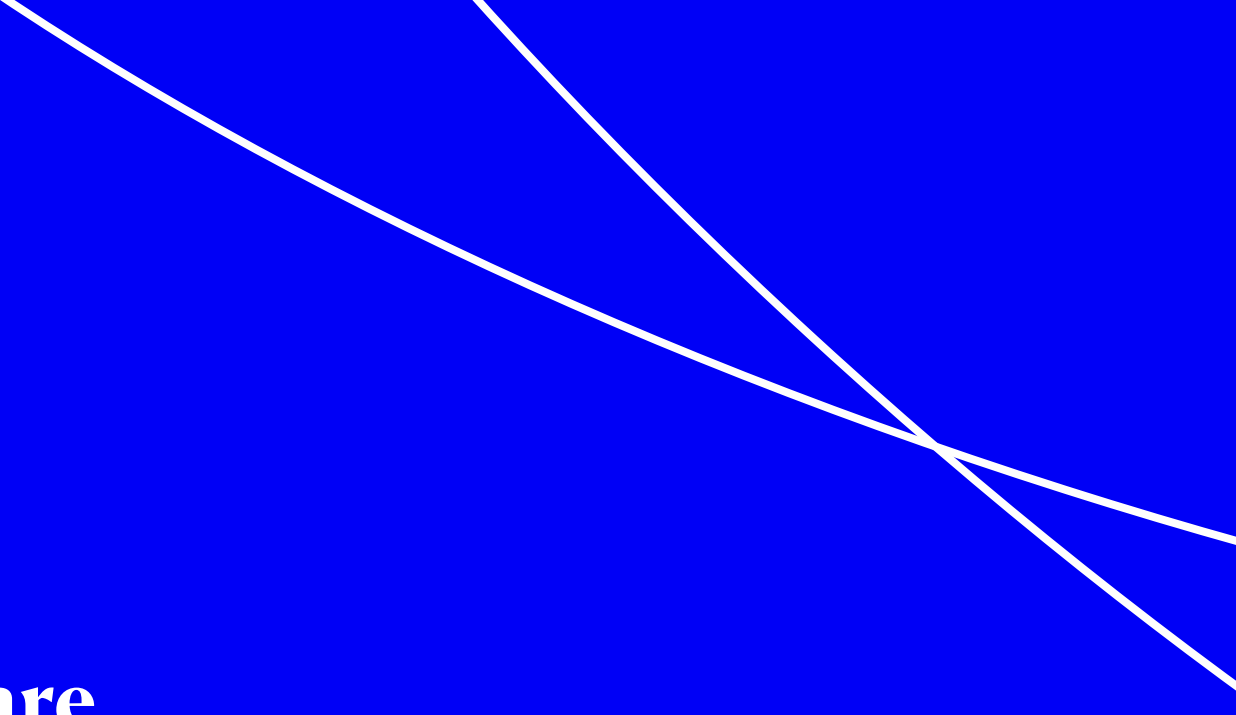


tunein

Will we work?





**There is no doubt we are
witnessing a seismic shift
in the culture at work**



Work used to be work and our 'real lives' happened in our downtime. The pace of advancing technology coupled with a shift to a knowledge-based economy has contributed to the convergence of every element of our lifestyles. Rather than fighting against the blurring boundaries, the millennial generation embraces this holistic lifestyle and this has major implications for the workplace.

Enlightened organisations know that in order to make themselves desirable to potential graduates in a hugely competitive marketplace, they must offer more than the highest salary. Millennials want to work not only in a cool workplace, but one that encompasses a culture of well-being and supports social interaction.

There is no doubt that we are witnessing a seismic shift in the culture of 'work', where the technology is a given and the true evolution relates to people. The next boundary to be examined is where the responsibility of the employer begins and ends.

The WELL standard could be the accreditation of the moment, but is it a great aspirational goal beyond the reach of most organisations? In the latest edition of the Voice, we discuss the challenges and opportunities it presents.



Rising expectations



So why is health and well-being increasingly on occupiers' radar? The millennial generation is more demanding than its predecessors, partly because it is used to getting what it wants, when it wants it.

