

**Adding Value to Mergers & Acquisitions with CRE Strategies**

Thursday 28 January 2016, AOL, Capper Street, London WC1

Moderator:	Peter van Emburgh	Senior Managing Director, CBRE
Speakers:	Stephen Dunn	Director Workplace Operations, CSRA Inc
	Kevin Frankenberger	RE Manager, Global Real Estate Strategy & Governance, Marsh & McLennan
	Troy Humphreys	Director Global Operations, Pfizer Ltd

This meeting was an absolute first for CoreNet - a joint transatlantic seminar between three of its leading Chapters: London, New York and Mid Atlantic.

The event was telecast from AOL offices in London, New York and Dulles, Virginia, from where it was hosted by Mid Atlantic - so we could see them and they could see us. In New York they sat round one large table, at Dulles they sat round a series of tables, and in London we were piled in theatre style.



Having been hustled in and sat down for a prompt 5.30pm (noon their time) start, **Robin Harris** explained the evening and then **Peter van Emburgh** from Dulles took over, introducing the first speaker.

**Kevin Frankenberger** is responsible for the global real estate, its strategy and governance at the giant Marsh & McLennan group. This is a company that is currently operating over 630 locations globally and is involved in some sort of merger or acquisition activity every year. Kevin aims to be best in class in dealing with this and introduced us to his Transaction Framework. The four basic stages consist in: Identification of the Opportunity - noting the need to provide meaningful guidance; Due Diligence - do you need to visit the site?; Confirmatory Diligence and Integration Planning - where you tighten up your initial assumptions; and finally Integration - clearly communicate the plan to all involved. He stressed the need to focus on talking about real estate in business terms so that the CFO understands, and partnering with the IT and business groups.

Next was the turn of **Troy Humphreys** whose current role involves providing innovative real estate solutions to align and meet Pfizer's corporate business objectives in the EMEA and APAC regions, while working as part of a Global Integration team. He pointed out that no two deals are the same - that it is important to listen and understand what type of deal it is. Then, reviewing the real estate portfolio, he said 'Identify opportunities, it's a great way to getting the attention of the CFO to execute and incorporate change'. Developing a playbook for each manoeuvre helps the whole business to move forward at the same pace. Among important questions to ask are: what is the CFO's

target? What sort of headcount are we looking for? And what sort of RE data is key? Alignment with other functions, IT, legal and financial, is as vital as communication with all staff at a time when anxieties are high. It is important to recognise timeliness, stick to plan, avoid surprises, and achieve synergies.

Finally **Steve Dunn** of the newly formed CSRA Inc told us of how the company is living the pain post-merger. His company, CSRA, is the result of the splitting of the previous entity and then subsequent merger with another, all of which was only completed mid-November last year. He is now dealing with roughly 19,000 employees spread over 143 locations. 'It's all about the deal' he said 'and we have to help it to happen'. It's an opportunity to rethink procedures and processes, to use real estate strategies to drive debt reduction and work through synergies. The most essential element of any plan he said is communication. That and the ability to keep calm, even in the face of last minute demands. It's also really important to engage your end-users - all of them - while being attuned to the potential impact of real estate on the culture of the business.

The Q & A session threw up more interesting facts, for instance : 'Once a deal has been announced, the CEO has moved on and is looking for the next one'. Which probably puts your role as CRE in perspective.

Afterwards the two US Chapter members had lunch, we had drinks. All agreed it was a good and innovative event. When is the next one and with whom?

