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UKGBC Wellbeing Lab: Retail

A compendium of experience

MARCH 2018

With thanks to our programme sponsors:

Foreword

It's becoming ever more apparent that the recent trend for 'healthy' buildings is not abating, but, rather, is becoming embedded as a mainstream objective. This is in large part down to mounting evidence that healthy, green buildings lead to better business outcomes and added productivity.

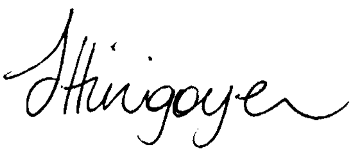
Here at UKGBC, we have been working hard to build evidence for, and disseminate understanding of, the impact of sustainable business practices (such as a healthier, greener built environment) on corporate value drivers. Our recent report on Capturing the Value of Sustainability set out at a high level to do exactly that, whilst our work on health and wellbeing digs deeply into a specific aspect of the topic.

Within that context, our Wellbeing Labs have performed a dual service. Firstly, they support forward thinking businesses through the process of assessing and improving their buildings from a health and wellbeing perspective; secondly, as part of this wider goal, they provide invaluable evidence to bolster the business case for healthy buildings.

This year's Retail Lab built on the success of the 2016 Offices Lab. It sits within a context of a rapidly changing sector: consumers are increasingly able to meet all of their buying needs online, meaning that visiting a physical space is becoming more of a choice. Forward looking businesses are recognising the need to set their places apart from the crowd, and many are exploring approaches very much in sync with our health and wellbeing agenda.

Our participants span the retail sector, but their commitment to improving their buildings is consistent. The projects tackled different issues within the topic, leading to a breadth of information about retail environments. The following pages summarise their experiences in the lab and pull out the key things we have learnt from the process.

We hope these lessons will inspire others to follow suit – and put healthy, productive, and green buildings at the heart of corporate strategy.



Julie Hirigoyen
CEO, UKGBC

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Introduction

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WHAT WAS THE WELLBEING LAB: RETAIL?

The Wellbeing Lab: Retail (or Retail Lab) was a six month, highly bespoke, collaborative research and learning programme, tackling the topic of health, wellbeing and productivity in retail environments. The participating teams, composed of different combinations of retailers, landlords, consultants and other stakeholders, each undertook a deep dive piece of research into a specific element of the topic. The overarching goal of the project was to strengthen the business case for sustainable design and investment decisions in the sector.

Many of the participants came to the programme with a good pre-existing level of knowledge about the key issues which impact on occupant health and comfort, and some experience with the WorldGBC Retail Metrics Framework (the 'Framework' explained later in this report). Each team then used the Framework, in different ways, as a methodological approach to their specific research topic. Over the course of the programme, they came to regular workshop sessions facilitated by UKGBC where they discussed their challenges, celebrated their successes and shared their findings with the wider group.

This report summarises the experiences of the group. Some teams chose to include case studies describing exactly what they did, and what they learnt, while others elected instead to reflect on the programme and its impact on their organisations.

WELLBEING LAB: RETAIL – OBJECTIVES

Although each team's specific approach and objectives varied, there were a number of themes that motivated participation across the cohort:

- To push forward best practices on this increasingly important issue, in the context of the rapidly changing sector landscape. As visiting a physical store becomes more of a choice, many retailers are working to create 'destination' spaces, intended to attract people interested in more than just purchasing. Many of these already incorporate a number of healthy design features, and the lab aimed to understand which of these work, and why.
- To build evidence for investing in people. Many of the teams chose to focus on their employees more than their customers for two reasons. Firstly, they did so on the basis that the retail experience is increasingly a choice for human interaction over digital, and happier employees lead to happier customers. Secondly, as with offices, they wanted to ensure they are able to attract and retain good employees.
- To develop a more granular understanding of, and more widely disseminate evidence for, healthy design and operational interventions in retail environments. Our teams were keen to contribute to industry knowledge. Sharing findings from these studies on specific issues will help the rest of the sector understand the impact of prioritising health and wellbeing.

HEALTH, WELLBEING & PRODUCTIVITY IN RETAIL: THE FUNDAMENTALS

In February 2016, UKGBC produced a report entitled Health, Wellbeing & Productivity in Retail. This followed our 2014 report on the same issue for the offices sector, and was in response to demand from the retail sector and part of the WorldGBC's Better Places for People campaign. Many of the issues arising in the retail report mirrored those in the offices research: for example, the majority of the environmental factors identified as beneficial to offices also improve retail environments.

That said, there were two major differences between office and retail sectors in terms of available information. Firstly, retailers generally already capture large quantities of data, especially concerning employee and customer satisfaction. Secondly, it is possible to look at potential value creation in terms of things like footfall, dwell time, and sales, rather than just cost avoidance, when studying the retail sector.

Furthermore, the retail sector is well ahead of the offices sector in terms of understanding the power of digital data. It is very easy to find customer perception data about health and wellbeing issues online, on sites such as TripAdvisor and Facebook. This is a very real risk – and indeed opportunity – for retailers, as individuals are increasingly likely to make decisions on which stores to visit based on easily available online information.

All of this together puts the sector in a strong position: by combining their existing economic data with environmental data and public perception in different stores, retailers are able to quickly identify which factors impact their business most. This idea formed the basis of the Retail Metrics Framework, which we published in the 2016 report.

OVERVIEW OF WORLDGBC RETAIL METRICS FRAMEWORK

The Framework provides a three-pronged structure for assessing and improving on health, wellbeing and productivity issues in retail environments, broken down into manageable components. The idea is that professionals should be able to pick it up, understand at least some parts of it and make a start on measuring some aspects of the environment. It should also help them understand who else they need to liaise with to gain information on aspects of the Framework beyond their reach in order to pull together a more complete picture of a space's performance.

The metrics are broken down into three categories – environment, experience and economics. Broadly, environment refers to physical characteristics that can be measured quantitively or qualitatively. Experience refers to the occupant's perception of the space, and covers both the employee and customer viewpoint. Economics pertains to both cost issues, such as absenteeism and employee turnover, and value drivers, such as sales, dwell time and brand.

THE IMPACT FLOWS THIS WAY →

ENVIRONMENT

1. Lighting
2. Indoor air quality
3. Thermal comfort
4. Acoustics
5. Interior layout
6. Look & feel
7. Active/Inclusive design
8. Biophilia
9. Amenities
10. Community space

EXPERIENCE

EMPLOYEES

Perception of the work environment

CUSTOMERS

Perception of the retail environment

ECONOMICS

COSTS

EMPLOYEES

1. Absenteeism
2. Staff retention
3. Medical complaints
4. Medical costs
5. Physical complaints

VALUE

CUSTOMERS

1. Sales
2. Footfall
3. Dwell time
4. Loyalty (retention)
5. Distance travelled

COMPANY

Brand (from social media)

← THE ANALYSIS FLOWS THIS WAY

KEY INSIGHTS

The challenge of the lab was to try and derive general observations and common conclusions using the same Framework across different teams and settings. Below we set out our five key insights:

1 Health and wellbeing is an issue that tends to promote collaboration

In the lab, landlords and tenants worked together to understand and improve retail environments. They recognised that the customer does not distinguish between "common areas" and "tenant premises" but has a single shopping experience that was a product of both landlord and retailer efforts.

