

REMOTE WORKING

Increase employee engagement and
the impact on the business

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SUMMARY

This paper presents a 10-step process which can take any corporate real estate or facilities manager towards the ultimate aim of becoming a corporate Placemaker.

This process, to become a corporate Placemaker, is smart not expensive. It uses technology, and is underpinned by trust. And that always results in positive business impact.

We now know, empirically, what organisational leaders didn't know in the past: employees who are fully 'engaged' in their work will deliver business impact. We also now know that their level of engagement is affected by their environment – largely by the way that employees are treated by their organisation and their managers. So, how do we create the right environment for people to feel able to reclaim their autonomy and humanly-derived desires and choices?

Trust is a key factor. Organisations must give their people some freedom and autonomy to manage how, where and when they work. Managers must trust employees to work remotely, when they need to, or just when they want to. The evidence to date suggests that this trust has a high rate of return; fully engaged people create greater business impact.

Digital technology is adding a stronger pull towards this freedom; in fact, it is changing the way we live our lives. We are mostly connected to the internet wherever we go, and because of this, we are less connected to unattractive 'places'. For anyone involved in the provision of places (real estate, and facilities) this is a fundamental shift away from what we have always assumed. Real estate was once about 'location, location, location'. For commercial real estate, providing places for office-based organisations to work, digital technology has changed the world.



Office space has shifted from the definite article to the indefinite article; we have shifted from “the location” to “a location” (or in fact, any location). Meanwhile, place has shifted in the opposite direction; we have shifted from “a place” to “the place”. Office space, on its own, is becoming a commodity purchase. Meanwhile, “the place” has greater value.

“The place to be” has a premium value to the individual. The corporate occupier that buys into this, also buys a bit of goodwill invested in the individual employee (or often these days, freelancer). It is easier to attract people to work in, or near, “the place to be”. It is easier to retain people, if leaving the organisation would also mean leaving “the place”.

The corporate Placemaker understands this, and gives people the tools to find their “place to be”, day by day. The Placemaker becomes more than the custodian of corporate real estate assets and facilities provision; the role extends, to understanding the people in the organisation, and giving them a flexible workplace solution.

INTRODUCTION

Data is fine...but what will we do with it?

Many things; we don't collect data just for fun...

Background

In September 2014, Condeco Software Inc. supported Occupiers Journal (an independent research and publishing company) to prepare and present new ideas on the future of work, at the IFMA World Workplace conference in New Orleans.

Paul Carder and Dr. James P. Ware presented “Blessed are the Placemakers”. It was a tongue-in-cheek title, suggesting that the Placemakers would not so much ‘inherit the earth’, but that they would certainly inherit the corporate real estate market. The seminar participants, in a well-filled room, were especially interested in an example of how Condeco’s Sense product could be deployed on workplace rationalised projects.

The seminar buzzed in Q&A, and received

great feedback. But, we felt afterwards that it would have been even better if we had a solutions framework. Or at least, we felt that we needed a ‘kit of parts’, or a process, from which we could create options for different client scenarios. This paper moves us towards that destination.

Armadillo: crunchy on the outside, soft(ware) on the inside

In New Orleans, we carried a few of these occupancy sensors.

There was a lot of interest in how these devices work. The nickname, Armadillo, was born; i.e., crunchy on the outside, but soft(ware) on the inside. We will come back to the Armadillo later. But, for now, let us just say that these are our front line troops – our data collectors. In the wonderful new world of Big Data, these unobtrusive little creatures are the corporate real estate leader’s reliable ally.

They send data back to analysts, 24/7, every few seconds, so building a picture of how space is being used in real-time. This was once the preserve of the workplace consultant, usually using numerous paid-volunteers with clipboards. It was expensive, potentially disruptive to occupiers, and at best took a few samples each day at key times. The permanently switched on low-cost Armadillo has changed that, permanently.

