

THE SUSTAINABLE WORKPLACE A STRATEGIC BUSINESS TOOL AND A SOURCE OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

“The workplace can be both sustainable and viable, with an integrated strategy delivering far greater Opex and Capex savings than the conventional workplace approach. Workplace change can also be leveraged as a catalyst for business transformation.”

Many organisations are overlooking sustainability and are focusing on the more urgent need for rapid cost reduction. There is a widespread sentiment that environmental and sustainability measures are ‘nice-to-haves’ that should be addressed in better times. However, by evaluating the overall contribution that property can make to reducing occupational costs, it is still possible to meet the sustainability requirements and achieve an optimum workplace solution delivering better productivity and lower operating costs.

For example, one area of operational efficiency that can be achieved is through the reduction of energy usage which does meet the sustainability agenda which will in turn drive down operating costs. This is a straightforward example

which shows that sustainability and cost reduction can be aligned. This demonstrates that the sustainable workplace, that is delivering cost reduction within a sustainable framework, is within reach and is a viable proposition.

Leading CRE professionals have developed viable benefits cases and are implementing sustainable development and energy strategies. Furthermore, we are finding that there is a convergence of sustainability, workplace strategy and numerous other disciplines emerging in response to wider business challenges.

Creating solutions

Workplace Optimisation

An advanced, innovative workplace strategy should maximise capital expenditure and operational expenditure savings whilst delivering a workplace that is matched to staff and business needs. We are finding average savings of up to 40% can be achieved.

“Re-organising the workplace increased our net profit as an organisation by 60%.”

Business and Operational Change

Migration to an advanced workplace model requires full engagement with users in order to guide them through cultural change. This presents the opportunity to review and streamline business processes, the business model and the operating model - to leverage workplace change as a catalyst for business transformation.

Technology Leverage

New ways of working and advanced workplaces need to be supported by an appropriate technology platform to form a rich virtual environment. For example, Voice-Over-IP, (VOIP) facilities, flexibility and desk-sharing, whilst wireless distributed computing increases staff mobility.

Advanced Benefits Modelling

By capitalising the benefits of the strategic workplace - what could be considered to be the dividends from an integrated and sustainable approach - organisations can clearly demonstrate the value of the approach to their stakeholders.

To achieve success the strategy must illustrate what sustainability means to users and articulate the benefits for themselves, the organisation and for the environment. Typically there is a significant change of culture to be achieved to overcome the perception that the organisation has, to date, merely been ‘paying lip service’ to sustainability. Furthermore, many stakeholders in this new, integrated approach will typically have had little or no involvement with workplace issues to date and will need guidance.

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Driving positive outcomes

Sustainable workplace strategy offers these key benefits:

- Cost savings; through workplace optimisation (space reduction through desk sharing), advanced workplaces (reduced churn costs and project capital expenditure), streamlined processes, more effective operating models deliver lower total operating costs
- Higher productivity; our own research shows that sustainability measures and innovative workplaces significantly improve productivity and reduce staff sickness days
- Improved staff attraction and retention; flexible and attractive workplaces, combined with a credible sustainability agenda, is proven to be a compelling mix for the best talent. This is one way in which the workplace becomes a source of competitive advantage.