Therefore, we did not see the "split incentives" that often hamper other sustainability efforts, most notably energy efficiency.

2 Employees are directly influenced by their physical surroundings and this, in turn, impacts on the customer experience

Employees are strongly impacted by their environments, and there was a clear link between employee experience and customer satisfaction. There are a number of ways to improve the customer environment and experience, but improving the employee workplace environment is one of the most promising of these.

Gathering data from employees and assessing their workplaces makes a lot of sense, as they spend more time in specific retail locations than customers, so the impact of place is potentially more pronounced. Moreover, when it comes to implementing easy (and less costly) wins that can have important impacts on the business generally, employee spaces are a prime target.

3 In comparison to offices, retail is data rich, but (as with offices) little of this data focuses specifically on the physical environment

Participants in this programme did not have to go and gather new data initially. Instead they could rely upon historical collection, so started the lab equipped with a considerable amount of data.

But there is still a lack of understanding about how the physical environment links to satisfaction regarding employee (and customer) wellbeing. Seldom are there specific questions in staff or customer surveys pertaining to the physical environment.

Going forward, time and expense could be reduced if aspects of the physical environment were referenced in surveys, so that an analysis of employee and customer experience can be understood in the context of place.

4 Technology is making it easier to understand how customers feel about the different retail environments

Social media means that customers are providing retailers with actionable knowledge about how they are affected by retail environments. This enables retailers them to correlate the customer experience and place as never before, for free, in a matter of hours. This type of feedback is both current and historical, so the lab participants were able to look online retrospectively to see how improvements they undertook had been received.

Thinking ahead, AI and neuroscience promise to inform architecture in innovative ways. When the challenge for retail is to create places that people want to come to, it is becoming possible to apply more science and technology data to design (and operational) decisions than ever before.

5 Health and wellbeing options are available to all kinds of people in all kinds of places, and are not confined to new build or premier properties

Health and wellbeing is not just about design and building decisions. There are inexpensive managerial actions that can be made immediately to unlock benefits straight away, and over time can continue to reap rewards. This is true regardless of physical environment: properties involved in the lab covered the entire spectrum, from new to old, large to small, premier to secondary stock. All of the teams found ways to introduce health and wellbeing interventions that improved the employee and customer experience.

By starting small and focusing on employee areas, our lab colleagues demonstrated that health and wellbeing can and should be available to all kinds of retail in all kinds of spaces. The teams now have more experience and confidence to expand the pilot process into the larger customer environment.

Case studies

M&S
EST. 1884

BUROHAPPOLD
ENGINEERING

THE CROWN ESTATE

M&S, BUROHAPPOLD & THE CROWN ESTATE

Why we were involved

In 2017, Marks & Spencer (M&S) assessed its UK store portfolio against the Framework, and found a strong correlation between customer and employee satisfaction. Therefore, we focused the efforts of the Retail Lab on the impact that the built environment has upon M&S employees, with the knowledge that satisfied employees lead to satisfied customers.

This project sought to identify the particular elements of the physical environment that impact upon M&S employees' health and wellbeing (HWB). The scope of the project extended beyond the internal physical environment, and also considered the nearby external spaces.

The outputs support the M&S Plan A Wellbeing Commitment:

'By 2019, we'll launch an independently benchmarked retail industry leading health & wellbeing framework providing support to M&S colleagues worldwide on physical and mental health as well as nutrition and wellbeing'.

The project also supports one of The Crown Estate's (TCE) strategic objectives,

'to build ever strong relationships through high levels of customer [occupier] and partner satisfaction, loyalty and recommendation'.

BuroHappold aimed to test a series of HWB performance evaluation methods in a real world setting to understand how to deliver improved wellbeing outcomes in the commercial property and retail sectors.

Our objectives

The objectives were to:

- Understand the elements of the physical environment that impact the HWB of M&S employees, and to what extent;
- Identify a key set of recommendations that are applicable to both landlord and occupier;
- Identify association between M&S Employee Satisfaction and TCE Customer [occupier] satisfaction.

What we did

In 2017, we undertook site visits across 8 M&S stores, 7 of which were on TCE's regional retail portfolio. Within each visit we pursued a mixed-methods approach, comprising:

- Semi-structured interviews to understand a typical working day and the relationships between physical environment and HWB. Questions included a 1-5 scale perceptual assessment of environmental factors;
- Walking interviews around front and back of house, and the external environment; and
- Audit assessments of the physical environment.

The site visits were supplemented by existing data sets, including:

- Building plans and elevations;
- M&S Employee Satisfaction Survey; and
- TCE Customer [occupier] Survey.

We carried out statistical analysis to strengthen the conclusions drawn from the site visits, and to explore the correlations between HWB of employees and their satisfaction and productivity.

What we learned

The results of the audit assessments were compared to the staff perceptual ratings of the same store environmental factors. Although limited by a small dataset (n = 8), we observed a general trend that high employee ratings corresponded with high audit scores.

- This suggests that there is a relationship between the objective physical assessment and the employees' experience of the space. However, we found a number of discrepancies between the objective and subjective evaluations, which emphasises the importance of combining different sets of information using mixed methods (i.e. triangulation).

- Further analysis has been carried out to identify the relationship between the environmental factor ratings provided by the employees and their general satisfaction. With the exception of Aylesford, we observed that a strong correlation exists between the M&S Employee Satisfaction Survey scores and the average ratings given to the environmental factors during the interviews in store.

- The Crown Estate's Customer Satisfaction Survey also asked the occupiers to provide a score to the stores' HWB. These scores were only available for four of the stores considered. However, we observed that the perceived HWB in those stores correlates well with the relative employees' satisfaction (as per M&S survey).

In conclusion, this analysis has shown that at the broadest level, the physical environment is linked to staff experience and wellbeing, which in turn affect employees' satisfaction (as summarised in the Figure below). Using the mixed-methods approach, the study was also able to gain deeper insights into which elements of the physical environment had the greatest impact.