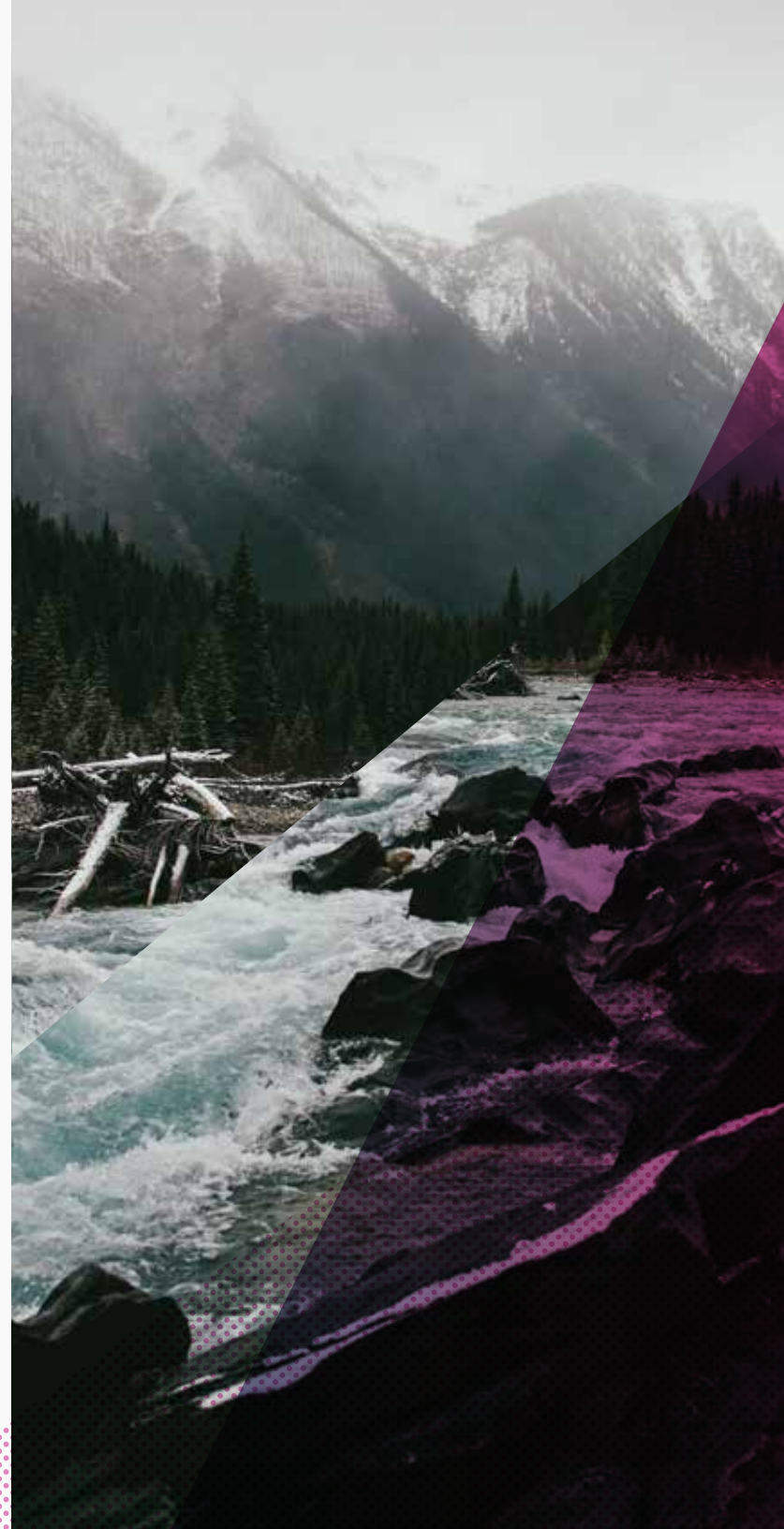
The software which monitors our army of Armadillo sensors is called Sense, and is a SaaS application, accessible from any connected device, for ease of use. We will explain how 'Sense' can be used by corporate real estate teams, later in this paper.

Towards the corporate Placemaker: a 10-step process

Data is just the start. It leads us through a process, to result in business impact.

The philosopher Lewis Mumford said people don't want freedom from work, but just freedom within work. In this paper, we present a vision for solutions which will give people freedom within their work/life, at the same time as making organisations more efficient and effective.

This paper builds upon the seminar by Paul Carder and Jim Ware at IFMA World Workplace, and takes these ideas on to the next stage. We focus specifically on how Condeco Sense (the leading-edge occupancy sensor and software application) can be used as the first step towards helping an organisation to become more 'agile'.





The solutions framework is essentially a 10-step process, as set out below:

- **Measure:** deploy Condeco Sense, occupancy sensors and software;
- **Analyse:** the Condeco Sense data: to understand office space use;
- **Develop:** a workplace strategy and change management process;
- **Implement:** workplace change; train space users for 'agile' working;
- **Realise:** reduction in space use, and create vacant space for disposal;
- **Dispose:** of vacant space; generate cash, or savings, or offset costs;
- **Reinvest:** (in part, or whole) of savings into alternative 'remote' spaces;
- **Train:** people to use agile space, and alternative remote space (nearer home);
- **Maintain:** continuous improvement: more change management and training;
- **Loop back:** analyse Condeco Sense data: learn, and feedback into development.

Let us start from the beginning though. Walk with us ... we will come back to this framework.

