



Building a better  
working world

# Smart buildings

## Smart buildings and occupant experience

In one way or another, everyone is a consumer of real estate. Equally true, however, is that everyone uses real estate differently. This is true regardless of the real estate sector in which you operate. Regardless of the venue or the purpose, all real estate occupants can benefit from ownership's understanding of their needs and comfort to create building systems to support both.

In commercial real estate, environmental controls were once largely categorized under the heading of "green buildings." Today, that conversation has advanced to encompass not only energy efficiency and the building envelope, but also all of the factors that contribute to health and wellness, downtime and, ultimately, productivity.

Most commercial real estate is populated by captive personnel as well as visitors. Whether there by choice or expectation, a smart building strategy is one of the foundations of a loyal population.

EY pointed out the following in its "Spotlight on the CCO: employees' loyalty – performance or risk driver?" white paper: "As an employer, you need to understand why your employees are emotionally connected to your business – and it's generally much more than salaries, training or benefits. Research shows that emotionally connected employees are the best employees because they are engaged and productive, and they feel validated and appreciated."



View **Spotlight on the CCO** paper

An essential part of that engagement is the way building systems support the task at hand. For an office worker, it could be dedicated heads-down work or open, collaborative meetings. For a retail mall owner, it could be the comfort of shoppers and the promotion of its tenants. The hospitality and health care markets are particularly dependent on the seamless delivery of building services. Whatever the real estate sector, the goal is loyalty – the expectation of a certain degree of satisfying performance.

The seamlessness of a well-executed smart building is a kind of paradox. It works best when unnoticed. Typically, building systems draw attention only if something breaks down. But a well-planned, carefully executed building strategy can provide comfort, appreciation and loyalty.

Technology certainly is making that easier today than ever, especially in the advancement of such concepts as the Internet of Things, which to a great degree can personalize and democratize controls of one's environment to the point of automatically adjusting lights or heating, ventilation and air conditioning to a user's preference. Such advancements, combined with thoughtful analytical parameters, are where the opportunity exists to lead in the marketplace.

But, as always, the conversation cannot stop at technology. In the midst of the ever-changing advancements and capabilities of systems and devices, the overriding message concerns understanding the needs of the specific sector. Despite differences in sector and personal need, that understanding is the unifying driver of a smart building strategy.

**Next in the EY focus series on smart buildings: part IV: Driving operational efficiencies.**

**To access EY's complete seven-part focus series on Smart Buildings, please [click here](#).**

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