

# I DON'T WANT TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.

*I want to create a world where the environment doesn't need protecting.*

I recently found this anonymous quote and it had such an impact on me that I have since turned my life goal into making it a reality. From that moment on, I decided to use this as my goal in life. For me, the environment should be one of humanity's top priorities, as without it we are nothing. This goal can be seen throughout many aspects of my life. In this column I would like to tell you more about how I try to incorporate the environment into my professional life and hopefully, you can learn something from me and help me achieve this goal.

In my personal life I have always tried to be aware of my choices and their influence on the environment. However, it wasn't until recently that I also adopted this into my professional life. Last year, I followed a course at The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS) called 'Sustainable Urban Engineering' (SUE). Here, I learned all about how to sustainably design and maintain a building and its technical installations. During this course I realised what a major influence we facility managers can have on the environment. We can influence: the use of electricity, gas, water and renewable sources; the behaviour of the employees; and even the family of the employee and our suppliers. Our reach goes further than we are willing to admit. I think that it is because of this that we feel obligated to take responsibility for the environment and that is what people are afraid of. However, everyone should feel responsible. Everyone can do their part. I think we should take the environment into consideration in every decision we make, because it is facility managers who can make the difference. My plan is to deliver this message to as many people possible within the FM industry.

**'Imagine that trees gave off WIFI signals, we would be planting so many trees and we'd probably save the planet too. Too bad that they only produce the oxygen that we breath.'** - Anonymous

I have already started small at organizations where I (used to) work. Recycling trash, turning off unnecessary lights, investing in sustainable central heating units, it all helps. Things can start small, but the idea behind these small actions allows them to grow. Through the results of my thesis, I want to help facility managers to take sustainability into consideration.

My thesis is about the role of facility management in energy labels. All European countries must have some form of energy labels for utility buildings, as set by European law. However, in The Netherlands the real energy usage is often much higher than what is expected based on the energy label. In my thesis, I question the responsibility of energy within organizations and the difference between building related and user related energy consumption. I concluded that facility managers should focus more on the latter. To help Dutch facility managers do this, I am currently developing a 'users label'. While an energy label indicates the theoretical energy efficiency of the building, the users label focuses more on the people within the building. This should help facility managers in being more sustainable while also reducing their CO2 emissions.

**Are you interested in finding out more about my thesis and the users label? By the time you read this, I will have just finished my thesis. Feel free to contact me for a summary or with any questions you might have.**

While finishing my bachelors', I have realised that there is often one crucial aspect in sustainability, which new age circular and sustainable organizations often have: leadership. Being sustainable is something we have not always been very good at, especially in the last couple centuries. If you want to change this within an organization or even within society, you will need a strong leader: one who can lead the change; one who can inspire people to follow or to co-lead this change; a leader who is sustainable at heart. In order to achieve my goal, I decided to apply for the Masters' programme of Strategical Leadership towards Sustainability (MSLS) at Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH) at Karlskrona, Sweden. I am very happy to announce that I have been accepted into MSLS. With the knowledge I gain from this master, I hope I can really make a change to the field of facility management and create a world where the environment doesn't need protecting.