mitigate risk, measure and improve tenant satisfaction, and make better, data-driven decisions.

The Building Engines integrated suite of solutions support the full range of critical building operations, including tenant engagement and service, maintenance management, communications, task and operational risk management.

[Schedule a Demo.](#)



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