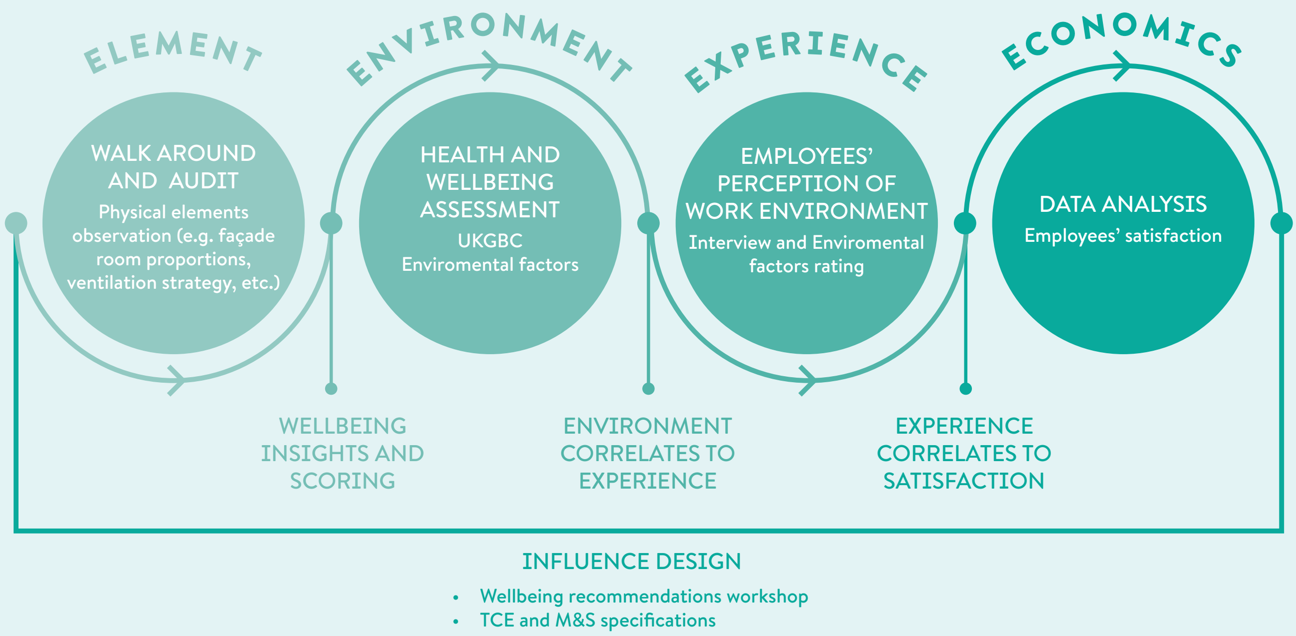

Figure 1

Priority of needs

The study showed that there is a clear prioritisation or hierarchy of needs that affected employee HWB, as shown in the Figure below:

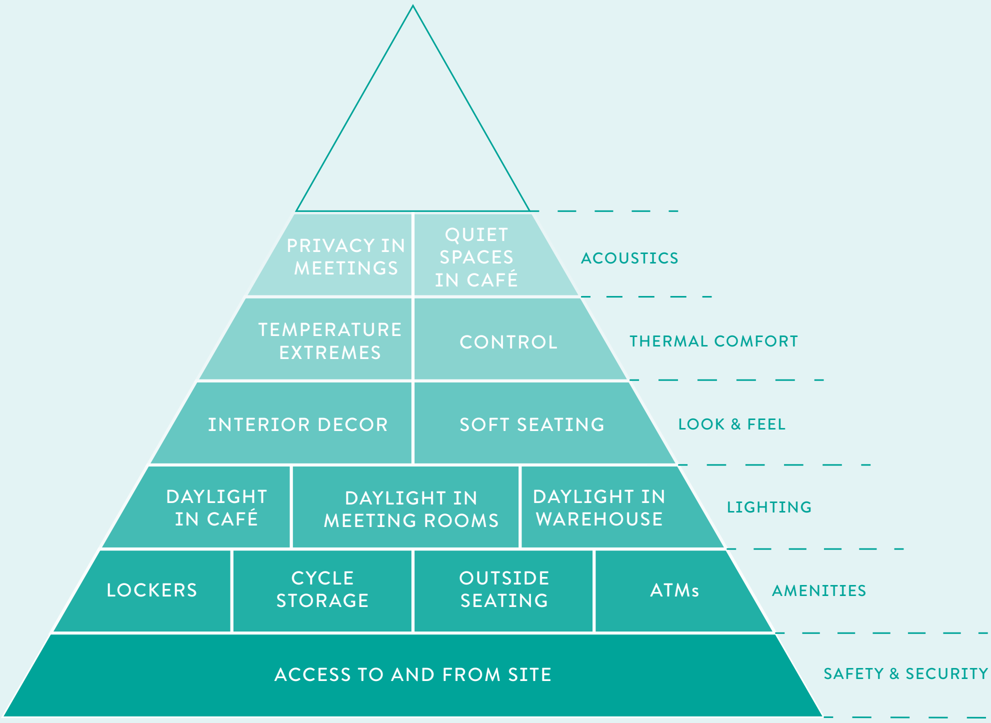

Figure 2

This hierarchy expands on the original set of environmental factors outlined by the WorldGBC Framework; safety and security has been added since it has been highlighted as a priority for employees, in line with considerations from Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Some other environmental factors, such as access to nature, are not included, as they were not perceived as a priority by the employees.

The blurring of boundaries

The needs identified demonstrated that there are no boundaries to HWB between landlord and occupier demise. Therefore, there are opportunities for both landlords and occupiers to contribute positively to improving the HWB of employees. In addition to the opportunities for physical/design interventions (see Figure 2 & 3), respondents also outlined that improved communication (e.g. between the landlord and occupiers, between different occupiers, or indeed internally) would enhance employee HWB and experience. For example, the importance of a strong and collaborative relationship between the landlord and occupiers was highlighted to support key issues such as staff parking and access.

Conclusion

Based on the key findings outlined above, we outline an "ideal" day in the life of the typical employee, as shown in Figure 3, highlighting the key elements of the physical environment that impact the HWB of M&S employees.

