Saving money in the modern office

The proptech sector as a whole is of great benefit to landlords and occupiers alike when it comes to providing products that help save money. Landlords and occupiers can now be radically more efficient in the way they use, manage and invest in space.

Temps de lecture : minute

14 December 2022

A more eco-friendly and cost effective solution

At _Spica,_ our flexible technology and cloud-based data platform is hardware agnostic to help landlords and occupiers respond quickly to the needs of a fast-changing working world. Hot on the heels of Covid has come inflation, cost-of-living and an energy crisis, elevating the importance of technology that can reduce the pain of unexpected costs.

Our solution, Spica Energy powered by Ecopilot, is a fully automated smart solution for real time HVAC efficiency, that can help optimise energy usage across buildings. Ecopilot continuously calculates and coordinates the energy balance, automatically adjusting setpoints for heating, ventilation and cooling working with the existing thermal storage of the building, real time sensor data and the 5 day weather forecast. We have recorded annual savings of up to 40% in HVAC energy costs, in addition to reduced carbon emissions, improved occupier comfort and greater information on issues and failures with HVAC systems.

By integrating IoT solutions and Smart Energy AI products into a Smart

Building System, Facilities Management (FM) teams are able to view a centralised dashboard in order to view, track and optimise buildings, and make business decisions in real time to save costs and improve worker comfort. Predictive maintenance is a key component of this; sensors are able to predict when machinery requires maintenance, informing FM teams much earlier than in previous manual methods, further saving maintenance and labour costs. FM teams can also monitor air quality, occupancy and utilisation levels via the dashboard, assisting them in creating a cost and energy efficient office.

Smart sensors also have the capability to automate lighting and heating, depending on usage of space. Data gathered from IoT sensors can show the number of desks that are being booked, how space is used, how often, and what times of the day, assisting landlords and occupiers with measuring their space requirements with considerably more accuracy.

Simple ways to save

Whilst IoT relies heavily on automation and live data, human input is still critical to decision making. Employee surveys remain a quick and high quality source of qualitative data; sensors may show the under-utilisation of an office space, but employee surveys are needed to explain why it may be underutilised.

In addition, existing data from Access Control systems and Building Management Systems (BMS) can help provide data and trends, enabling landlords and occupiers to predict resourcing requirements in advance. Spica combines IoT, existing IT data and employee qualitative data to provide as much intelligence as is available for landlords and occupiers.

A space optimisation software, like our IoT enable Spica Workplace GemEx Solution Workspace, can help give an accurate view of how the space is being used and allow corporate teams to make data backed

decisions on their property and assets. Those clients who have implemented our solution have seen huge savings on estate consolidation, space planning and change management. For example, Atos, a multinational IT service and consulting company with over 110000 employees in 73 countries, saw a footprint reduction of over 3,600m2 and provided capital investment return within a year using our software.

How does it work?

Viewing the office as a holistic system that can incorporate smart technology in addition to pre-existing data and simpler analog measures, is the best strategy for reducing costs at each pain point. A product like our own Ecopilot provides advanced methods of energy efficiency and worker comfort, but the implementation of hybrid workplace strategies, particularly post-Covid, is an additional effective measure for reducing bills and emissions. At Spica, we empower ESG transformation, collating these actionable insights to improve performance across buildings, or even entire portfolios.

Hybrid workplace strategies allow scope for office downsizing. If a plan is in place for different employees or teams being physically present on different days and times, there is no longer a requirement to provide a desk for every employee. Considering whether a breakout area would substitute for a meeting room, or what measures are needed to support hot desking adoption (such as lockers) is also necessary. Shared office workspaces, that incorporate co-working areas, are also a viable and long-term alternative to signing long leases on offices that may be either too big or too small before the end of the lease.

How to avoid failure?

Short-term thinking in any sphere of business often leads to failure, and companies that only think about short term cost cutting tend to ignore the

bigger picture of long term savings.

In addition, misalignment amongst senior leadership teams on cost strategies can sometimes lead to dispute and failure in the long run. It is crucial to have unanimous agreement when decisions are taken on budget, even if it is often difficult to unify thinking. Delivering real time intelligence is one way to achieve this. Technologies like our own can demonstrate live building usage and performance to equip decision makers and create a consensus.

Of course, cost cutting initiatives should not be left just to senior management. Involving everyone in the company, from junior level upwards, surveying and asking for feedback on what works best for them in the workplace is important in order to democratise the cost cutting process and improve employee happiness.

When it specifically comes to integrating technology as a cost cutting initiative, it is vital to fully validate and qualify the technology deployed, and then understand how best to use it. If you want to save energy costs, then ensuring that sensory data harmonises with hybrid workplace strategies will result in the largest cost savings.

Tim Streather is MD of _Spica_, a future-proof platform with a single interface that aims to empower business leaders and landlords to create commercial spaces that people want to be in - helping them to achieve operational excellence and work towards sustainability goals.

Article écrit par Tim Streather