

## ***The Impact of Emerging Technologies on the Property Profession***

### **Executive Summary of the discussions at Burlington House – London, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

Delegates at the June Property Directors Forum event discussed two pivotal changes in the market that will affect property directors over the next five to seven years. The debates were stimulated by two presentations. The first, delivered by Andrew Waller, Partner at Remit Consulting, looked at the impact on the profession of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. The second, delivered by Neil Usher, Executive Consultant at Unispace, looked at how to deliver an excellent workplace to every employee. The Panel Debate was facilitated by Jason Sibthorpe, UK Managing Director at Avison Young.

### **The main themes and conclusions were as follows:**

#### **1. The transformational impact of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

- 1. Basic CRE tasks that are easy to automate will be lost.** [RICS](#) estimates as many as 88% of? Tasks or jobs could go. These include: Preparing contracts, obtaining property information, planned maintenance, managing leases, space management.
- 2. However, if property directors upskill, they could take on a more strategic role in the business.** This will involve more complex tasks that are more suited to humans rather than machines. These new strategic roles will ‘touch’ multiple business functions, e.g. HR, IT, Operations, Finance
- 3. AI will improve job quality** by removing the repetitive and dull elements of today’s role.
- 4. AI will improve proactivity, productivity and responsiveness by property directors** by providing the ability to predict what is needed from a property perspective
- 5. Property directors will need to become data ‘savvy’.** They will need to be skilled at defining what data is needed by the business and then using it intelligently to add value to the business. It’s not about access to all the data but access to the right data for your business.
- 6. Occupiers need to start using their data in a more efficient and cohesive way to harness the full value of AI.** Technology will be used to either reduce the time for a task or cut out a task completely. For example, the travel time to inspect a property and produce a report in the building surveying process could be replaced with the use of remote technology.
- 7. Landlords and occupiers need to work together to get the right technology ‘dividend’ from AI.** Landlords and occupiers need to work together to ensure the right data is collected to deliver a better workplace at less cost. Current UK lease structures do not support innovation, predominantly due to: lease lengths, dilapidations and rent reviews, etc. Recent examples of House of Fraser and M&S store closure announcements also suggest that more innovative workplace thinking is needed to respond better to customer needs and wants.
- 8. The increasing use of technology will make service charges more transparent, measurable and accurate.** It was thought that technology will help to normalise costs. Landlords providing more technology in their buildings will rise to the top.

## 2. Providing 'excellent' workplaces is essential to future success

1. **Every employee deserves a fantastic workplace.** As “workplace” is taken more seriously as a contributor to personal and organisational success, occupiers need to ensure it can deliver the best possible experience to all its employees, rather than just concentrate on the productivity aspect alone.
2. **Providing a great workplace will be key to winning the battle for talent.** This will help attract and keep the right people for the right jobs. Providing a great workplace will be key to attracting and retaining talent.
3. **You don't need to wait for huge capital projects to improve poor or mediocre workplaces.** Run the self-assessment in Neil Usher's book, [The Elemental Workplace](#), to identify quick wins.
4. **Not every workplace needs to be like Google to deliver an excellent experience to employees.** Involving employees in identifying affordable improvements can build morale by showing you care about the working environment.
5. **Every workplace is a permanent beta trial.** Involving employees in workplace evolution will ensure continuous improvement and an energised and engaged workforce.
6. **Keeping things simple and easily understandable is key to creating 'fantastic workplaces'.** Neil Usher has extended Fran Duffy's original 3 Es of workplace strategy to six:
  - **Efficient** in terms of space occupied and its cost
  - **Effective** so that the workplace allows people to work and be at their best
  - **Expressive** in representing and reinforcing the DNA of the organisation
  - **Environmentally** responsible
  - Exists digitally – in the **Ether** – so it is known as a fantastic place to work
  - Creates and preserves the **Energy** of its people and therefore the organisation.
7. **Flexible working arrangements don't mean 'the death of the office'.** Occupiers should not be overlooking the importance of the workplace and the benefits that co-working and collaboration can bring to it.
8. **Occupiers need to acquire additional skills to maximise the benefits of new workstyles and emerging technologies.** These include:
  - A mindset and behavioural change to embrace the new technologies
  - The ability to efficiently and effectively interpret collected data
  - Managing relationships
  - Employing flexible / agile ways of working

For more information about – or to join – the Property Directors Forum please contact Gail on 020 7041 9991 or [gail.wickes@propertydirectorsforum.com](mailto:gail.wickes@propertydirectorsforum.com)

The next Property Directors Forum will be held on **Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018**. We look forward to seeing you there.

To find out more about Neil Usher's book “Creating the Elemental Workplace”, contact [gail.wickes@propertydirectorsforum.com](mailto:gail.wickes@propertydirectorsforum.com)