BUSINESS IMPACT: REMOTE WORK AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of a business is to serve its shareholders. That usually means to return a profit.

In a non-business organisation, the goal may not always be profit, but efficiency and effectiveness are no less important.

So, for any organisation, we may call this ‘business impact’.

We now know, empirically, what organisational leaders didn’t know even a decade or so before now: that employees who are fully ‘engaged’ in their work will deliver business impact. And we also know that their level of engagement is affected by their environment – largely by the way that employees are treated by their organisation and their managers.

Aligning corporate real estate strategy and employees’ expectations: key questions

What do most corporations want from their corporate real estate? Traditionally, they did not give this much thought. Today, most organisations just want to keep their costs low.

Yet, corporations also claim that their people are their most valuable assets. Much of corporate real estate is provided for the specific purpose of supporting people, so that they can work effectively. Logic would suggest that if people are so valuable, and their workspace is important to them, then corporations would give them what they want (within reason).

So, what do employees want from their work-life? That is a far more difficult question to answer, as people are all individuals. However, there are some almost-universal truths. Most people would prefer to be given a choice of how to work, and how that relates to their own life.

This is freedom, within work, which is discussed below.

The result of freedom is fully-engaged employees, working productively and effectively.

The result of this engagement is improved corporate performance; or business impact.

Freedom and employee engagement

The management writer, Charles Handy, cited the great 20th Century philosopher, Lewis Mumford, who said, “True leisure is not freedom from work but freedom in work...” quips Handy, and continues by stating that “modern work does not provide too many of those opportunities...”

Handy was commenting over twenty years ago, but it could have been today. How much freedom do employees typically

have in their daily work/life?

Actually, Mumford was explaining that, except in “servile industries like mining”, playful relaxation, aesthetics, and other stimulations, were “not spatially or mentally separated completely from the work in hand.” In other words, the work of the artist or artisan was not about labour-saving, but “labour-loving” as he called it.

Mumford reflected on what we have lost in modern-day work (bearing in mind, he was writing in 1970, then who knows what he would have made of 2014):

“Such an economy had something that we now have almost forgotten the meaning of. Leisure: not freedom from work, which is how our present culture interprets leisure, but freedom within work, and along with that, time to converse, to ruminate, to contemplate the meaning of life.”

More recently, William Manson (a “psychoanalytic anthropologist”) further explains:

“Mumford advocated a negative revolt—resistance, refusal, withdrawal—whereby individuals may reclaim their autonomy and humanly-derived desires and choices. One might call this “dodging the Mega-System”: possibly fleeing the urban, market-driven “Pathopolis”—or at least, exercising one’s autonomous right to—Choose to Refuse!”

How do we create the right culture and environment for people, as William Manson phrased it, to feel able to “reclaim their autonomy and humanly-derived desires and choices”?

It is simple really, isn’t it? Organisations must give their people some freedom.

Not freedom from work (people need to work, and most want to work), but just some freedom to manage how, where and when they work.

Trust employees to work remotely, when they need to, or just when they want to.

Give back some work-life balance, by allowing people to work closer to home.

We should all perhaps try it, as many organisations already have, and see how better engaged people create greater business impact. Let’s explore this further.





Remote working improves employee engagement – it’s about trust

In 2013, Gallup demonstrated a direct link between working remotely and employee engagement. The Gallup organisation can support this better than most, through strong quantitative credentials, as their media states:

Through decades of research with hundreds of organisations and more than 25 million employees, Gallup leads the world in its unparalleled understanding of engagement’s impact on the workplace.

Business impact, as discussed earlier, was the main focus of attention in the Gallup study. Their research was able to show that the more engaged employees are, the more this directly correlates to higher earnings-per-share.

This was no ‘woolly’ social experiment in how happy people are. The study used empirical data to demonstrate that high levels of employee engagement lead on directly to business impact.

If you want people to deliver more, just leave them alone to decide how!

Like the artist or artisan of earlier centuries, referred to by Lewis Mumford, there is something in all people which makes us want to be masters of our own world. We want to be able to do our work, practice our ‘art’, in our own particular way.

And, more than this – people in the 21st Century world of work do not have the luxury of time to waste. Many have to balance work, family, friendships and other social responsibilities in their community.

To give back time to someone is almost like putting cash in their hand! Sometimes it is more valued than money. This relationship often changes over peoples’ life-path.

It is perhaps not so surprising, therefore, that a key finding of the Gallup study was as follows:

Despite not always having a manager nearby to monitor their productivity, remote workers actually log more hours at their primary job than do their on-site counterparts.