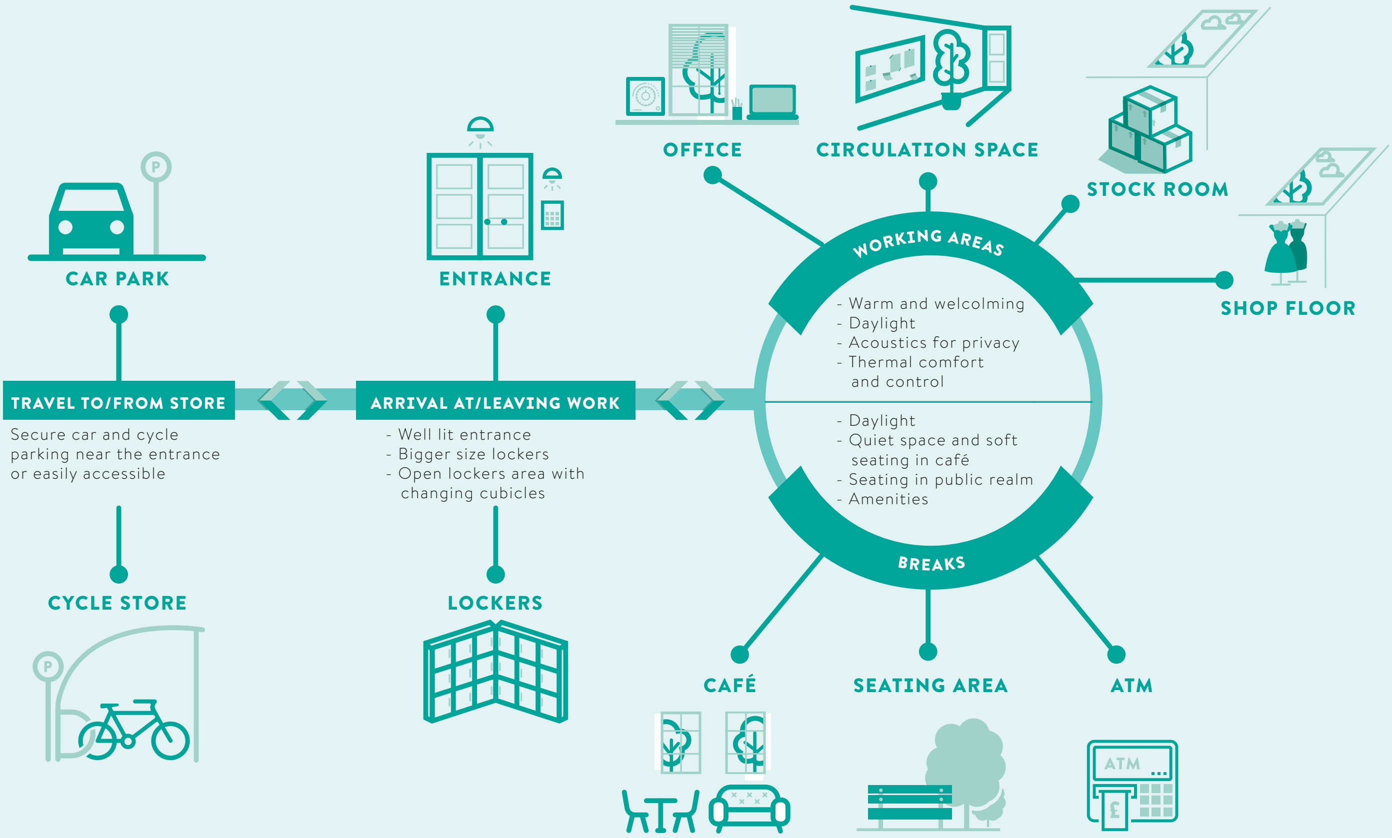

Figure 3

Next steps for us

- This ideal day will be played back to key stakeholders in a workshop. Following this, M&S and TCE will identify recommendations that can be taken forward.
- M&S will embed the principles of the ideal day into the Plan A 2025 Wellbeing Framework commitment.
- TCE will look to incorporate the principles into any appropriate development and refurbishments work, and to support one of TCE's strategic objectives of building strong relationships with customers.

JLL & CETEC

Why we were involved

We were glad to have the opportunity to take part in the Retail Lab so that we could explore how to apply the Framework in a retail environment. We decided to focus our project specifically on management suites because:

- they present a discrete and controlled environment;
- we believe that optimising this space will lead to a happier, healthier and more productive workforce, resulting in a more positive experience for customers;
- their refurbishment is usually lower priority than other areas of shopping centres; and
- the findings can be used across other landlord controlled areas in shopping centres.

Our objectives

We wanted to collect both qualitative and quantitative health and wellbeing data using several different data collection methods (i.e. perception surveys, site inspections and IEQ testing) to determine:

a. the environmental factors that are most important to occupants; and

b. the actual or perceived issues with the workspace.

What we did

- We developed a perception survey that was issued to management suite employees. We had a response rate of 100%.
- We conducted a site inspection of 9 distinct but representative management suites throughout the UK.
- We conducted professional-grade indoor environmental quality (IEQ) testing at 4 of the 9 locations.

What we learned

Internal temperature, indoor air quality and access to natural light were the most important environmental factors for occupants. This was surprising as most occupants had access to operable windows, and to individually controlled heating and cooling systems, giving them more control than typical office occupants.

Access to healthy food, drinking water and active design were identified as the least important environmental factors for occupants. This was understandable as most occupants had access to multiple food retailers and filtered water, they also spent more time away from their workstations than typical office occupants.

Results from indoor environment quality (IEQ) testing across four of nine management suites found that temperature, air quality, noise levels and light levels were within industry thresholds. Most management suite occupants were content with the design, amenities and indoor environment of their workspace. Most management suites have more underutilised space than typical workspaces.

General findings

- Perception surveys are useful in understanding which environmental factors are most important for occupants and whether there are any common issues.
- Site inspections are useful for determining best practices and areas that could be improved when reviewing multiple sites.
- IEQ testing is cost sensitive, but can be justified when perception surveys raise an issue or site inspections identify a risk factor (e.g. proximity to a construction site or busy road).

Next steps for us

- Develop our own toolkit for healthier management suites.
- Provide recommendations reports to each shopping centre.
- Our recommendations will be reviewed by other centres, who will work with asset managers to implement low-cost interventions.


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"Wellbeing is an increasingly important area in real estate management and we appreciate the opportunity of collaborating with our managing agents to start understanding health and wellbeing benefits which will improve productivity amongst onsite staff."

Rebecca Gates
Head of Asset Management
LaSalle Investment Management

LIVERPOOL ONE & EVORA

Why we were involved

Liverpool ONE is a shopping, residential and leisure destination in central Liverpool, which opened in 2008. As part of the Retail Lab, we have worked together to explore whether the implementation of health and wellbeing focused initiatives to the public realm areas contributes to an enhanced visitor experience.

Shopping, retail and leisure locations face a challenge when it comes to addressing health and wellbeing: variability in design, layout and size of retail-led schemes create challenges when trying to share best practice. As such, our project focused on analysis that can help identify steps to be taken to consider health and wellbeing in operational centres.

Our objectives

We wanted to use the lab to inform the approach we use to establish health and wellbeing initiatives in future.

We also understood that the methodologies we were able to follow in the lab could be applied at other schemes.

What we did

Liverpool ONE benefits from a significant amount of public realm space. Many initiatives introduced have had a 'health and wellbeing' aspect to them. One of these, the application of artificial grass to Sugar House Steps, was selected as a case study for this project. The idea behind this installation was to mimic a natural environment and soften what is otherwise a more barren landscape. Artificial rather than real grass was used for practical (maintenance, safety and resilience) and economic reasons.

We also selected this project for practical, logistical reasons – it was installed and in place at the time of the Retail Lab, and visitor (footfall) data was available.

The steps are a design feature developed as an access route to the main entertainment area and Chavasse Park (which also forms part of the centre), as well as providing a location where visitors can meet, relax and take a break. Artificial grass was installed for the 2017 summer period.

