Why Do Some Corporate Real Estate Departments Embrace Innovation More Than Others?

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Before we answer this question we must explore the concept of innovation a little further. The dictionary defines innovation as a new idea, device, or method; the act or process of introducing new ideas, devices, or methods.

In its simplest form, innovation is a New Idea!

The question then becomes, "why do some corporate real estate departments embrace new ideas more than others?"

It's important to note that in today's context, innovation is often associated with technology.

So, in essence, the final question is actually "why do some corporate real estate departments embrace **new ideas influenced by technology** more than others?"

After discussion and debate with a number of corporate and facility professionals on this topic over the years, the following observations have been offered:

1) Real estate departments are influenced by the overall culture of the company. A technology company is more inclined to be comfortable with technology and the associated risks; therefore the real estate department will follow suit faster than in non-tech companies.

2) Information technology and real estate operations are two distinct and complex professions, and it is unusual to possess skills in both areas.

3) Real estate departments and the associated processes are typically not high on the priority list of IT departments.

4) Changes in technology happen so fast, presenting challenges even for seasoned IT professionals, and can be daunting for a real estate professional.

5) Technology is flattening processes and therefore challenges the traditional compartmentalization of different departments dealing with corporate real estate and facilities.

6) Change is hard even in small increments and the transformation of real estate processes using technology is a major undertaking requiring large scale changes both within physical systems and in mindset.

There is no doubt that the methodologies of corporate real estate and facilities are ripe for change. There are hundreds of processes that involve the collection, organization, analysis and redistribution of data involving real estate operations. From managing fire extinguishers to understanding space utilization, technology can play a role in the process reengineering.

So the question remains, "why are some organizations more willing to use technology to transform their business operations which will result in lower energy costs, lower operating costs and more engaging facilities?"

What we have found to be the most common attribute of the most innovative corporate real estate organizations is **one person** who has a vision, is willing to take big risks, has the authority (budget) and has the communication and organizational skills to effectively engage their teams. This is a person who fundamentally knows there are new ideas, better ways to organize all the data and processes involved with complex corporate real estate portfolios, and is willing in some cases to risk it all. These people are technically known as early adopters. They pave the way for new ideas and concepts.

Change is not easy, especially change on such a large scale. However, every businessperson knows that companies cannot survive or thrive without it. So the question becomes, "how can we get our corporate real estate organization to be more open to change which is influenced and enabled by technology and automation?"

Coming together with some of the most innovative corporate and facility professionals in the world, this is the number one question Realcomm will be asking at [CoRE Tech 2014](), to be held at the Sprint headquarters in Overland Park, November 10th and 11th. Stay tuned as we continue the conversation.

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