This supports much of the ‘teleworking’ research conducted by others, on smaller samples, over many years. In fact, this research goes right back into the 1980s, when early (and very slow!) technology was just starting to allow some professionals to work away from their offices.

What’s it all about? It seems to be about trust.

Leave people to decide how, where and when they can best deliver their work, and they will in turn feel trusted. People generally reward that trust with greater engagement in their work.



INCREASING REMOTE WORK; REDUCING CORE OFFICE SPACE

“Let people decide how, where and when they can best deliver their work, and they will in turn feel trusted. People generally reward that trust with greater engagement in their work.

It is essential to always keep in mind that every person is unique. Is this an obvious statement? You may say so. In the design and delivery of corporate space however, there is limited evidence of consideration for people as individuals.

The very best contemporary office design delivers a variety of spaces for different purposes. This goes some way to addressing the fact that the variety of activities performed by people in office space requires a corresponding variety of spaces, specifically designed for those activities.

However, even the best office cannot suit the individual needs of every person allocated to that office. Here are some obvious (but often overlooked) factors, for an individual person:

- The office may be in the wrong place: the individual may be able to work effectively in a good variety of spaces provided in the office. But, would prefer not to spend the time (and money) getting to and from the office.
- The office may be in the wrong time-zone: the individual may need to get onto calls, or online meetings, with people in a different time-zone. That may be 4pm for the Palo Alto headquarters, and 8am for the sales office in Hong Kong. If a person is part of that team meeting, but lives in London, that means a midnight call. Why do that in the office?

- The office may be too quiet: we often read about noise in open-plan offices, but the issue can equally be lack of noise. Acoustic designers introduce white-noise, to try to address this. But, some people just find that they work better in café with a ‘buzz’ about it.
- The office may be too accessible: or specifically, the individual may find their self too accessible when in the office. i.e., they get distracted. How many times have we heard someone say, ‘I can’t get any work done in this office’?

For these reasons, and many more that we could probably think of, if you give people the choice, they will often decide not to work in the corporate office.

So, given a choice, where will they work?

The answer is, almost anywhere; but, not necessarily at their home.

For some, home is their ‘place to be’ – if they have enough space, and are not going to be interrupted or distracted by family or flat-sharers.

For others, a separation of ‘home’ and ‘work’ is needed. Their ‘place to be’ may be somewhere they just like to be. Near restaurants and cafes, perhaps where they meet friends for lunch or after work. The ‘place to be’ is a very individual thing.



“Office space has shifted from the definite article to the indefinite article; we have shifted from “the location” to “a location” (or in fact, any location).... Meanwhile, place has shifted in the opposite direction – to “the place....”

‘The place to be’ ... an individual desire

What is happening, to allow “the place to be” to progress from desire to reality?

Digital technology is changing the way we live our lives. Because we are mostly connected to the internet wherever we go, we are less connected to specific places. For anyone involved in the provision of places (real estate, and facilities) this is a fundamental shift away from what we have always assumed.

Real estate was once about ‘location, location, location’. In some sectors that is still true (e.g., retail – it’s about getting your store in the right place to attract the most potential customers). But, for commercial real estate, providing places for office-based organisations to work, digital technology has changed the world.

Office space has shifted from the definite article to the indefinite article; we

have shifted from “the location” to “a location” (or in fact, any location).

Meanwhile, place has shifted in the opposite direction - from the indefinite article to the definite article; we have shifted from “a place” to “the place”. Search Google: allintitle: “the place to be” you get almost 200,000 results – i.e., with the exact words “the place to be” in the title. If you just Google “the place to be” you get 275 million results.

The lesson here is that office space, on its own, is becoming a commodity purchase. It is a purely rational economic transaction, at the lowest price achievable. You pay more for certain characteristics, but not much more.

Meanwhile, place has a premium value to the individual person. For them, it is “the place to be” and that is worth more to the individual. The corporate occupier that buys into this, also buys a bit of goodwill invested in the individual

employee (or often these days, freelancer). It is easier to attract people to work in, or near, “the place to be”. It is also easier to retain people, if leaving the organisation would also mean leaving “the place”.

The corporate Placemaker understands this, and works to match where individuals want to be, with where they can be, to work, on any particular day. The corporate Placemaker becomes more than the usual custodian of corporate real estate assets and facilities provision; the skill is more about understanding the people in the organisation, and giving them a flexible solution.



Remote working does not (necessarily) mean working at home

Remote working simply means not being in “the office” – it does not mean working at home, though it can do where this suits the employee’s circumstances. More often today, remote working means working in an office-type setting, or co-working hub, closer to where an individual needs to be on a given day. Or, just wants to be on that day.

Q: Where do you want to be in 5 years’ time?

A: Not here...

