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10 Ways to

Improve Your Workplace Experience

Insights and tips from top industry leaders at HqO's Commercial Real Estate Leadership Forum.

Spring 2023

> **It's inspiring to see so many industry leaders come together to share insights and best practices. As a company, we're committed to pushing the boundaries of thought leadership in this area to create a better workplace experience for all; we look forward to continuing this conversation with you in the future.**
>
> Chase Garbarino
> HqO Co-founder and CEO

Building Tomorrow's Workplace Today:
Insights from HqO's CRE Leadership Forum

On February 28, 2023, HqO hosted its proprietary CRE Leadership Forum at LBA Realty's state-of-the-art Park Place Campus in Irvine, California. The day-long event brought together an elite group of CRE and workplace experience leaders from Amazon, The Clarion Group, LBA, and other top organizations for a busy day of knowledge sharing, spirited discussion, and engaging thought leadership.

Over the course of the event, attendees and presenters took a hard look at the challenges and opportunities that employers and property teams face in today's ever-changing market. While Forum speakers and attendees were candid about the obstacles that companies and real estate teams face today, many speakers also noted that the current situation presents enormous opportunities for high-performing organizations to increase satisfaction, retention, and NOI. In short, leaders who attended the Forum are planning to make the most out of this period of uncertainty – and they're planning to do that by building tomorrow's workplaces today.

This report highlights the top 10 takeaways from the Leadership Forum, which represents input from 30 leading corporate real estate executives, workplace consultants, and a select group of innovative landlords across the US. Read to get an exclusive look at the most important industry trends and engagement tactics to help you reach peak performance in 2023 and beyond.

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01

Score quick, high-impact wins by making the first 15 minutes in the office as seamless as possible

The first 15 minutes in the office have the power to define an employee's entire day and therefore have a significant impact on the entire employee workplace experience. By making those first few minutes as stress- and friction-free as possible, landlords and property teams can greatly improve the likelihood that employees will want to come back to the office later in the week, month, and throughout the year. This can help companies keep employees satisfied and engaged while also boosting occupancy at a critical time.

That's why Forum attendees said that the start of the employee's day needs to be as simple and frictionless as possible. By removing speed bumps in the first 15 minutes, workplace leaders can score quick, high-impact wins that go a long way toward improving employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity. Specifically, attendees suggested that employers and landlords can improve the first 15 minutes by simplifying access to meeting rooms and desks; enabling seamless entry to secure office spaces; improving support for "super driver" amenities like coffee and refreshments; and by making it easier for employees to navigate the office.

By taking these and other steps to remove friction from the start of the employee's day, property teams and CRE companies can set themselves up for success in 2023 and beyond.
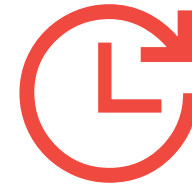
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(From left to right) Lauren Kelch, Hines; Suzanne Navarro, Blizzard Entertainment; Nathan Bricklin, Wells Fargo.

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02

Maximize productivity by being vocal and intentional about the office's neighborhood design

Kirsty Angerer of Leesman discusses Leesman's **Purposeful Presence** report.

Neighborhood design is a workplace design concept that organizes employee workspaces into clusters based on the kind of work that employees typically perform. In workplaces that use a strategic neighborhood design, teams that work together (like sales and marketing, for example) are often seated close to each other in the office. This can facilitate better collaboration and connection, and also enhance cross-functional work.

Forum attendees said that workplace neighborhoods have become a critically important engagement tool in recent years, as companies work to transform their offices into hubs for connection and collaboration. Attendees also said that leaders need to be vocal about their workplace's neighborhood design in order for their broader experience strategies to be effective.

Without a deliberate neighborhood design and dynamic support tools, even high-performing companies could find themselves falling behind. That's why it's important to think critically and proactively about the layout of your office workspaces.

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03

Create stronger workplace connections with an informed, intentional strategy to harness the power of an age-diverse workforce

With 5 different generations of employees now represented in the workplace, it's important to acknowledge and address these generational differences in order to promote a more collaborative and productive work environment.

While age differences between employees can sometimes present challenges, Forum panelists also noted that the current situation presents an enormous opportunity for high-performing companies to boost innovation by harnessing the varying perspectives of different employees from different age groups. But in order to accomplish this, workplace leaders need to do more to create a welcoming work environment with strong employee connections.

Forum attendees suggested that workplace leaders can accomplish this by tailoring their workplaces and management methods to better suit the needs of younger and older employees simultaneously. It's important to recognize, for example, that management styles from 10 to 20 years ago may not be effective in connecting with 22-year-old employees. By adopting more flexible and adaptable management approaches, companies can foster a more inclusive and diverse workplace that caters to the needs of all employees from all generations. Ultimately, this leads to a more closely connected and innovative workforce, driving success for the company as a whole.

