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Event
Quality of work life: the employee services revolution

Saint-Denis, November 20th 2018 - As a reference in the work environment field (services to occupants, sustainable development and innovation, workspace design and layout, etc.), the WORKPLACE MEETINGS exhibition is a key event for SPIE Facilities, the subsidiary of SPIE France dedicated to building maintenance and Facility Management. The event is an opportunity for Philippe Jeannès and Aude Lévêque, respectively Key Accounts Director and Innovation, Reports and Methods Director at SPIE Facilities, to assess the current state of the market and the latest trends.



Businesses have been involved in a radical overhaul of their employees' work environment for a number of years. So is the office of yesteryear, with a table, a chair and a screen, well and truly over?

Philippe Jeannès: 'Threatened with very gradual extinction would be a more accurate description! But crucially, it's not a matter of simply replacing one model with another: the concept of "open space" is outdated. Nowadays, the key word in many businesses, and especially in large groups, is "well-being at work" - in other words, "services to occupants", i.e. employees. What's behind the change? Quite simply the emphasis on improving image, on attracting and, above all, retaining talent. To achieve these goals, adapting the work environment to meet employees' expectations is key to promoting their employee fulfilment, motivation and engagement in company projects.

What changes to work environments does this shift imply?

Philippe Jeannès: The most visible change is the rapidly expanding range of types of workspace and the rise of flexible offices. In the same space, you'll now find co-working spaces, "bubbles" to isolate yourself, spaces combining relaxation and work, green spaces, etc. And of course there's digitalisation, so room booking systems, control of comfort settings (temperature, lighting, air quality, etc.), access to external information (weather forecast, public transport, etc.), management of parking spaces, real time information about the attendance level of company canteens, etc. But the big change is services. Property managers, purchasing directors and, more generally, builder-owners and contractors must constantly provide new services to employees. That's already the case in large groups with concierge services. For example, in the future, you'll be able to book a tennis court or a restaurant table from the company's unique digital platform.

So does that mean the "Facility management" business is also

destined to change?

Aude Lévêque: Yes, of course – while we remain “service managers”, we’re now also partners in the development of dedicated and customised services. It's one of the major functions of the DIEM (Innovation, Reports and Methods Division) we set up within SPIE Facilities. We’re constantly monitoring new trends and new demands among employees and businesses. Using technical advances, we’re turning these trends into sustainable services that we can then incorporate into our service offering. Another key point is that the “business” environment in which we operate is also undergoing radical change. The challenge is to spot the good ideas and to create a real ecosystem so that we’ll be able to integrate these new models. That’s precisely what we did in launching our unified digital platform, “SMART FM 360°”, an intuitive and ever-changing Facility Management digital interface, to which an infinite number of services can be added.

Can you give us an example of something the Innovation, Reports and Methods Department (DIEM) is currently working on?

Aude Lévêque: Yes: the acoustic environment. It has a very big impact on the standard of living at work. We’re so used to being surrounded by constant noise that we don’t even realise it’s there anymore! And yet our ability to concentrate and the cumulative fatigue in a day depend largely on it. The DIEM is currently working on a number of projects, including the introduction of sensors capable of feeding workspace noise levels back to the platform. The results are then made available to employees in real time: alerts and suggestions for improvement are then delivered via the platform. It can even suggest locating employees in sound spaces or concentration spaces, according to their uses. Communication of this kind is one of the simplest ways of changing behaviours! We’re also working experimentally on “sound absorption” systems that can be adjusted according to need. Collaborative work being one of the major developments of recent years, technology needs to be able to promote it while ensuring other employees continue to enjoy ideal concentration conditions!

Briefly, what does the future hold for work environment management?

Aude Lévêque: What the future holds is permanent and continuous monitoring! In other words, technical monitoring of building usage that makes the unthinkable possible thanks to new technologies. But also monitoring among employees, who are able to express their desires and their satisfaction in real time...or not!

Workplace Meetings Show - Cannes

20, 21 et 22 novembre

Hall Riviera - Palais des Congrès et des Festivals de Cannes

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