When we start to have choices, in pretty much anything at all, the mindset starts to shift from ‘need’ to ‘want’. Social norms in most societies around the world suggest that we ‘need’ clothes! But that would never explain the range of choice of clothes available in developed countries. Fashion is not about ‘need’.

This shift from ‘need’ to ‘want’ is just starting to impact the office space market.

Corporate real estate in most organisations delivers the basic ‘need’ – an office, somewhere. But people have started to

realise that this basic ‘need’ may be covered, but it is not necessarily what they ‘want’.

As an employee, if asked the old staple interview question, “Where do you want to be in 5 years’ time”, they may well reply, “Not here!”

Blame Starbucks – they’re just too good

People are starting to value experience over basic ‘need’. Take coffee, and the Starbucks story. Starbucks did not set out to sell coffee. They set out to sell an experience, based around coffee. They are in the real estate business, per se. They are in the hospitality sector too. Starbucks sells space and hospitality, for the price of a ‘cup of Joe’.

You can usually buy a cup of coffee cheaper, near a Starbucks outlet. That is not the point. People buy a Starbucks coffee to sit for a while in their ‘shop’. Not everyone loves it – but, that goes back to the point made above, that we are all unique individuals. Enough people like Starbucks for it to be a successful business.

Who will be the Starbucks of office space, when more people can choose where they work on any given day? Or, will it in fact

be Starbucks? We have already seen (for many years now) the franchising of outlets like Starbucks (and many others) within corporate real estate managed facilities. What is to stop Starbucks offering office facilities, with free coffee, to regular subscribers, or people willing to pay for “coffee plus” services?

Who pays for the remote working ‘place’?

If an organisation provides its employees with an office, it is never going to give those employees additional funds to sit in Starbucks and drink expensive coffee. If you want to do that, you’re on your own. But, that is far too simplistic as a picture of what is happening.

Reflect a while on the business impact derived from fully engaged employees, and how they may be more engaged when trusted to work remotely.

Is there a business case for funding employees (via various means) to work remotely, in a workplace of their choice?

What if funding employees to work remotely was cost neutral, but improved their levels of engagement and ultimate business impact?



*“We don’t want to pay for an office and a remote workplace” –
OK, you don’t need to!*

If everyone in an organisation has a desk in their company offices, but many of them work remotely, there is a waste of resource. True.

But, typically offices are 40-50% occupied at any given time, if they work on a one person to one desk ratio (a desk-share ratio, or DSR, of 1.0).

A workplace consultant, Gary Miciunas, recently explained this in a new set of metrics for high-performance workspaces. He set out the following:

A new set of metrics for high-performance workspace must expand beyond area per person to include:

- Square Feet per Person
- Square Feet per Seat
- Persons-to-Seats Sharing Ratio
- Ratio of “I” Seats Area for Concentration to “We” Seats Area allowing for Collaboration and Community settings

- Number of “I” Seats to Number of “We” Seats Ratio

If used intelligently, Miciunas argues that these metrics drive an increased proportion of what he calls “We” seats (shared, collaborative spaces) as opposed to “I” seats (dedicated to concentration tasks, or those deemed to need a permanent desk).

However, we hear some of you shouting “this stuff is not new!” One of our colleagues made this point in an article titled “After 50 years, it’s time to go main-stream”. Designing office space around its patterns of use can be traced back to the 1960s, to Bürolandschaft and Dr. Frank Duffy as a young PhD student.

What is new? We think, the driver to reduce the waste of underused office space, and to re-invest in remote working options, where your people are more engaged, and therefore delivering higher levels of business impact.

The policy decision for corporate real estate leaders is whether savings identified in this way can then be put aside to re-invest in remote working solutions. We look at this in the next section.

Analysis showed that average occupancy was 48% across the four week period ... with 400 people across four floors, on average only 192 desks were being used.

If you identify low occupancy levels, and address this, you can create vacant space – how?

The best way to explain this is with an example. We will use Wallace&Spocket LLP, a fictional (but realistic) professional services firm (a full description is given in Appendix 1).

The first step was to deploy occupancy sensors at every existing workstation, and around spaces where people worked such as in meeting rooms.

The software was adjusted to measure occupancy at every 'seat' at 10 minute intervals (the software does this 24/7, for as long as the sensors are deployed).

Over a four week period, analysts began to work with the sensor data, to understand patterns of office space use across the four floors. This analysis showed that average occupancy was 48% across the four week period. This varied by business unit

and function across Wallace&Sprocket's operations.

Using the analysis, the company's management was able to develop a workplace strategy and change management process. The calculations were fairly simple, as an average across all business units (though adjustments were made for some, such as Tax and IT, whose occupancy had been around the 60-70% level).

