

CoreNet Global UK Chapter - Workplace Community Event - October 2014

Our future marketplace: Connect, Ignite & Grow

Thursday 2 October 2014 - Diageo, Park Royal, London NW10

Organised by CoreNet UK's Workplace Community this visit, to Diageo's Park Royal headquarters, was to see how the theory of 'linking hearts and minds through the physical workplace' can actually work in practice.

Ruth Saunders for Diageo's facilities team welcomed us and explained how, over the last three years, through creative thinking and focussing their operations into a more commercial mindset, they have carried out a transformation of the conference areas and meetings rooms, the bars and the brand store, to create active brand ambassadors of the 1,200 staff who work in or visit the building which occupies the site of the original London Guinness brewery.

The catalyst for the changes came about in 2009 with the rationalisation of the group's London offices. With little or no real investment since 2002, the Park Royal building was in need of attention. The facilities team came to the conclusion that a more commercial approach could be used to bring life, engagement and excitement to a headquarters that now housed a number of disparate functions. In practice they have created efficiencies through design and are now delivering economies in operating costs. As a result more locations are planning to implement the same strategy.

The staff shop was turned into a brand store to bring energy and drive sales. The bar was brought from the sixth floor to the ground floor and is now an active showcase. It has become a centre of group activities, as well as a meeting place, where staff and clients can connect directly with the wide variety of brands. The meeting rooms which had previously occupied the ground floor have in turn been moved up to the sixth floor. And all of this is part of an on-going plan and has been done on a tight budget.



We set off. First downstairs to the lower ground floor where members of the team showed us the café and restaurant, with more meeting areas and a conference centre, before taking the lifts up to the top of the building. Here the space has been reconfigured to provide a huge area capable of seating over 200 cabaret style or be divided into a number of smaller spaces. In the break-out lounge areas imaginative use has been made of seating and decoration to provide a welcoming and calm space for small meetings and discussions. While below, on the fifth floor, we saw more flexible active working spaces.

After all this we returned to the ground floor where we walked round the impressive brand shop and were introduced to several of the newest products. And then at last to our original starting place, the bar, where a team from one of the departments was taking part in a staff initiative, learning how to be barmen, and where we in turn had a lesson from their world class bartender: how to make cocktails! A most entertaining end to a fascinating visit.



A V Sutherland