One result of this is that they are less likely to be loyal to the same employer, says Rennie Dalrymple, Managing Director of Concert. Rennie points to forecasts suggesting that those starting work today might change jobs 10 to 15 times over the course of their career. "The workforce will fundamentally change over the next decade. They are becoming a lot more transient," he adds.

"It's what you can do for me as much as the other way round," says David Nash, Associate at Concert, who adds that word of mouth endorsements for workplaces are becoming more important thanks to social media.

Employees are expecting more from the places they work in, he says: "Five to 10 years ago it (health and well-being) wasn't a top priority – it was more about salary and location. Now it's about whether a gym membership is included, or what healthy food choices are available throughout the day in the office."

What will urban life be like for those that live in these vast urban sprawls? Will Mega-commutes become the norm in the Megacity?

What is well?



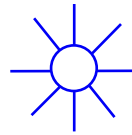
AIR



WATER



NOURISHMENT



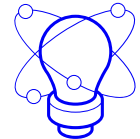
LIGHT



FITNESS



COMFORT



MIND

To encourage healthy workplaces (other building types in pilot developmental stage), the WELL Building Standard has been developed in the US. Focused on the health and wellness of building occupants, the standard features just over one hundred measures.

They are sorted into seven categories:

air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort and **mind**.

Dalrymple says: “It’s very prescriptive in the sense that it sets out a number of criteria and it’s based on specific medical research undertaken in the US that has focused on the wellbeing of people.” The idea that the workplace should be a healthy environment is not a new one. However it wasn’t a major factor in occupiers’ thinking until recently, says Nash.

Concerns about wellness have been around for a long time but for many clients it’s been a bolt-on. But this is rapidly changing.

A well workforce is a productive one



Until recently, the likes of the big financial institutions were keen to keep their staff chained to their desks for as long as possible, such as by providing facilities like dry cleaners, hair dressing and gym facilities on-site.

Dalrymple says: “The idea of productivity was keeping people in a building by giving them very limited reason to leave. Their view was that if you had people at their desks 12 hours a day, that must be great because everybody must be working hard and making lots of money.”

However companies are increasingly recognising that breaks, even if it is just a 20 minute walk to clear the head, can boost productivity. This new thinking can be seen in the conscious effort to create break-out spaces within the latest generation of tall buildings.

“If you go to places like Kuala Lumpur you can go outside even at a high level,” says Dalrymple. Some of London’s proposed tallest buildings in the City are now focusing on the importance of vertical changes in use over all levels.

And there is plenty of academic research that demonstrates a healthy and happy workforce is a more productive one. “People’s productivity and efficiency increases when these (health and well-being) concepts become an integral part of a building’s design,” says Dalrymple.



**The thinking on
productivity in the
workplace is changing**

Agile workplace

So how does the recent drive in agile working dovetail with the new focus on wellness?

Agile working was initially mainly about cutting down on wasted desks, improving utilisation and making more creative use of office space.

Dalrymple says: “If you look at how agile working started, people were looking to reduce their real estate footprint and drive value. That was a very financially driven agenda. As things have progressed, wellness has blended into that so some of the objectives are now very similar.”

“It’s about giving people choices on how and where they work, to give them an element of control over aspects of their working day or week. Everyone likes to feel they have an element of choice.”

Being able to find privacy in break-out spaces can be important too, says Nash: “We all work extremely hard and it’s not particularly 9 to 5. Sometimes you have to take a sensitive call or need some quiet thinking time, so it’s important to have a place where you can undertake these activities. Open plan offices should cater for the different and varying needs of the workforce, so that there is a range of working and social environments. For people to feel they have choice is important.”





Dovetailing with environmental standards

Of course the WELL standard isn't the only benchmark that developing workplaces will be seeking to achieve. Other standards of note include LEED and BREEAM.

Nash says that the WELL standard can dovetail with LEED and BREEAM, which exist to promote sustainable construction in the US and the UK respectively.

However it will require careful thought. As an example, he cites how designers of WELL standard buildings must make sure that staff taking a cigarette break outside of the office don't funnel their **noxious fumes** into the building via the ventilation grills.

"If 10% of people smoke, you have to make sure that they are right away from the building. It's got to be thought about in the design at a very early stage," says Nash.

And there will sometimes be tensions with standards laid out in BREEAM.

Dalrymple says: "With wellness, people come first and with BREEAM, wellness was residual."