With 400 people across four floors, on average only 192 desks were being used.

The company therefore decided to re-stack the office space, to move out of the ground floor. The assumption was made that if occupancy levels stayed broadly similar, and 192 desks were being used (average) then the company could cope with 300 desks on three floors (an occupancy rate of around 64%). This could be monitored over time, using the Condeco Sense software, to see how well the space coped



with any fluctuations in use.

Wallace&SprocketLLP was able to realise savings, on paper at least. The company was able to reduce space use, by one whole floor (25%), totaling 1200 square metres net internal area (NIA). At an annual run-rate of approximately £750 per square metre NIA, the saving identified was circa £900,000.

RE-invest

What is really interesting about Wallace&SprocketLLP is that the Partners decided to re-invest 75% of the savings into alternative ‘remote’ spaces for staff to use, closer to where they lived. And also, issue ‘cards’ to mid-to-senior level staff which they could use to access meeting rooms and workspace on the move.

REALISING SAVINGS; RE-INVESTING IN REMOTE WORKING

In the sections above we have described the business benefits of increased remote working, and the opportunities to identify under-utilised office space. The Condeco Sense tools (occupancy sensors and software for analysis) can accurately identify the level of under-used office space (including meeting rooms and other useable space). It is then a policy decision for corporate real estate leaders to consider whether potential savings identified in this way can then be put aside to re-invest in remote working solutions.

Realising savings from under-utilized office space

It is one thing to identify opportunities to reduce office space. It is often more difficult to realise these potential savings. There will also be a need for good change management to make the transition from individually-owned space to working in team-shared spaces; we return to change management later.

Let's assume that an office building has been 're-stacked', and one whole floor is now vacant space (as in the Wallace&SprocketLLP example).

How do we turn this vacant space into cash?

There are several options available to the corporate real estate leader. We have outlined a few below, though this is not an exhaustive list, and is indicative only*.

The basic options for 'disposal' of one floor are as follows:

1. For leaseholds

- Terminate ("surrender") the lease (if the landlord agrees – it may be in their interest to do so, but it will always be a negotiated agreement);
- Exercise a 'break clause' to end the lease;
- Transfer ("assign") the lease to a third party – not all the obligations under the lease will usually be transferred, so professional advice is required;
- Sublet (if permitted under the lease) to a third party.

2. For freeholds

- Lease the vacant floor to a third party.

If an organisation can dispose of its vacant space via the property market, then often that will be the preferred solution.

What are the options if the office property market is ‘flat’ (or dead) in your area?

If an organisation can dispose of its vacant space via the property market, then often that will be the preferred solution. But there are two key reasons that this may not work out:

1. The office property market may be ‘flat’ (or dead – no transactions at all) in your location; or
2. The business may consider it prudent to hold the space for future expansion.

If either of these situations arises, then a less traditional route is needed to realize the savings potential from the vacant space.

Some potential options would be as follows:

- Sublet to a close business partner
- Change of use (e.g., from office to retail)
- Bring in a Serviced Office operator
- Mixture (of the above)

Let’s look at these options in greater detail.

Sublet to a close business partner

Talk to close business partners, perhaps with a dedicated account team working with your business. There may be mutual business benefits in bringing their team closer to your business, by co-locating in your building.

Change of use (e.g., from office to retail)

Subject to planning permission (change of use) there may be more demand for a retail outlet in your location than there is for an office sublet. Common examples have been coffee shops and restaurants being granted a lease to fit out and operate space on the Ground Floor of an office. This could benefit your building users, in addition to providing an income stream to cover the cost of the vacant office space.

Bring in a Serviced Office operator

Your vacant office space may present an opportunity for a Serviced Office operator. The City of London research in October 2014 claimed that 18,000 people work in serviced offices in the City alone; the number across major urban areas in the UK is far higher (though London has seen a particular growth in serviced offices).

The research also suggests that 2,250 businesses are based in serviced offices in the City of London. Many are stable, steady

state SMEs. The businesses that are serving these customers are also investing – Workspace Group, the provider of space for new and growing companies, has recently spent £31.4m on the acquisition of two London properties.

As an occupier with a vacant floor (or floors) to let, you could become ‘landlord’ to a serviced office operator. They will rent your space on a medium-term lease, and take the risk of finding serviced office tenants on shorter contracts (anything from a few hours, to a year or more).

Create your own ‘corporate coworking centre’?

Depending on the amount of space that is available to release onto the market, and the restrictions on the use of that space (e.g., with the landlord) it could be used for a mixture of the options described above.

One of those options – creating your own coworking centre – we will return to below.

