

Workplace visions at One Canada Square

Innovation and technology electrified
Worktech 2014 in London

By **DAVID STRYDOM**

The two-day Worktech exhibition and conference organised by Unwired was held at the Level39 Technology Accelerator, based on the 39th level of One Canada Square in Canary Wharf, London. Highlights included a welcome presentation from Kit Malthouse, deputy mayor of London, who spoke about the future of the city, and debates about financial real estate.

The first day saw a thorough investigation of subjects around people and change and wellness, designing for collaboration, collaboration technologies and the future of work. Topics covered included 'Wellbeing at work – standing up for health in the office' by Gavin Bradley of Get Britain Standing and 'Delivering the vision of an integrated workplace' by Ian Adams, head of marketing strategy development for FM at Mitie.

The second day was opened by the deputy mayor who painted a picture of how London will look in future, and noted the city is due to run out of landfill space in 2018. He also outlined the importance of London's infrastructure, taking into account transport such as the Northern Line extension, buses, bikes, broadband and a



creaking power grid.

"Too many businesses (in London) are caught between what they need and what they can afford," Malthouse said. "Office space is changing – filing cabinets used to be stocked with confidential papers but now my laptop is my business. In addition, there has been a blossoming of shared spaces; indeed, hot-desking is particularly a model of new industries."

Also on day two was a future financial real estate panel debate that focused on changes predicted to take place in the financial workplace. The question 'Will regulation, compliance and risk constrain banks in their ability to be innovative and creative?' appeared to be answered by the prediction that walls will be built, emphasising separation and control.

It was also predicted that there would be property-free expansion, in which banks will expand their service offering and product portfolios without a proportionate increase in real estate. And, it was suggested, banks will look to utilise a combination of traditional financial CBDs and mixed use, vibrant, connected urban environments.

With respect to attracting talent, it was said that banks will compete with technology and media firms, requiring a more innovative approach to the workplace. There will no longer be a monopoly on top talent with young people being drawn to vibrant cities. In addition, it was noted that banks will start to reinvest in their workplace and there would be widespread provision of agile working. ■

IN BRIEF

Tokyo-based data centre company KVH is alleged to be the focus of a planned £102.7m takeover by Telecoms group **Colt**. The company hopes a takeover would help it flourish in Asian cities across the region. KVH and Colt are owned by Fidelity Investments, and have complementary businesses with similar technology.

G4S saw its share price drop after a hoax press release claimed the outsourcer had overstated profit by nearly £400m and that it had fired its chief finance officer, Himanshu Raja. The bogus release contained a link to a fake website that mirrored the real one. After G4S clarified the website and release were fraudulent, its share price recovered to finish up by more than 2%.



One World Trade Center, a 1,776ft tower built on the site of the Twin Towers in New York, was the focus of world attention when firefighters had to rescue two window cleaners whose scaffolding malfunctioned, leaving them dangling 50 storeys above ground. The workers were rescued after a hole was cut through one of the glass windows.

Babcock International has seen its half-yearly pre-tax profits rise by 32% to £187m. It also