Top 10 Tips to Launch an Effective Office Hoteling Program

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of mobile workers worldwide in recent years. According to an international survey conducted by CoreNet Global and Microsoft, 76 percent of respondents indicated that they employ some form of a "flexible work" program. The reasons are many, but at the end of the day these programs introduce dramatic improvements by enhancing collaboration, increasing productivity, reducing costs, and even extending the agility of the office space.

While several departments in an organization are involved in the roll out and ongoing management of flexible work programs such as human resources, IT, and even finance, facility management or corporate real estate are often the ones held accountable. Therefore, facility directors must understand how to facilitate the needs of the mobile workforce in order to maintain productivity.

When developing and implementing an office hoteling program, there are several straightforward, yet vital, concepts facility managers should understand as they move forward.

Build the Business Case for an Office Hoteling Program

To guarantee internal acceptance of a flex-work initiative and to get more people engaged in the process, FMs should work with HR to demonstrate to key decision makers the hard cost savings that can be achieved through implementing an office hoteling strategy, such as projected overhead savings, and demonstrable ways the company can operate with fewer resources. FMs should also articulate the potential productivity gains, including increased teamwork and collaboration, improved morale and work-life balance, and the attraction and retention of top talent.

Assist Mobile Workers with Cultural Change Adjustment

Some issues may develop when implementing a flex work program, such as mobile workers feeling a lack of appreciation because they no longer have a personal workspace. Those not eligible for flex work may feel they are not viewed as trustworthy. Facility managers should again work closely with HR and respond immediately to any and all concerns by building upon existing policies, easing fears from the top down, and coaching individual contributors and the managers to whom they report. In some cases, FMs may want to call upon change management consultants who can also

" PROVIDING A WORKSPACE TO AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE COSTS AN ORGANIZATION FROM $8,000 TO $14,000 A YEAR. ELIMINATING 100 WORKSPACES CAN SAVE AN ORGANIZATION OVER $1M A YEAR."

— Gartner Group

help managers and their employees through this transition.

Guarantee Success by Planning Ahead

To ensure success of a flex-work program, FMs should develop a detailed plan that includes tactics and logistics, focusing on the ultimate objectives, while still allowing plenty of room for any changes or enhancements that can be made along the way. Among the reasons, a plan expresses to others that the decision to implement an office hoteling environment has been thoroughly developed and demonstrates the program's feasibility.

> " MANY COMPANIES, LIKE PROCTER & GAMBLE OR CISCO SYSTEMS, ARE TRYING TO GET THEIR REAL ESTATE COSTS DOWN WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MAKING THE SPACE WORK BETTER FOR COLLABORATION. WHEN CISCO SYSTEMS UNDERTOOK THIS RECONFIGURATION, IT REALIZED REDUCTIONS IN SPACE COSTS OF 37%, AS WELL AS GAINING $2.4 BILLION IN WHAT THE COMPANY CALLS "PRODUCTIVITY BENEFITS."

— "Going Bedouin at Work" Innovation and Business Architectures

Understand How CREs, IT, HR and Other Departments are Affected

To guarantee organizational alignment during the implementation of a new mobile workforce system, FMs should work closely with their corporate real estate (if they're not already part of this group) and HR departments. These groups should be actively involved as the office environment is redefined to better support how work is actually being conducted. It should also be understood by all how assigned and unassigned workspace decisions will be made as to avoid any confusion or later disagreements. The IT department should also participate so it can determine how the program will affect the current infrastructure and to be in a position to deal with any technological obstacles that may result during the implementation.

> "ALTERNATIVE WORKSPACE STRATEGIES ARE A COST-CUTTING MEASURE THAT CAN HELP COMPANIES SAVE THEIR BUDGET WITHOUT HAVING TO MAKE BIGGER STAFF FREEZES OR SALARY CUTS."

— HR World

Align with Current Infrastructure

It is extremely important that a new flex work program aligns with the existing corporate infrastructure. It is recommended that facility managers run a pilot program so that any kinks in the program can be worked out. Engaging in a pilot program enables the company to identify different work styles, design a workplace that supports various activities, target early adopters to test the new space, and determine the training and tools necessary to support the mobile workers. Pilot programs prepare the company for the impending larger-scale implementation and demonstrate whether it is able to accommodate the change at the projected time.

Maintain Productivity While Maximizing Efficiency

During the shift to a mobile workplace, a cultural change is inevitable and must be dealt with early on, as many mobile workers may feel cut off, and office workers may feel left behind. Collaboration within the organization is crucial, so FM and HR should make certain that all employees are able to connect with peers and partake in projects and meetings. New tools may be required to provide a collaborative work environment, such as scheduling software, which can help to maximize productivity while in the office.

Reduce and Repurpose Workspace

The aim of consolidated workspace is to reduce the square footage of office space per employee while maintaining or increasing productivity. One

way to reach this goal is to have less "I" space and more "we" space. Shared space where workers feel welcomed generates a friendly and comforting environment, increasing employees' acceptance of the new mobile work initiative.

Manage and Measure Performance

As Peter Drucker said, "You can't manage what you can't measure," so facility managers should employ a pilot program to track variance and behavior by comparing planned data with actual data, then analyzing the results. Soliciting feedback is vital in order to find out what worked, what didn't, and what needs to be improved, while gaining the opinions of others about the new flex-work program. This information allows the company to maximize the efficiency of a new flex work plan while maintaining productivity.

Record and Analyze Actual vs. Planned Utilization of Space

To learn where changes need to be made, FMs must track actual versus planned utilization of space using nonintrusive occupancy detection, kiosk, or security badge log systems to record necessary data. With this information, facility managers can discover what space is being underutilized as well

as the reasons for it, allowing them to identify any issues and resolve them quickly.

Understand Changes in ROI

It's imperative to track any new program's return on investment. The employment of an alternative workplace, the adjustments, and recording the changes are all worthless without calculating the ROI. Understanding all impacts on the company, however large or small they may be, makes the entire transition to a mobile workforce worthwhile, reflecting positively on all involved, and proving that all the time and effort put into the new program has been wisely invested.

The transition to a mobile workforce has not only become a growing trend but has become a necessity if businesses hope to keep up in their competitive industries. However, the transition to an office hoteling environment involves an immense amount of planning, discussion, and encouragement. By following these tips, facility managers will be on their way to a successful office hoteling program implementation where ROI and employee productivity are the true benchmarks for success.