Making the transition: good change management

There are books, articles and conferences dedicated to this subject, so we will not cover it in this paper. Change management is a process, and often needs some external expert help. Alison Maitland and Peter Thomson, in their book *Future Work*, give many examples.

There are many good consultants that can support transition to agile working. The Workplace Consulting Organisation (WCO) holds a list on their website:

http://www.workplacechange.org/content/16129/membership/membership_list/membership_list

With your new income stream (or cash in the bank), now, re-invest in “the place to be”

“The place to be” has a premium value to the individual. The corporate occupier that buys into this, also buys a bit of goodwill invested in the individual employee (or often these days, freelancer). It is easier to attract people to work in, or near, “the place to be”. It becomes easier to retain people, if leaving the organisation would also mean leaving “the place”.

So, what are the tools available to the corporate Placemaker, to give people their “place to be”, day by day? How does the Placemaker’s role becomes more than the custodian of corporate real estate assets and facilities provision; to extend into understanding the people in the organisation, and giving them a flexible workplace solution.



Is it just a case of giving people what they want? Maybe, an occasional office near to home, an open welcome at HQ anytime they want to be there, and a ‘card’ to use a Regus centre?

Yes, largely ... But there are a rapidly growing set of options around the world.

The world of co-working has recently expanded at a pace. But, there are essentially two routes:

- Individual coworking
- Corporate accounts
- Create your own coworking space

Individual Co-working

Deskmag (www.deskmag.com) keep an interesting timeline¹⁵ for coworking, and the journal claims the concept can be traced back around twenty years to C-base in Berlin.

<http://www.kircher-burkhardt.com/blog/c-base-in-berlin-der-ideen-inkubator-der-dritten-art/>

But, coworking is generally described in various sources as a workplace solution for independent workers, freelancers, start-up businesses and the like. One simple definition is given by Andrea Foertsch as follows:

“Working independently in a shared environment such as an office or workshop.”

Of course, “working independently” could be re-interpreted in line with this paper, as working away from the ‘normal’ corporate environment. After all, in a coworking environment everyone works for different organisations – does it matter if a coworker is employed by a large corporation?

To the individual corporate employee though, there is a fundamental difference. As discussed above, it could be one of their “places to be” – somewhere they feel more at home, perhaps. Somewhere, perhaps, they can just get on with their work, alongside other people, but without the structure and politics of the corporate office.



Sometimes (maybe often!), we just need to get away from the hierarchy. Bernard De Koven describes the start of the idea of “working as equals”:

“I learned, somewhat reluctantly, that the whole idea of “working together as equals” was a lot more revolutionary than I had naively assumed. For the most part, people don’t work together as equals, especially not in the business world where they are graded and isolated, categorised and shuffled into a hierarchy that separates them by rank and salary level; creating, for the majority of employees, an indelibly competitive relationship which, even when they find themselves members of the same team, is rife with distrust, duplicity and often downright sabotage.”

This may be a somewhat cynical viewpoint – but, that may be the way many corporate employees feel about their organisation.

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The Wallace&SprocketLLP notional case study was developed for teaching purposes, by Occupiers Journal Ltd and University of the West of England, Bristol, UK (www.uwe.ac.uk). Several versions of the story may be in circulation, and you are welcome to use it or change it to suit the story you wish to tell. But please credit Paul Carder @ Occupiers Journal
Selected further reading from Occupiers Journal

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/Placemaker-Research-Programme-5093552/about>

The challenge of personalization; another nail in the coffin of the office monolith <http://occupiersjournal.com/the-challenge-of-personalization-another-nail-in-the-coffin-of-the-office-monolith/>

Consumerization of Workplace Accommodation: How Far Will it Go? <http://occupiersjournal.com/consumerization-of-workplace-accommodation-how-far-will-it-go/>

Placemaker: 2040: “Grandma, what was Commuting?” <http://occupiersjournal.com/Placemaker-2040-grandma-what-was-commuting/>