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04

Reach
peak performance
by building an
employee-centric
workplace

To boost satisfaction and productivity, many workplace leaders are implementing "employee-centric workplaces" – workplaces that prioritize the needs of employees to help boost satisfaction and productivity.

To build an employee-centric workplace, it's important to first understand and evaluate all friction points in the employee experience journey. One Forum presenter said that this should involve employee "journey mapping", where leaders map out the employee's entire day to identify emotional, cognitive, and interaction friction points that make it hard to get work done. This helps leaders identify points of friction that could discourage employees from coming to the office and being productive.

Once that journey mapping is complete, leaders have to implement technological tools to help eliminate those points of friction. By addressing all employee needs through a single app and platform, workplace experience technology like HqO gives workplace leaders a comprehensive solution to help them meet their business goals. Learn more by downloading our new industry guide, which features proprietary research from Leesman, an HqO company.

Zubair Chowdhry of Snowflake and Luba Karson of Edwards Lifesciences

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05

Enhance productivity and satisfaction with sensible, intelligent leadership

Omar Ramirez,
Co-Founder
Collective.

In a time of rapid change, bold and intelligent workplace leadership is more important than ever – however, Forum attendees agreed that workplace leaders don't always have to make drastic changes to get positive results. One attendee suggested, for example, that managers and executives should make themselves more visible and available when they're in the office. This simple change can give employees better access to management, which can help improve in-office attendance and employee satisfaction.

Overall, attendees agreed that it's critically important to give employees a degree of choice when it comes to when, how, and where they work since this can increase workplace satisfaction in every measurable area. Ultimately, modern leadership must prioritize building a culture that supports employee autonomy, engagement, and productivity, while also adapting to new technologies, processes, and workplace trends.

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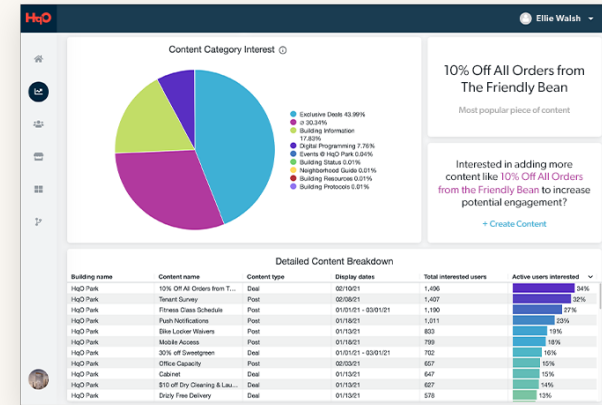
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06
Optimize investments and improve occupancy by generating and leveraging better workplace data

HqO Analytics™ delivers near real-time data on space and amenity usage.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, few in the CRE world knew what the future of office occupancy would look like. But now, three years on from the start of the pandemic, the post-pandemic occupancy picture is starting to take shape. Forum panelists shared their take on this unfolding situation, and held a frank discussion about occupancy targets and goals.

While the previous standard for corporations was to achieve 80% in-office occupancy, research presented at the Forum suggested that the new target is generally set at 50%. That research showed that the average office occupancy is currently around 30%, but with the right incentives from leadership, researchers and leaders believe that companies can hit that 50% target.

But even as broader trends start to emerge, it's important for real estate leaders to have a clear picture of occupancy at every building in their portfolio. That's why CRE companies need to be able to carefully evaluate day-to-day occupancy and activity at all of their properties. By understanding who's in the building and when, property teams can make smarter decisions to optimize their workplace investments, while also boosting tenant retention and NOI. Forum attendees said that property teams now need better, more accurate data on occupancy and space usage in order to boost occupancy and engagement this year and beyond.

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07

Win back days in the office with engaging events and improved access to leadership

Follow these practical tips to boost employee engagement.

Forum leaders shared these tips that can help property workplace leaders (both on the occupier and the landlord side) to get employees back in their buildings:

- Employees use the office to get better access to management. To facilitate this access, workplace experience managers could consider implementing a weekly meal or breakfast with managers and C-Suite executives.

- Implement an executive speaking series to provide more facetime with c-suite executives (Netflix and Stripe have both done something like this already).

- Run happy hours and other work social events

- Organize watch parties for major sporting events (World Cup, Masters, March Madness, and so on). Employees will likely already be watching these events at their desks; leaders may as well hold a watch party to bring people together and help build connection.

