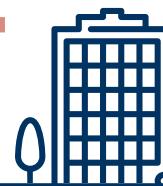




WELL Certification: The Next Frontier



CREATING AN OFFICE ENVIRONMENT THAT ATTRACTS TOP TALENT AND FOSTERS INNOVATION INVOLVES MORE THAN IMPLEMENTING THE LATEST TRENDS IN DESIGN

When GoPro hired Cushman & Wakefield to develop the first-ever sustainability program at its San Mateo campus, the focus was on much more than saving energy. A primary motivator was to create a workplace that embodies GoPro's culture while enhancing the health and well-being of all employees.

For GoPro, along with a growing number of our clients, the work environment is much more than a place to plug in a laptop for the day; it represents a key differentiator in the ongoing competition for talent. Nowhere is the talent war more pronounced perhaps than in GoPro's backyard of Silicon Valley, the heart of technology and innovation.

Beyond the tech sector and extending across the United States, millennials now account for more than half of the workforce.

This growing demographic is increasingly drawn to organizations that create workplaces that reflect their values.

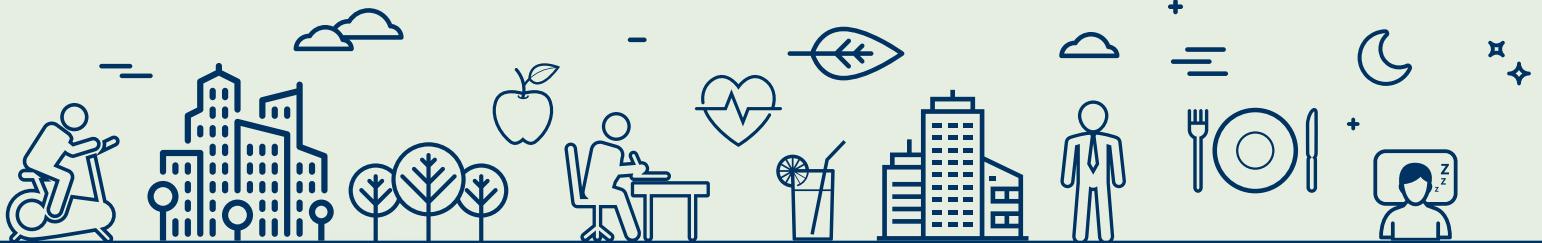
As Alex Spilger, Senior Vice President and Cushman & Wakefield's first WELL AP, notes, "Creating an office environment that attracts top talent and fosters innovation involves more than implementing the latest trends in design. Increasingly, companies are recognizing that the most effective workplace is one which puts sustainability, and in particular, the health and wellbeing of their employees at the forefront."

Until recently, guidelines and benchmarks for wellness strategies did not exist, leaving companies such as GoPro to chart their own path without the benefit of a third-party, industry driven rating system.

From Protecting the Environment to Enhancing Human Health

While LEED Certification set the benchmark for developing environmentally friendly buildings and responsibly sourcing materials, more companies are now directing their efforts toward the human-side of sustainability. The relatively new WELL Building Standard was born from the demand for an independent rating system that focuses exclusively on the health and wellbeing of occupants.

The WELL Building Standard is administered by the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI), a public benefit corporation formed in 2013. The standard takes into account seven categories called 'Concepts': air, water, nutrition, light, fitness, comfort and mind - all of which are based on medical research concerning how environments affect human health.



Unlike LEED, WELL extends beyond the realm of buildings; it incorporates elements such as:



Minimum paid family leave



Policies around healthier sleep patterns (i.e. limiting red-eye flights)



Access to fitness monitoring devices



Stocking healthier food options – limiting sugars and banning all artificial ingredients



Providing adjustable height workstations



Incorporating biophilia, a sustainable design strategy that aims to reconnect people with the natural environment.

Within the seven ‘Concepts’ of WELL are over 100 wellness ‘Features’, each designed to improve the overall health, mood, sleep and performance of a building’s occupants.

Healthier = More Productive

In addition to attracting top talent, studies have shown that these healthier, WELL Certified workplaces lead to more productive and better performing employees. With health care costs on the rise, companies are facing higher insurance costs while individuals are required to cover higher deductibles and co-payments. Small changes to increase everyday wellness can significantly reduce sick time, increase employee satisfaction and have a big impact on a company’s bottom line. WELL Certification may ultimately lead to lower insurance premiums for companies, providing quantifiable returns on investment.

Allison Kim, Northwest Sustainability Lead at Cushman & Wakefield explains, “The interest in wellness in the workplace has been around for quite some time. WELL Certification provides the industry with a comprehensive and well-organized framework for evaluating all aspects of wellness within the built environment – mental, emotional and physical.”

This is Just the Beginning

While the wellness movement has gained international attention within the building industry, the WELL Building Standard is still in its infancy and the number of projects that have achieved WELL Certification is relatively small. Several of Cushman & Wakefield’s more forward-thinking clients are at various stages of the WELL Certification process – led in part by our growing sustainability team. Internally, Cushman & Wakefield is also evaluating WELL Certification for several of our own offices.

The wellness movement has made big strides in the short time since Cushman & Wakefield developed GoPro’s sustainability platform. Most recently, Cushman & Wakefield is proud to be managing both the LEED and WELL Certification process for a confidential technology client in Silicon Valley in hopes of achieving one of first dual-certified projects in the world. Wellness strategies in the space include providing operable windows throughout, encouraging healthier food options such as fruits and vegetables in their cafeteria, providing treadmill desks, offering a fully-equipped bike repair station, building out a state of the art fitness facility onsite and providing access to nature via a vegetated roof.

“While technology firms may be leading the charge with WELL Certification,” notes Spilger, “more and more of our clients across the globe are recognizing the value of investing in the health and wellbeing of their workforce. There may be upfront costs involved, but the long-term benefits to both the individual and the company can far out weigh the initial investment.”

Now that WELL Certification has provided a third party benchmark for the industry to leverage, the time is ripe for the commercial real estate sector to play a leading role in the growing health and wellness movement.



Evaluating WELL Certification for our future offices demonstrates that we aim to ‘walk our talk’ with respect to sustainability and provides Cushman & Wakefield an opportunity to align with our client’s values while taking a leading role in the wellness movement.

- Eric Duchon, Director of Sustainability



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