Placemaker: Independence <http://occupiersjournal.com/Placemaker-independence/>

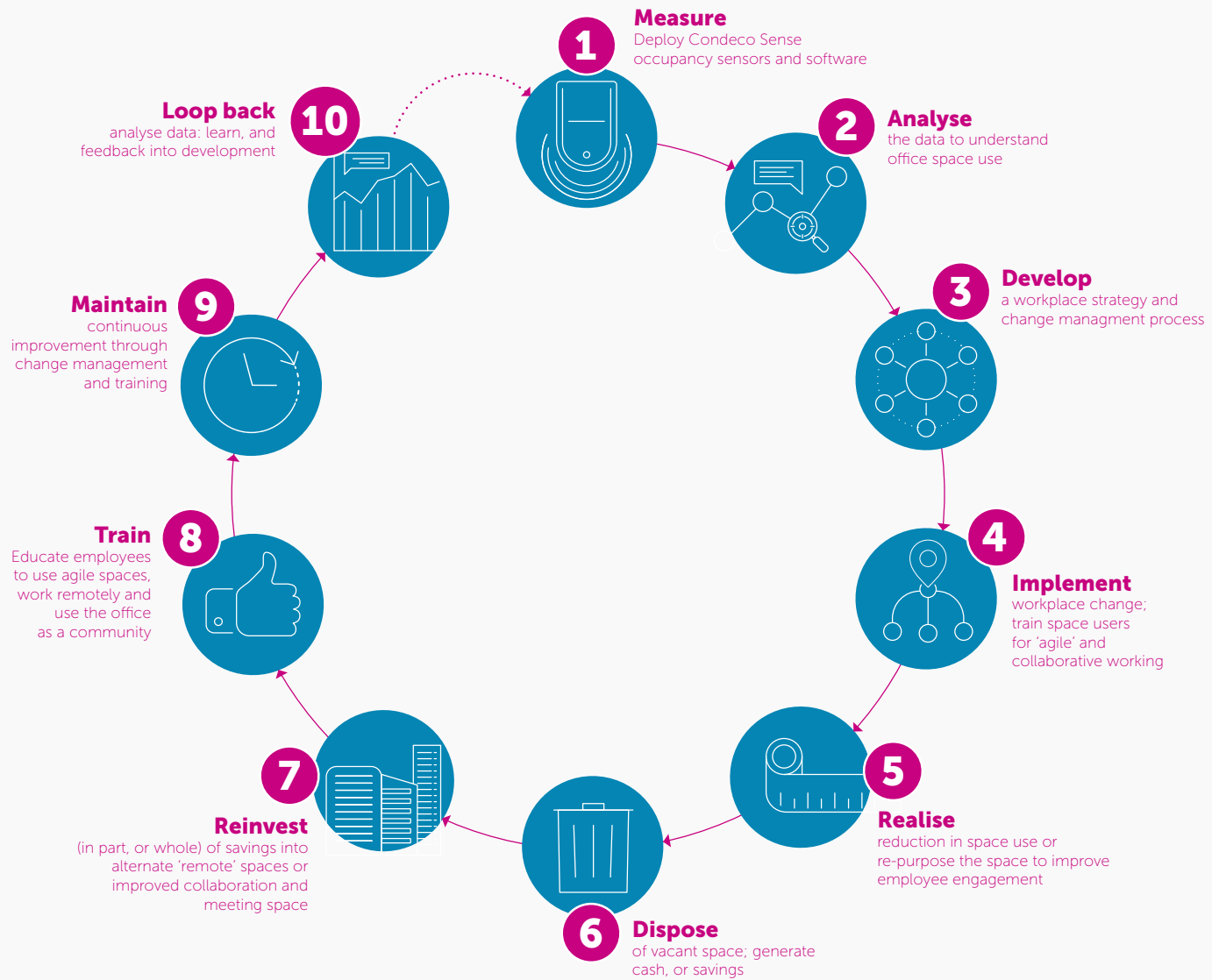
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Placemaker: Research Programme: Questions? <http://occupiersjournal.com/Placemaker-research-programme-questions/>

Placemaker: Who Creates 'home' for People at Work? <http://occupiersjournal.com/Placemaker-who-creates-home-for-people-at-work/>

Workplace is Discipline; See One, do One, Teach One <http://occupiersjournal.com/workplace-is-discipline-see-one-do-one-teach-one/>

APPENDIX - 10 STEP PROCESS



ABOUT CONDECO

We are Condeco, pioneers of workspace management technology for the world's most competitive businesses. Our integrated meeting room booking, desk booking and workspace utilisation technologies help organisations transform their operations quickly, efficiently and at scale.

By taking time to understand each business and challenge individually, we help our clients shape a more sustainable and efficient future for their enterprise. And to benefit from connected products and services that help people work more productively in markets around the world.

Our mission

For businesses today, growth at scale depends on total management of the workplace environment.

Condeco provides the insight and technology you need to adapt quickly, and the products to transform workplaces and work-life capabilities, so you can engage effortlessly across global locations, and make the most of tomorrow.



The workplace is changing, it's not just a building, it's a new way of meeting and collaborating. Since 2005, Condeco has been revolutionising the way we interact with our business environment, combining progressive workspace management technology with future foresight. Through extensive research, industry insights, and workspace leadership we evolve the digital workspace with a Force for Change.

Are you ready to shape your workplace future?

www.condecosoftware.com/forceforchange

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