OCCUPIER INSIGHTS:
DEMYSTIFYING SMART TECHNOLOGIES & DATA

CoreNet Global UK Chapter hosted its second Occupier Insight series, titled 'Demystifying smart technologies' on the 26th of September which was kindly hosted by Macquarie at their London office and sponsored by IWG.

Our panel of experts, moderated by Steve Norris of Incendium included:

- Michelle Marwood - Senior Vice President, Head of Corporate Services Operations, EMEA & India, Blackstone
- Mark Bell - Senior Regional Site Operations, EMEA, Adobe
- Julie Lapsley - Customer Lead: New Buildings Milton Keynes and Bottle, Santander
- Kim Van Rooyen Global Head of IT Turner & Townsend

One thing became clear from the beginning – no one has all the answers. Smart technologies and the use of data is an ever evolving phenomenon. In his opening statements, Steve Norris gave this quote: '65% of children in primary school will find themselves in a career that doesn't exist today'. This illustrates just how rapidly technology advancements change the world we live in.

The world is now so dependent on IT to navigate through daily life and this is becoming the norm within the modern day workplace. Occupiers are under pressure to stay ahead of the game and develop all singing, all dancing buildings to attract talent and run in the most efficient way possible at the same time.

The members of the panel each shared their experiences of embracing smart technologies and it was interesting to hear perspectives based on different sectors, security requirements and GDPR.

Julie Lapsley, Customer Lead for New Buildings at Santander, shared her experience of working on the development of two buildings in Bootle and Milton Keynes. Julie explained that the property strategy began with the building itself and the team looked at ways to create the most efficient and sustainable building. Early on in the process, they realised that the choice of Smart technologies was not taking the end user into account.

Santander made the decision to pause the design development and went through an extensive process of speaking/ surveying colleagues about how they use their workspace and what they would like from the new buildings. This has completely changed how the building design is shaping up and it is now far more focused on making the workplace more 'people friendly'. The Santander team believe that this engagement will make it easier for colleagues to embracing new ways of working when the buildings go live.

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A few other key observations that came out of the session were:

- How do we learn from each other with regard to smart technology? Occupiers land up making the same mistake as there is a hesitancy to share information on what works and what doesn't work.
- Security is a massive issue – both from a building and from a human perspective.
- Getting landlords involved in developing buildings that adopt more smart technologies is crucial.
- Different sectors have different ways / needs for smart technologies and this has to be taken into consideration – a solution that is suitable for a technology company based in Old Street is going to be very different to the solution suitable for a financial institution based in a much older building in the West End.
- Mobile phone technology will become more and more important when gathering data or sharing information.
- The need for big data is changing – instead of occupiers asking for reams of data, they should be asking for answers.
- Historic ways of developing contracts with various suppliers, manufactures, developers need to change.
- Understand what your purpose for our buildings is first of all and then use the relevant Smart technologies instead of adopting too much.

The one constant that remained was people and the panel urged occupiers to remember who they were designing buildings for and what they wanted to achieve before adopting extensive technology solutions that didn't serve a purpose.