

The WELL Occupier

Cundall, Carter Lane, London EC4V 5ER

Host: Debbie Coleman, Telereal Trillium
Chair: James Pack, CoreNet UK Sustainability Committee, Sentinel RPI
Panel: Simon Wyatt, Associate Director, Cundall
Jane Smith, Assistant Director, EY
Zoe Young, Property Plan A Project Manager, Marks & Spencer

We were welcomed into Cundall's Carter Lane office, the light and airy lobby of which is also the kitchen and staff dining area, and often used for client meetings. Cundall has introduced the WELL Building Standard, an independently administered accreditation system, into these new offices and we had come here to learn how we might implement the ideas into our own working environment.

The evening was launched by **Debbie Coleman** from CoreNet Global UK's programmes committee who gave us a brief outline of upcoming events before introducing **James Pack** of the CoreNet Global UK Sustainability Committee.



James, a real enthusiast for sustainability, is aiming to engage more thoroughly with the occupier community, working with other knowledge streams and curating and disseminating the latest information. 'WELL', he said, 'is one of the keys to this', relating as it does to the UKGBC and the Green Property Alliance. 'It is not' he said, 'just open-toed sandals'.

message with stats on air pollution and its effect on our bodies. There is however, he said, a solution. Studies undertaken by the Mayo and the Cleveland clinics had isolated seven areas: air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort and mind, which affect our daily lives and which, are readily open to improvement. Cundall had used the opportunity of the office move to aim for WELL standard through a mix of measures, from the simple use of Bolon carpeting (recycled plastic) throughout, to specially chosen furniture. 'How you use the space' he said 'can make a radical difference'. Monitoring the quality of water as well as air can also lead to improvements; natural light can be reflected off furniture and carpeting; the kitchen and dining area leads to better eating; yoga and pilates classes encourage staff to concentrate on their own fitness while ergonomic sit-stand desks provide better comfort. Finally artworks and clever planting nourishes the mind. Ultimately, he said the cost of the work carried out is a tiny percentage of the whole fit-out and, nine months on the benefits are already being seen.



Next we heard from **Jane Smith**, the change management lead at EY UK, who is piloting the Workplace of the Future project which aims to encourage agile working and a more entrepreneurial mindset. That this is based in wellness is a given, she said, quoting Dame Carol Black 'Health is an economic issue'. So EY's UK Wellbeing approach has four prongs: dynamic desking; active collaboration; creative space; and communications and measurement. Dynamic desking includes stand-up and treadmill desks ('fantastic for calls') as well as exercise cards for those sitting at a traditional desk. Plans for active collaboration mean standing up at meetings ('amazing how it shortens the time spent!') or sitting on exercise balls. Calm space allows room for reflexion - a room which can also be used for meetings but just happens to have sofas and low coffee tables. And finally communication: talking about and measuring the campaign using social media and a survey of the staff. Lessons learned she commented include the obvious that communication and engagement will make or break the initiative, and also the less obvious: health and safety can be your best friends. And she added, providing a better working environment need not necessarily be frighteningly expensive.

Finally it was **Zoe Young**'s turn. Zoe is the property project manager at M&S, managing elements of Plan A, the company's sustainability programme. Plan A was launched in 2007 and, as well as supporting their eco and ethical commitments, has also benefited the business financially. One of Plan A's commitments is to investigate the benefits of sustainable stores on health, wellbeing and productivity, and M&S' involvement in the Better Places for People Campaign supports this. At Cheshire Oaks, a Sustainable Learning Store built in 2012, the post occupancy evaluation not only revealed reductions in energy use and carbon emissions, but also increases in both customer and staff satisfaction. This example has shown that good design can lead to improved performance, and in turn, a better experience. For example increased natural daylight resulted in a 13% reduction in the lighting electricity consumption compared to a benchmark store, and 87% of customers found the lighting levels satisfactory. While the focus to date has been in stores, M&S is now looking at how some of these lessons can be applied to the Head Office Estate.

Following a brief Q&A session we were divided into small groups and given guided tours of the offices including the silent and green meeting rooms. A fascinating evening.

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