To assess use of the space, we reviewed footfall in the area during and before the installation. We also surveyed the public with targeted questions on their use of the space. To consider the management view, we interviewed key staff members on the decision-making process and barriers they may face.

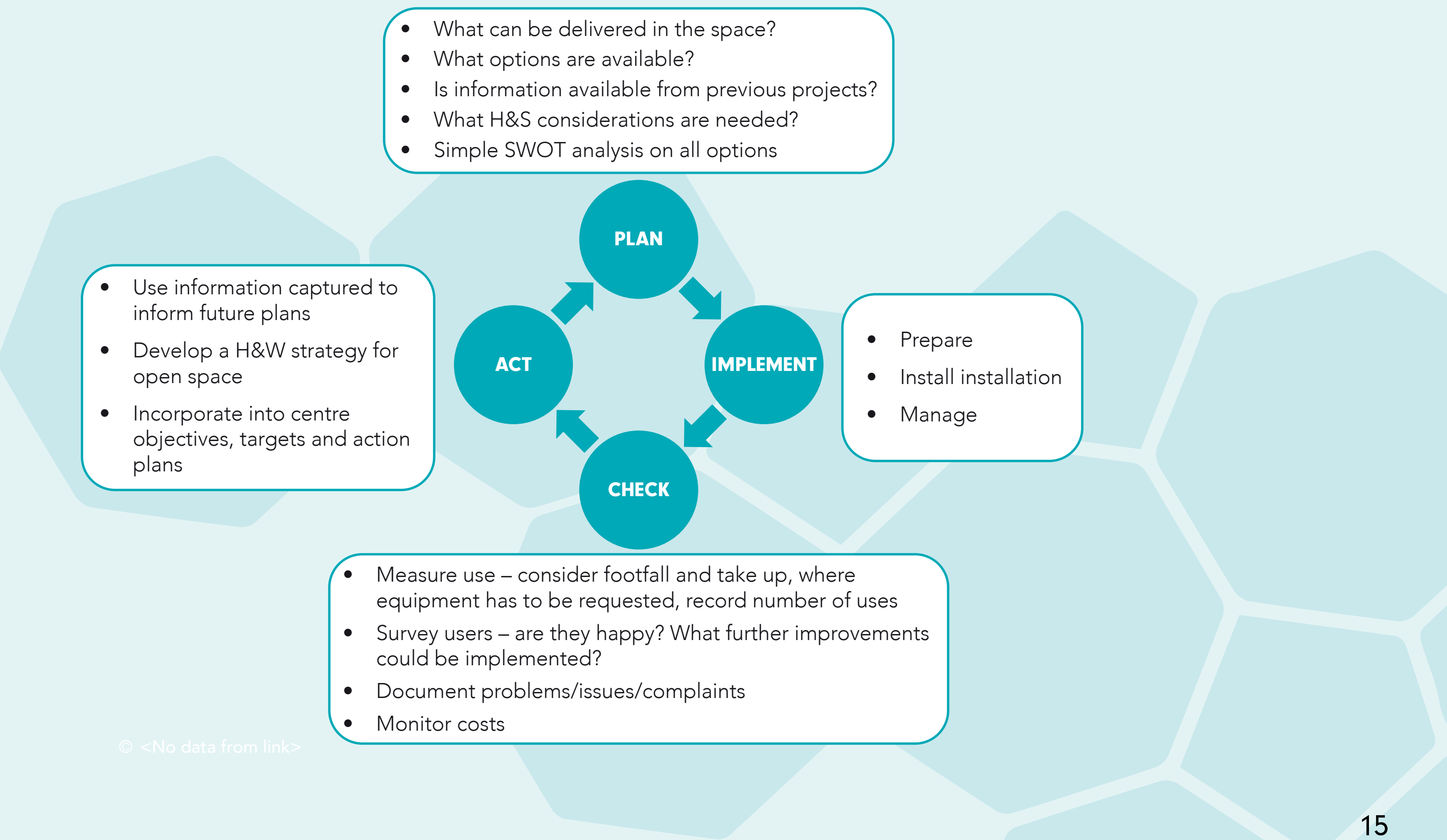
Steps, before (left) and after

What we found

- Analysis of the footfall data revealed a significant uplift of 9% in footfall for the period of April to August (inclusive) when comparing 2017 (installations in place) to 2016. This compares favourably with the rest of the shopping centre, where the positive increase was not as significant.
- The survey results suggested that more than 50% of users would not use the steps if the artificial grass was not in place.
- Additionally, as hoped, the steps were in the main used for eating and relaxing, suggesting that they do have a positive impact on centre users.
- Discussion with the management team demonstrated that, whilst there is a significant amount of effort required to prepare and plan for installation of health and wellbeing focused initiatives, the benefits outweigh the costs, as they make the centre a more attractive place to visit.

Next steps for us

- Building on the success of this projects, we will consider interventions that promote biophilia.
- We will work to implement a "Plan, Do, Check, Act" (PDCA) approach to implement, measure and improve health and wellbeing.
- We will engage further with retailers on ideas for interventions to ensure their views are taken into account, and best value is delivered for all.
- We will also engage our social media teams to proactively track feedback on installations and commentary.



CARBON CREDENTIALS, NORTHERN RAIL & HASKOLL

Why we were involved

Rail stations are no longer just part of an infrastructure network – they are also retail centres. Beyond the sale of tickets, rail stations are including an ever-increasing number of retailers centred around passenger convenience.

We are particularly interested in understanding how the physical aspects of the environment impact our customers both socially and psychologically.

Our objectives

Northern's aim for the Retail Lab was to first understand and then over time to develop a programme to monitor, measure and report on the benefits of wellbeing to our employees and customers within rail stations.

We wanted to use the findings from this lab to support and inform our ongoing programme on wellbeing. While much of our focus to date has been on employee wellbeing, the lab provided a forum to consider different approaches to the wellbeing of our customers. As our front-line staff share station and train areas with our customers, discussing different approaches retailers take to wellbeing provided some different perspectives.

© Northern Rail

What we did

- Northern looked at wellbeing and accessibility, taking advantage of a growing number of learnings from the retail sector.
- Northern focussed specifically on the accessibility of stations for those with mental health issues.

What we learned

- This is a rapidly growing and particularly relevant issue for Northern as navigating transportation systems is rated among the most stressful experiences for those with mental health conditions.
- Northern sees the importance of catering for those with disabilities within retail environments as a social responsibility beyond the aspects of legal obligation. Inclusion is also a financially intelligent strategy for our retailers. 22% of the disabled population in the UK have mental health issues, and this represents a large part the £249 billion value of the 'purple pound'.[1]
- This collaboration with leading retailers has helped Northern explore opportunities to support innovative ways that transport hubs can be healthy retail places for passengers, and healthy workplace environments for staff.