An example is allowing windows to be opened to let in fresh air rather than relying on artificial ventilation. The former may use less energy, thus improving the building's environmental performance. However the same feature may allow pollution to enter the building, which could undermine efforts to meet the optimal air standards enshrined in WELL, says Dalrymple: **"Clearly if you had that in central London, we know how polluted the air is."**

Cost implications

Meeting the WELL standard may involve the incorporation of specific features, such as providing exercise facilities or ensuring stairs are wide enough and sufficiently well located to encourage their use.

Nash says: “Things like shower facilities add cost to a building but are part of people’s expectations because we are all trying to get fitter.” Daniel Wright, Director at Concert, gives as an example a central London office project which Concert advised Hewlett Packard on. The computer giant has traded parking spaces to allow a doubling of its on-site cycle accommodation, requiring the construction of a dedicated block to cater for the growth of people riding to work.

Other WELL features might have implications for buildings’ ongoing facilities management budgets, such as providing bowls of fruit or ensuring a set number of plants per members of staff.



We are involved with one developer that has a ratio of nine plants to every one employee. However, it has to be recognised that while that is a fantastic offering to have in the office, there are initial and ongoing associated costs

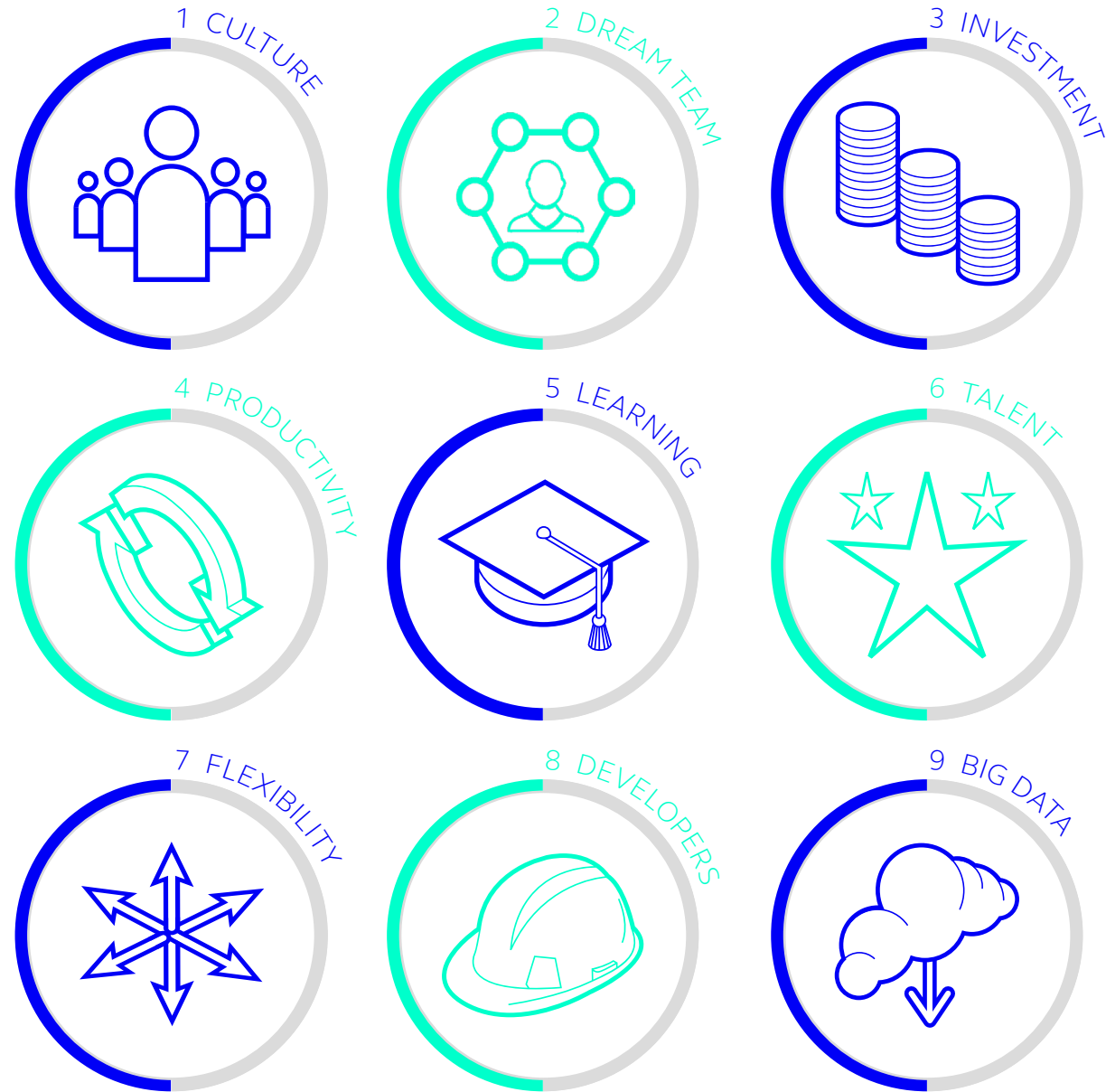
But prospective occupiers shouldn’t be frightened of adopting the WELL standard by cost factors, he adds: “There is no one-size-fits-all and you can get away with a modest level of spend. It needn’t cost a lot of money and can be done very cost effectively.”

