

CONTRACTOR



Meld Strategies' Bruce Duyshart

TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGY

Symbiosis is the Buzzword

On a hot summer's day in February, a group of the world's leading thinkers descended on Sydney for the annual WORKTECH conference to discuss emerging workplace technology and trends. Kylie Field reports.

Gathering together to discuss smart buildings with integrated technology and flexible work practices, it became clear that today's workforce is different to that of 10 years ago, and in some industries, even five years ago.

For instance, words like "slashie" are now used to describe an individual's portfolio of experiences and skills rather than labeling them a regular, "common" job title, many perceived as old fashioned. Meanwhile, smart buildings with integrated technology and flexible work practices are the norm and white collar and blue collar are defunct definitions as no collar takes over.

Bruce Duyshart a keynote speaker at WORKTECH and director of Meld, which specialises in building technology, spoke to

Contractor about the new trends in building design and how words like "symbiosis" help people understand how a smart building operates. He also discussed how having abundant technology affects the way we live and work.

"Symbiosis is about putting yourself in the shoes of the tenant when you design a building and we find that word resonates with

people. Traditionally, these two worlds have been separate to each other but the new message is rather than think we'll design things the usual way, we now design to the requirements of the tenant," he said.

Duyshart added that there has been a fundamental shift towards bringing various buildings systems under one common IP network, a.k.a. a building automation systems network.

"Traditionally, building services have operated each with their own system's cabling, which makes it difficult to have these systems interact with one another. It is [now] common to have a network switch on the floor and whatever building services you have on that floor can use that switch to communicate with the traditional systems that may be at the bottom of the building. It's secure and creates what are called virtual networks," Duyshart explained.

"It enables people to have the knowledge that their system can communicate effectively. It saves space and improves coordination. If extra capacity like a camera sensor is required, it's very easy to add that to the floor without adding to the infrastructure."

Duyshart suggested that aside from the physical aspect of it, there is also the aspect of collecting data and being able to service that information to a wider range of stakeholders than just the traditional building managers.

"There are a lot of people who want to understand how that building works, not just engineers. For example I might be a tenant in the building and I want to know how we are going on consumption, power, water etc," Duyshart said.

As the move towards smart buildings becomes the norm in the same way sustainability has underpinned construction and work practices over the past 10 years with Green Star ratings, Duyshart believes Australia is tracking pretty well when it comes to innovation.

"We want to reach a similar level to Green Star with smart buildings. People are willing to try new things but there is an innate conservatism in the construction industry because it's a very risk-focused industry," Duyshart said.

"It's an industry that says unless you can prove it to me I am not willing to go there. But if you look at the innovators, the early beginners there is a sizeable chunk that go down the path."

Duyshart believes when there is a downturn cycle, people start to look towards innovation and ask: "Well, how can we do things more innovatively?"

"People think harder about what they can achieve and the more enlightened companies realise it's a journey. This is not a one shot thing," he concluded.