Next steps for us

- Northern is piloting a biodiversity programme at several stations in Spring 2018, and the Retail Lab has highlighted how this project might have additional, under-appreciated benefits in improving wellbeing and Northern's customer experience as well as economic advantages.
- Biodiversity and biophilia are often included in retail and transportation hubs for aesthetic and environmental reasons, but our research shows that these features also improve on mental health, and we aim to investigate the connections using our facilities and data.
- Northern will use this Retail Lab experience to consider the strategic importance of features like biodiversity and accessibility, and share these with colleagues across the rail network.

[1] The 'purple pound' is the estimated spending power of the disabled population and their carers in the UK.

WORKMAN & ELLANDI

Why we were involved

Ellandi and Workman have collectively been looking at health and wellbeing for some time, with a particular interest in how it might evolve from being perceived as an office occupier luxury to an embedded piece of the asset management jigsaw, regardless of property type.

We are both committed to integrating health and wellbeing into the way in which we manage retail assets on a day-to-day basis. It is becoming a fundamental part of the asset management model as it affects our shoppers, our centre management staff and our occupiers.

Objectives

The team's objective for this project was to substantiate our belief that management interventions to improve the health and wellbeing of our stakeholders do not have to be expensive or hard to achieve in order to be effective.

What we did

- We looked to identify the types of investor interventions completed in shopping centres which have had the highest impact on health and wellbeing for a relatively low cost.
- We focused on maximum impact and minimal cost increases and the likelihood of the works being implemented across other similar assets.
- The project was specifically limited to communal areas, including malls and other facilities, where management control is retained.

We looked at two shopping centres as part of the project:

Centre 1

Following works in one centre to improve levels of both artificial and natural light, and maximise natural ventilation, our project explored the possible impact that these changes had on key stakeholders.

This analysis consisted of perception surveys and social media data, which gave us a wide variety of data in a relatively limited time.

We used similar social media analysis to look at customer trends and opinions focused around works that had been carried out to lighting in a customer car park.

Centre 2

Our second study focused on a centre management staff's view of their rooftop allotment. The allotment provides a valuable green space and the produce is donated and sold to raise money for local charities and also used within the centre.

We conducted a perception survey of the management staff.

Prospect Centre Rooftop Garden

What we found

Centre 1

- We found that customers reacted positively when asked about levels of natural light within the centre: more so than tenants did when asked the same question.

- When questioned on temperature, both groups generally felt the temperature was comfortable, which compared well against other centres without natural ventilation.

- Customers were most likely to perceive the centre as comfortable when compared to retailers. We suggest that the mall areas benefited the most from the natural ventilation, with individual retail units having their own heating/air conditioning and hence varying temperature levels.

- These results suggested to us that different shopping centre stakeholders were likely to have different priorities, experiences and perceptions of comfort. When comparing the centre to those that have little or no natural light and are artificially heated the outcomes were definitely positive.

- Prior to the works, 40% of reviews on the centre's Facebook page were negative and particularly focused on issues such as the cost of the customer parking. Comments such as "Couldn't find a space and was still charged" were quite common.

- Following the re-lamping of the car park this figure dropped to 17% and comments such as "First visit and the first thing that struck me was how clean and bright the car park was. That then followed all the way through the malls. Need to visit again soon!"

- We would therefore suggest that relatively low cost, high impact works such as LED replacement projects have both a direct benefit and also the indirect benefit of negating other, potentially unlinked factors.

Centre 2

- When asked about their opinion of working at the centre in questionnaires, all referred to the access to the roof space and time spent there extremely positively.

- The "feel good" factor that this rooftop space created was mentioned by almost all and was perhaps the stand out initiative of all those implemented, in terms of both user perception and value for money.

Next steps for us

We believe that making relatively minor changes to a retail environment in terms of cost and ease to undertake will generally improve users' perceptions of that space, and we intend to roll out more examples of the initiatives described above as a result of our findings. We believe that implementing relatively easy wins could have a positive impact on social media, which might well attract new customers, so we will monitor social media across other centres within the retail portfolios which we have responsibility for and attempt to replicate the effect across a wider selection.

We also found that our green roof space, which was one of the most cost-effective initiatives to implement (now actually saving the centre money by providing the flowers previously purchased), also had one of the most significant positive impacts on the users, and so will expand the use of biodiversity as a means to enhancing our portfolios wherever we can.

Our theory is that health and wellbeing does not need to be expensive to benefit users – just well thought out and accessible, and so we will be looking for as many available options as possible to implement the examples detailed above (and more) to enhance the experience of our stakeholders.

Reflective pieces

John Lewis Partnership

JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP
KATHERINE RUSSELL
HEAD OF REAL ESTATE, PLANNING, POLICY & COMMERCIAL

A major thrust of this report is to understand how the design and operation of the built environment can affect the building users' comfort, productivity and/or overall willingness to be there. This is particularly important for staff working in the space due to the confines of their working hours.

High quality design of buildings and services is important to the John Lewis Partnership; however, well-designed buildings in the absence of effective operating procedures will not yield optimum results. Brighter, fresher buildings will typically be more desirable than darker, staler environments, yet how much do management practices also influence the building users' mindset and their general health and wellness? This is something the John Lewis Partnership is eager to explore.

John Lewis Partnership has 84,000 employees, better known as Partners. Its physical estate comprises over 500 buildings across two trading divisions, Waitrose and John Lewis. This includes: shops, head offices, distribution centres, residential properties, manufacturing facilities and a 4,000 acre farm. In all, a vast array of property of varying size, age and condition. Interestingly, some older properties may not represent the optimum from a health and wellbeing perspective (e.g. daylight, acoustics, etc.), yet outperform newer, 'healthier' buildings in both footfall and staff satisfaction. This shows that building design is only one aspect of the jigsaw. Another driver behind staff morale, affability and general health and wellbeing is effective leadership.

I am a huge advocate of health and wellbeing, and passionate about embedding this into the working practices of my department. It's important to me in my personal life, so why should it be any different in the professional world? Health and wellbeing champions are now in place to promote activities in my team, for example hourly mindfulness sessions on Monday mornings. Mindfulness provides a great process to clear the mind, rationalise tasks, improve wellbeing and increase productivity. The popularity of the sessions is really beginning to snowball.

The Partnership has always placed the health and wellbeing of its Partners at the heart of all it does and even offered a health service 20 years before the NHS launched. The world has changed drastically in recent years and with that, the pressures Partners face at home and at work have intensified. To give Partners the opportunities to relax and have fun the Partnership has a Leisure Benefits programme. It also has two teams – Partner Support which offers a helpline for emotional and practical support as well as financial assistance and mediation, and Partnership Health Services who provide physiotherapy, counselling and other health related services.