- Start doing "fireside chats" – intimate debriefs with company leaders that help build culture and get people in the office.

- Offer innovative, high-value programs to valued employees. For example, some companies have experimented with "Work From Anywhere" perk programs, where employees spend 3 months in another office location across the world before returning to their home office.

As the state of work and the workplace enters a new and exciting chapter, leaders will continue to experiment with new ways to boost attendance and engagement. These tips provide a good starting point, but workplace leaders have to avoid taking a one size fits all approach. Instead, the key will be to personalize and improve amenities to meet the highly-specific needs of tenants and employees in their respective buildings.

London Kemp-Boykin, Amazon, and Luigi Sciabarrasi, AECOM, discuss ways to boost employee engagement in the workplace.

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08
Increase collaboration by improving design and workplace connectivity

The 2023 State of Workplace Experience report found that informal social interaction is now a highly-valued activity, increasing in importance by more than 8% since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This shows that today's employees value and expect greater connection and collaboration in the workplace.

To create a more connected workplace, it is essential to evaluate current office connectivity points and determine if they allow employees to casually collide and talk. Connectivity points to leadership are particularly important and can be tested and changed to make managers more accessible to the team for conversations and connections.

Testing office footprint and design is another critical step to ensuring long-term success. One Forum attendee told the room how one US software company shut down two entire floors of their office building to bring people together and test the effectiveness of workplace design, resource booking tools, and other elements of the workplace experience. This allowed the company to gain insights into how it could create a more connected workplace.

By testing and changing connection points and office design, workplaces can create more opportunities for employees to connect and collaborate, leading to a more engaged and productive workforce.

Alice Wilson of LBA Realty (far left) and Bill Marec of Western Digital (second from left) lead a thoughtful conversation with other panelists.

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09

Keep satisfaction high by expanding your commitments to ESG

Environment   **Sustainability**   Governance

Today's tenants and employees are more conscious of environment, sustainability, and governance (ESG) issues than ever before. This has led a number of leading companies to augment and improve their ESG programs in order to boost employee engagement.

In real estate and workplace experience, energy use is a huge ESG issue. To promote sustainability and energy goals, landlords need to effectively communicate their support for green leasing partnerships and ESG reporting. Effective ESG management also relies heavily on sustainability data, which can be gathered through energy reporting in certain technology platforms. Real

estate teams should also have an ESG sustainability checklist or standards to follow when selecting sites for their buildings.

Some attendees argued that employee attitudes towards sustainability are often driven by feelings rather than specific data sets. That's why promoting greenery, visible certifications, and recycling bins can create a sense of sustainability within the workplace. Educating employees on ESG terminology and company certifications can also help them feel more connected to the sustainability efforts of their organization.

Regardless of how you choose to approach ESG at your building, portfolio, or workplace, it's important to remember that ESG is increasingly a top priority for corporations and younger generations of employees. This shift in employee sentiment means that high-performing organizations need to implement successful ESG strategies in order t o stay competitive.

Andy Wattula, Chief Operating Officer, Hudson Pacific Properties.

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10

Turn your workplace into a value driver with an innovative tech and data strategy

Creating independent data layers, using easy-to-use tech dashboards, and providing digital equity to all employees are essential components of a successful tech and data strategy.

Creating an innovative tech and data strategy is crucial for companies that want to stay ahead of the curve and improve their operations. Creating independent data layers, using easy-to-use tech dashboards, and providing digital equity to all employees are essential components of a successful tech and data strategy.

But in order to have a successful data strategy, Forum attendees noted that digital tools like movement sensors can be used to gain insights into how frequently spaces are used and what energy is being used when occupied, which is important for understanding the efficiency of buildings. Another useful tool is "connection scoring" focused on PXT (people, experience, and technology), which involves gathering data through

employee micro surveys to understand what is working best in the workplace. By implementing these strategies, companies can improve their overall performance and create a more efficient and engaging workplace experience for employees.

Charles Buscarino, CEO at The Clarient Group, shares his thoughts on creating an innovative tech and data strategy.

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Build a Better Workplace Experience

As the future of the workplace continues to evolve, companies can insulate themselves from macroeconomic uncertainty by building stronger and better-connected workplaces. HqO equips employers, property teams, and commercial real estate companies with practical tools that improve the workplace experience, which leads to decreased turnover, and increased NOI over time. By delivering engaging events, exciting programming, and a wide array of practical tools to our customers, HqO helps make the workplace a more human and connected place. And, in 2023, that's exactly what employees need.

? **Interested in learning more about how HqO can help your company succeed?**

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