

“Data personalisation is key for facilities and asset management clients”

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Amey's Head of Transformation, Philippa Patterson, discusses why the future of facilities management lies in a personalised service

Today, new ways of working coupled with higher employee expectations puts greater demands on facilities and asset providers.

It is becoming more normalised to expect personalised workplaces that offer agile working solutions. Add the need to schedule and manage resources carefully in these uncertain and challenging times, then it becomes clear that we must offer clients new solutions.

A 2019 Harvard study revealed that high quality workplaces can reduce absenteeism by up to four days a year and that happy employees are 16 percent more productive. Employees who have a say in their working environment are also more likely to stay with an employer and feel more loyalty to them. But perhaps most interestingly of all, by a margin of 42 percent to 28 percent, employees said they would rather have the power to personalise their workplace than opt for unlimited annual leave.

Technology is key to delivering new gains for facilities and asset management clients, not least because it means we can move away from a one size fits all approach. Instead, it allows us to tailor services for our clients, their employees and for their customers. And this personalised approach is a progressive approach.

In its most simple form this might mean booking desk spaces, meeting rooms or car parking in advance. Or ordering a coffee on the way to work so that it is ready on arrival. How about a personalised service that remembers your needs and preferences when booking? Or enabling employees to control the temperature or lighting in their own workspace - having it pre-set for your arrival.

It could mean the introduction of apps-based alternatives for people who are not office-based. Or gathering feedback on the effectiveness of the working environment by surveying people on how it might be changed to better suit their needs.

Data is key and its strength lies in the intelligence it brings. Harvesting and interpreting data optimally gives you a full picture of how, when and why facilities are used. It allows you to predict when things will need upgrading or replacing so you can act before a fix is needed. What this results in is increased availability of facilities for the users.

Harvesting and analysing data also gives an accurate picture of building use from occupancy, flow and usage, highlighting preferred areas or workspaces at any given point to time preferences throughout the day. It can also bring health and safety benefits. For example, using sensors to gather data on the temperature of water in taps, or water flow it can help guard against the legionella bacteria by giving real time alerts, leaks and water waste. Similarly, real time data on facilities use allows for a targeted management regimes on demand and output requirements.

Using data in this way creates Smart buildings leading to smarter choices, bringing huge immediate and longer-term benefits for our customers. And while the potential cost savings are clear, it is not just about the buildings. First and foremost, it is about people and creating a great experience.

The next era of smart data use will further support doing things differently, allowing clients and their employees and customers to become co-creators in the development of the workplace and active partners in its management. This can only be a positive thing and we already know that responsive, employee focused workplaces drive up productivity, increase job satisfaction and help retain talent.

A personalised approach to building management is the future. It creates a more enjoyable, healthier and more productive working environment for all. And ultimately, good facilities services must be about the people, working in partnership with our clients to co-create the very best working environments.