The physical environment is recognised as an important enabler of good health and wellbeing; albeit evidence is required to understand where changes in the physical environment can offer the greatest returns. The WorldGBC Retail Metrics Framework helps prioritise areas of focus. For example, natural daylight has many merits but provision can be restricted by the layout of retail buildings. This is especially relevant given John Lewis Partnership's current commitment to investing in its existing estate, where opportunities to insert new windows or rooflights are limited. However, other indicators on the Framework can be investigated and influenced in all building types (new or existing). This is a key focus area for the Partnership. Over the next year, work will be undertaken to monitor the indoor environment then overlay sales, building condition information and HR data on top of this. This process has begun but getting projects up and running can be lengthy given all the stakeholders and complexity involved. Nevertheless, understanding whether a correlation can be identified will help inform future design solutions and management processes.

Determining the economic impact of building and service design across the Partnership's estate is difficult, but the feedback received from Partners and/or customers on the indoor environment goes a long way in justifying the need for understanding. Product suppliers have been supporting this by enabling health and wellbeing to be considered in the selection of fittings and furnishings. For example, the manufacturer Forbo (a lab sponsor) provide flooring to the John Lewis Partnership; both organisations are keen on products which reduce any negative health and wellbeing impact on the building user (e.g. via improved comfort and/or reduced pollutants) without compromising design, performance, colour, function or durability.

It is clear that the present momentum behind the health and wellbeing agenda in the built environment (and beyond) is not a trend which will fade. Instead, it is recognised as vitally important in providing attractive and comfortable places for staff and customers. Greater awareness and implementation of health and wellness at work and at home is part of an evolutionary process to enable longer, more fulfilling lives. A principle of mindfulness is that a healthy mind is symbiotic with a healthy body, which is a function of exercise, diet, relaxation and the environment. As an organisation the John Lewis Partnership can affect all of these for both Partners and customers. The beauty is getting this right should lead to ongoing prosperity and greater happiness for all involved. In essence it makes commercial and moral sense.

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FLOORING SYSTEMS

FORBO
MARK BAUER, ENVIRONMENT SPECIALIST

We are delighted to have been given the opportunity to sponsor this Retail Lab. We recognised during the Offices Lab the value that these educational, informative programs bring to participants and this has again been very evident during the Retail Lab.

The challenges this lab faced were in many ways more complex than those in the office environment – here one could compare aspects of the "back of house" environment directly with those of an office but then "front of house" in which employees and the public combined were certainly different.

As a program sponsor we were pleased to partner up with John Lewis Partnership. This enabled John Lewis to gain the benefit of the program and for us it was an opportunity to understand, first hand, the challenges that a major retailer faces enhancing its health and wellbeing practices. As a flooring product manufacturer it is enlightening to view how the process is embraced as this will assist us in providing better solutions, through our flooring products, for use throughout the retail sector.

These labs dovetail with our own internal programme "Committed to the Health of One" which represent a mindset shift from a more traditional approach that has been focussed on manufacturing and finished product impacts to a focus that is centred on providing a safe, hygienic, environment that offers wellbeing for all.

© Forbo

Studio **DS**

Studio DS
DIBA SALAM, PRINCIPAL & FOUNDER

Using technology to capture health & wellbeing during the creative process
The world's urban population is expected to increase to 66 per cent by 2050. Projections from the United Nations show that urbanisation combined with the overall growth of the world's population could add another 2.5 billion people to urban populations by 2050*.

Creative tools enable the industry to explore varying typologies through the use of virtual reality (VR) during the design stages. By harnessing modern technology, we can explore how best to meet the challenges of the future through interactive workshops and social media.

Studio DS established its core design philosophy based on creating efficient, adaptive and effective designs in response to increased global urbanisation. Achieving such results required analysis of how a traditional approach to design could be enhanced through adopting innovative 3D centric technology.

Our research in architecture and neuroscience has enabled us to explore and collate how we enhance customer experience using VR during the design process. We tested our coded methodology through our public realm and retail projects. Participation in the Retail Lab has allowed us to test our innovative approach to design against the health and wellbeing metrics established in the WorldGBC Framework. We know that:

1. Elements of design that are people-centred and promote wellbeing contribute to a positive user experience
2. Technology can help us better identify those elements of design, and how they impact building users
3. There is a great opportunity to use the data we gather to benefit not only our business and our clients, but also the wider industry

Today, traditional bricks and mortar retailers are investing increasingly in online services and online retailers are investing in key retail destinations, which promote their brand values and provide an opportunity to redefine customer experience. Look and feel of the physical environment is essential to the customer experience and has a large impact on their comfort value, as outlined in the WorldGBC Framework. The emerging world of virtual reality and social media gives us an opportunity to work with all stakeholders, understanding how our design aligns with the project brief and adapts to trends.

As part of the Retail Lab, we tested a number of different typologies in a virtual environment for new retail spaces, including our unique concept of a 'community mall', and assessed them in terms of the experiential aspects of the Framework. We started by simply asking people how they feel in a particular environment, in line with the Framework's recommendations. This process can be scaled up by addressing large numbers of people through traditional or modern means, such as social media, thus adding weight to our design decisions at minimal cost. All of this happens without anything physically being built, meaning it is a highly commercial and environmentally sound process.

We are beginning to significantly elevate and refine our understanding of places by introducing biometric testing to our virtual environments. This means we can objectively measure peoples' reactions to spaces and verify what they say. Again, this adds integrity to our design decisions; particularly where they might differ from a traditional design approach.

Technology has shown itself to be a powerful disruptive force in recent years and continues to challenge modern retail experiences. Our entrepreneurial approach will enable us to open our immersive process for designers, developers, tenants and local government, and strengthen how the industry responds in bettering communities.

*United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects 2014 and 2017 Update.

HOARE LEA

HOARE LEA
JAMES FORD, SUSTAINABILITY PARTNER

Health & wellbeing: the real retail therapy
When it comes to the retail industry, tapping into the desires of human beings is where true success lies: people gravitate to places and products that make them feel good.

Naturally then, this extends to the design, construction, and optimisation of retail-led developments: indeed, a health & wellbeing focus in the retail environment is the next step we can take to further enhance value. By reaching out to the innate (yet generally subconscious) needs and wants of people, we can create spaces that transcend the usual attractions of the retail offer.

Achieving such a lofty aim comes with its challenges, but – given the pressures and competing factions of the retail sector – arguably ambition on this scale is a necessity.

The potential of the public realm

People desire escape, relaxation, social interaction, and entertainment. By meeting these desires using the natural environment, true 'retail therapy' can be realised. Taking it one step further – could health and wellbeing actually be enhanced through the creation of passively conditioned public-realm spaces?

