

The Amenity Dilemma - February 19

CoreNet Arizona convened 13 corporate real estate and workplace leaders for the End User Exchange — end-user-exclusive round table designed to foster confidential peer dialogue among corporate occupiers. This forum provides a structured environment for members to openly discuss shared challenges, benchmark strategies, and exchange insights without service providers present. The February session focused on amenities strategy, utilization, and balancing workstation demand in today's hybrid work environment.

Key Discussion Themes

1. Balancing Amenities and Workstation Demand

Participants acknowledged increasing pressure to convert amenity space back to workstations as in-office expectations evolve. While some frameworks suggest allocating up to 60% of space to collaboration and amenity functions, actual headcount requirements and utilization realities are prompting reevaluation of those ratios.

2. Portfolio-Specific Strategies

Amenity strategies vary significantly based on portfolio scale and geography.

Smaller regional offices require efficient, right-sized solutions.

Large suburban campuses must deliver a more comprehensive ecosystem of amenities.

Participants agreed that a standardized approach across diverse portfolio types is rarely effective.

3. Campus Development vs. Leasing in Amenitized Buildings

Suburban campuses often require organizations to develop amenities internally. In contrast, leasing in amenity-rich buildings can serve as a strategic alternative to capital-intensive investments.

4. Outdoor Space as a Workplace Asset

Outdoor environments — including walking paths, patios, shaded seating areas, and water features — are viewed as valuable extensions of the workplace that support wellness and informal collaboration. Utilization, however, is highly dependent on climate and site configuration.

5. Food Service Models and Financial Considerations

Organizations are employing a range of food service strategies, including subsidized cafeterias, grab-and-go concepts, stipends, and reliance on nearby retail. Cost management, utilization data, and changing employee patterns are influencing long-term decisions.

6. EV Charging and Parking Management

EV charging infrastructure is increasingly common, often implemented with time-limited or subsidized models. Parking allocation and oversubscription remain operational challenges, particularly where reservation technology is limited. Some organizations are integrating EV charging access with workplace booking systems.

7. Utilization Data and Technology Adoption

Participants shared experiences piloting sensors, Wi-Fi analytics, badge data, and beacon technologies to inform amenity sizing, food provisioning, and space standards. While data-driven decision-making is a priority, confidence in reliability and consistency of data remains mixed.

8. Persona-Based Space Standards

Several organizations are adopting persona or space-profile frameworks to align amenities and workspace types with functional team needs. Tiered standards allow more targeted investment and clearer alignment between business function and spatial allocation.

9. Monitoring, Trust, and Cultural Considerations

There was strong consensus that occupancy and badge data should be used to inform strategic decisions — not enforce attendance or monitor individuals. Leaders emphasized the importance of transparency and maintaining trust when deploying measurement technologies.

10. Amenities as a Strategic Talent Lever

Amenities continue to serve as tools for recruitment, retention, engagement, and employee well-being. Impact is typically measured through engagement surveys, retention data, and qualitative employee feedback.

Closing Perspective

The discussion reflected the complexity and nuance facing corporate real estate leaders as they recalibrate workplace strategies in a hybrid environment. The strong engagement and depth of dialogue underscored the value of a confidential, end-user-only forum dedicated to peer exchange.

The quarterly End User Exchange will continue to provide a platform for candid discussion, shared benchmarking, and collaborative problem-solving among Arizona's corporate real estate leaders. If you would like to attend the next round table, please reach out to arizonachapter@corenetglobal.org.