

Why did Savills buy workplace consultancy KKS?



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COMMENT: In recent years the office market has evolved significantly, and as a result we have seen a fundamental shift in terms of what occupiers now expect from their work space. It is impossible to ignore the changes affecting workplace design today, as technology continues to mobilise the workforce and employers increasingly understand the impact that workplaces have on our physical and mental health. The key is to balance business objectives with a workspace design that will attract – and retain – talented individuals and enable them to function at their highest level.

Having recently undertaken our latest What Workers Want survey, we know that up to 39% of employees across the UK state their workplace has a direct impact on both their health and well-being, as well as their productivity. What's more, the relationship between work and home are becoming increasingly blurred, and the real estate industry needs to better understand and accommodate this.

A better experience

Consequently, Savills' recent acquisition of KKS, the London-based workplace consultancy and design studio, will do just that. Acting as the glue that bonds our occupier services, landlord leasing, mixed-use development and building and project consultancy teams together, it will offer an all-encompassing solution focused on creating a better occupier experience and enhancing productivity.

By developing this entirely new service line, which combines advisory, transactional, project management and strategic intelligence, Savills will provide its clients with an interior architectural solution that challenges this evolution of workplace reality. Through collaboration we will essentially put occupier experience firmly at the heart of our real estate strategy and services for both occupiers and landlords.

Already strongly aligned, both Savills and KKS share a number of key clients across several disciplines which will benefit from our ability to offer a comprehensive end-to-end service. We know from working closely with both occupiers and landlords that rents and square footage are no longer enough to secure an instruction. Instead there needs to be a breadth of understanding around market trends, place-making and the social value of your offer. Our plan, therefore, is to help to redefine the workplace on that basis. The traditional focus on reducing cost is rapidly being displaced by a more human and personal focus inspiring passion, loyalty and improved productivity.

Maximising client value

KKS's focus is on the best interests of the occupier, their business and work space efficiency, and the goal is always client value. With developers, the firm works to ensure buildings function as productive assets, and for occupiers they create spaces that function as efficient business tools which express brand and business messages. Taking into consideration wider aspects of the occupier requirements – including occupational densities, optimal floorplates, core configuration, entry and arrival sequences and effective M&E integration – this kind of attention to detail can help the agency teams sell a very specific vision, while giving project management a comprehensive brief to oversee. From a development perspective, this will help to shape the design of future schemes, building in these core principles from the outset.

The opportunity to collaborate, and provide a fully integrated offer that will have a positive impact across nearly all divisions, is enhanced by the connection with Savills' global business. We have teams of renowned workplace strategists working across the continent, and having KKS on board will now allow us to join up the dots and create a global centre of excellence.

As a recognised and best in class leader in development and occupier strategy and interior architecture design, KKS is very well placed to help us challenge the current workplace norms, and ultimately create a new way of working that enables us to build better performing communities for our occupiers. KKS will retain its brand as part of the Savills Group, remaining in its current studio location.

Liberating potential and maximising performance – KKS Savills will do just that.

Simon Collett is head of professional services, building and project consultancy at Savills