Conventional developments are often dominated by hard surfaces devoid of visible water and greenery. By comparison, integrating hydrological ('blue') and ecological ('green') systems into public-realm environments creates real connection with the natural world. Adopting this Blue Green design approach also presents a range of interesting commercial health & wellbeing propositions, such as:

- If the cooling effects of shading, evaporation, and evapotranspiration from Blue Green infrastructure (such as green roofs and walls, landscaping, and water features) can reduce public-realm temperatures by up to 10°C relative to their surroundings, do we need to mechanically-cool developments?
- If trees and landscaping can be designed to act as natural windbreaks to limit wind speeds and buffer airborne pollution, why not create open, permeable, and accessible public spaces?
- If green infrastructure can achieve a 30% reduction in airborne pollutants (maybe even more), could retail developments be air-quality positive?
- If vegetation can limit the intrusion of traffic noise and the unwanted build-up of noise generated within internal spaces, can it be used to create spaces that support conversation and reduce noise related stress?
- If green infrastructure can provide enhanced ecological and biodiversity value (plus reduce flood risks), is it more appropriate and valuable than below-ground attenuation measures?
- If biophilic design solutions can increase wellbeing, productivity, and creativity in a workplace, why shouldn't we incorporate it in order to increase the commercial success of retail operators?

Working on landmark developments such as Bristol's Cabot Circus, Victoria Gate Leeds, and – most recently – Westgate Oxford, has allowed us to continually evolve our progressive approach to valuable, functional, and natural public realm spaces. Looking forward we believe a retail development that addresses these questions is far more likely to succeed in such a challenging market.

Ultimately, people are drawn to spaces that promote the natural environment and, furthermore, spend more when they are there. A Blue Green approach presents the opportunity to go further than ever before and create retail-led developments that can achieve unprecedented levels of value.

Thought pieces

Finally, a couple of our Retail Lab participants had also participated in the Offices Lab. We asked them to reflect on the differences and commonalities between the two sectors, and on health and wellbeing more generally.

THE CROWN ESTATE
JANE WAKIWAKA, SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER

For both the UKGBC's Offices and Retail Labs, The Crown Estate was fortunate to collaborate with two of our highly engaged customers. As a landlord, we were interested in participating in these labs to better understand how the Frameworks could be used to support our customers' health, wellbeing and productivity needs. Our occupiers allowed us to use their demised space to trial aspects of the Framework on properties within our Central London and Regional portfolios.

Both experiences demonstrated a strong appetite from customers to understand, and where possible improve, their employees' health and wellbeing. In both labs, some of the opportunities identified did not involve workplace design changes, but rather 'softer' initiatives such as better communication. For example, driving greater awareness of the most effective use of certain spaces, such as duration of meetings and the spaces best suited to the type of meeting, was an easily applicable outcome.

The lab work also showed us how, as the landlord, we could also impact and influence employee health and wellbeing, whether through improvements to the base build landlord system in offices, or providing amenities outside of the occupier's demise.

There were also differences around how elements of the Framework could be applied. For example, undertaking physical measurements (such as indoor air quality), or occupier satisfaction surveys at scale, were much easier to do within an office setting. However, with the use of semi-structured interviews in the Retail Lab, we were able to extract valuable insights and detailed accounts from the interviewees as part of the employee journey mapping exercise.

We also found deviation away from the environmental metrics identified within the Framework for the Retail Lab. As outlined in our case study with Marks and Spencer and BuroHappold, we discovered a clear prioritisation of certain issues over others. Identifying these priorities has enabled us to focus and collaborate on key areas, such as the journey to work, that may have a greater impact than other areas.

Our participation in these labs has reinforced that health and wellbeing is not defined by boundaries. We have found that adopting a collaborative approach with our customers is key to creating brilliant places that enable our customers and their employees to flourish.

CARBON CREDENTIALS
SAM CARSON, DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABILITY INNOVATION

Many wellbeing projects are being initiated by sustainability leaders in organisations. Sustainability leaders have become well trained in making sure programmes have clear return on investment and are likely using the language of ROI to discuss wellbeing. It is quite possible this focus is misplaced – for many business leaders the business case is already made, but what is missing are examples of wellbeing leadership in buildings, and evidence of what successful projects look like.

Unlike sustainability, business leaders are more likely to have an appreciation of the benefits of health and wellbeing on employee performance. They may have already invested in gym memberships and other fitness, health or wellbeing programmes as staff benefits. They may use fitness and healthy living themselves to manage stress or improve their own workplace performance. So, much of the general business case, which we have spent so much time working on in sustainability has already been made and accepted.

That doesn't mean that it will be easy to establish wellbeing projects, because the projects are all still risky. The vital missing ingredient will often be the 'vision', or a clear description of what a project looks like, with a sound assessment of risks and clear success criteria. Business leaders may be looking for wellbeing projects, but rarely agree to any kind of project without a clear understanding of risks, process and outcomes.

Case studies of wellbeing projects relating to the physical space in buildings are still rare. At a recent workshop, Carbon Credentials asked attendees why more wellbeing projects were not being initiated. Apart from budget, 39% of those surveyed said that unclear project definition or lack of case studies were the most significant barriers. This lack of examples makes it difficult to convey process and outcomes, to de-risk proposed projects. As a result, business leaders can find it difficult to agree to projects.

To reduce risk, your pilot needs to start with a Minimum Viable Product (MVP), even if it makes the overall project longer or less cost-effective overall. It needs to be clearly articulated, with approaches to managing risks set out transparently. Remember that an MVP can have parts that fail; transparency builds trust so long as you can demonstrate learning. This gives the opportunity to build on something that has worked, rather than attempting to start a full programme from scratch.

The business benefits of wellbeing can often be implied, at least at the pilot stage. We can talk about what we are seeking to learn and what a successful project will look like. However, like step counters or gym memberships, people will implicitly understand that a healthier lifestyle is worth investing in. The trick is to be clear about what the project is, so that they can invest in the vision and help achieve its outcomes. In time, return on investment and productivity improvement will be measurable and understood, but right now you need to get your pilot project agreed.

Thanks

With thanks to Retail Lab participants:

BUROHAPPOLD ENGINEERING	Duncan Price Trevor Keeling Giulia Escher Jamie Anderson
Carbon Credentials	Sam Carson Natasha Allard Steve Dagg
CETEC Professional Scientific Solutions	Paul Ajiboye
ELLANDI	Jonathan Robson
EVORA	Paul Sutcliffe
forbo FLOORING SYSTEMS	Mark Bauer Louise Serjeant
Haskoll Architects and Designers	Maria Newstrom Justin Richards David Leech
HOARE LEA (H.)	Ashley Bateson James Ford Darren Woolf
JLL	Connor McCauley Corin Wates

John Lewis Partnership	Phil Birch Robin Palmer
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LIVERPOOL ONE	Chris Grundy Karen Palmer Liz Edwards
M&S EST. 1884	Zoe Young
northern	Gareth Williams Kyle Macneill Ann McHaffie
Studio DS	Diba Salam James Kasprowiak
THE CROWN ESTATE	Jane Wakiwaka
workman	Vicky Cotton Nick Hobbs Sasha Armstrong Robin Howland

With special thanks to our delivery partner:

Richard Francis, Monomoy

MONOMOY

And **David Johnston**, Partner, RPC

Download the report at **ukgbc.org/Wellbeing-Lab-Retail**

#WellbeingForRetail

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