But it is important to ensure that wellness considerations are factored in when the project is at design stage rather than being retrofitted later, says Nash: “Once a project gets beyond a certain design stage, the costs involved to ensure it truly achieves the ethos of wellness can become hard to justify.”



Will well work?

To attract the 'best of the best' a workplace has to offer so much more than a functional office. Employees want to feel inspired, valued, connected and motivated by their environment. Is your workplace up to scratch? We'd love to talk about how we can help you to help you create a tool for your business that is more than a place to work.



1 / Culture at the top

How high is the idea of staff well-being on the agenda of the board and senior management? Is anyone responsible at the most senior level of making sure the well-being of staff is prioritised and the workplace is achieving its full potential?

2 / Joined up approach (Senior Exec / HR / Property / FM)

The dream team for the start of a project would be as holistic as the completed project needs to be and include representatives from property, finance, HR and marketing as a minimum, in order to set out each stakeholder's objectives.

3 / Return on investment

WELL encompasses so many different initiatives, so the finance, HR and property functions need to work closely together to ensure that any investments made can be co-ordinated and measured effectively. When budgets are under pressure, will wellness be the first thing to be cut, as we saw in the 2008 recession with green initiatives?

4 / Productivity and efficiency

If you can't measure something, you can't improve it. How will the drive to improve productivity and efficiency in business still positively influence the health and wellbeing of staff? How can 'old school' thinking be challenged? We are still seeing clients behave in a very conventional way, with a 'more desks, higher density equals more efficiency' mentality.

5 / Learning from others

All companies should be more open to learn from other organisations and office design in different cities, so that best practice initiatives relating to staff wellness can be implemented more effectively. Imagine sending a traditional accountant to work with an advertising agency for the day, for example.

6 / Talent: attraction and retention

Organisations that ignore the potential benefits in terms of productivity through developing a happy and healthy workforce are likely to suffer in the future. Employers and organisations involved in the design of offices will need to be in tune with future requirements of an increasingly more agile workforce. Skill shortages in key sectors of the economy are likely to increase over time, so the appeal of the workplace and its importance on people's health and lifestyle should not be underestimated.

7 / Control / "nanny office"

For some, WELL may be a step too far. There is a line between offering choice and imposing that choice upon people. Ultimately the well-being of an individual is up to them; it is the employers' responsibility to encourage healthy behaviour and support it.

8 / Landlord vs. developer

Who will take the lead in ensuring that offices will be fit for the workforce of the future? Developers currently build to established codes where staff amenity initiatives meet the basic standards. However tenants usually demand more and this trend is only likely to increase. Would closer interaction with landlords and tenants create more effective office buildings? Is there a responsibility on the institutions that develop the workplace standards of the future to be more forward thinking regarding the requirements for the workforce of the future?

9 / Big data is big news

There is much that new building technology can tell us about the people it accommodates – which will only increase as companies harness this technology to improve the performance of facilities. For example, through the use of iBeacons we can understand the peaks and troughs in terms of desk requirements throughout the day, where people prefer to sit (quiet or open spaces), right through to the temperature of buildings. Used wisely, smart buildings will equal smart people and better businesses.

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