

## This is Your Workplace Forum

### What makes DEGW Workplace Forum special

By John Worthington, DEGW Co-founder



'Founded almost 20 years ago, Workplace Forum is still a pioneer in the field of construction and real estate. It recognises the power of Knowledge and the value of learning from DEGW's own past experience and that of others and the formula is simple and elegant.

It is a supportive club where workplace users meet face to face in a trusting environment to share problems and successes and access a global network of experience. The subscription membership is small, no more than 30 companies, of which no more than 30% are invited suppliers of services or products.

During the first 10 years Workplace Forum thrived on meeting. Four one-day events a year each featuring presentations, discussion and a case study visit with a two-day annual study tour, to as far away as the West Coast of America or as close as The Netherlands. Meetings were themed with special research topics selected by the members and the outcomes of multi client studies, such as The Responsible Workplace and The Intelligent Building (1) undertaken by DEGW.

In fact, the whole spirit of Workplace Forum was that the agenda was owned by the members, with DEGW bringing its international experience and contacts to provide content and facilitate events.

The result was an archive of proceedings that reflects the most innovative thinking of the time and provided pointers for what, today, has become main stream thinking. Early themes, for example, explored the opportunity of outsourcing the provision and management of accommodation, and

the impact of converging information and communication technologies on the way we organise work.

Today, in our Knowledge economy, the need to be alert to new ways of working has never been greater. The themes have shifted and, with the same technologies of production available to all, timely innovation coupled with speedy creative process is where real value is added.

Learning, working and leisure environments are merging and a variety of settings within the city have become the office. The web is providing free accessibility to case study material globally, and forums and communities of practice are now emerging for ever more specialised interests.

Workplace Forum is today addressing issues of workplace management, the use of time and space and the planning and design of place to support sustainability in the new economy.

Yes, it takes its place alongside university further education executive programmes, professional groups and cross disciplinary interest groups such as the British Council of Offices (BCO) but Workplace Forum remains unique.

What makes Workplace Forum so special is:

- Its focus on end user companies with its discrete and selective membership policy.
- Its shifting focus of interest as the world of work evolves and members' concerns change.
- Its international outlook through DEGW's global network of clients and offices.

- Its ability, learning from members, of using new ways of presenting and disseminating experience and knowledge.

The DEGW Workplace Forum remains open in inviting the leaders in their field to present and in visiting projects which provide markers for future practice. Today, it is not only an information source but a place for networking knowledge and drawing on insights of experience.

Quite simply, the primary goal of Workplace Forum is to identify workplace issues as they appear on the horizon and to seek the most innovative solutions directed by its members and facilitated by the international resources and contacts of DEGW.

## **John Worthington**

*Past Chair DEGW Workplace Forum  
Co-founder DEGW  
Graham Willis Professorship University of Sheffield  
Professorial Fellow the University of Melbourne*