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WEBINAR SERIES  
DESIGNING FOR A NEW  
WORLD - POST COVID-19

COMMSCOPE  
presents

DESIGNING  
AND BUILDING  
SMART OFFICE  
CAMPUSES

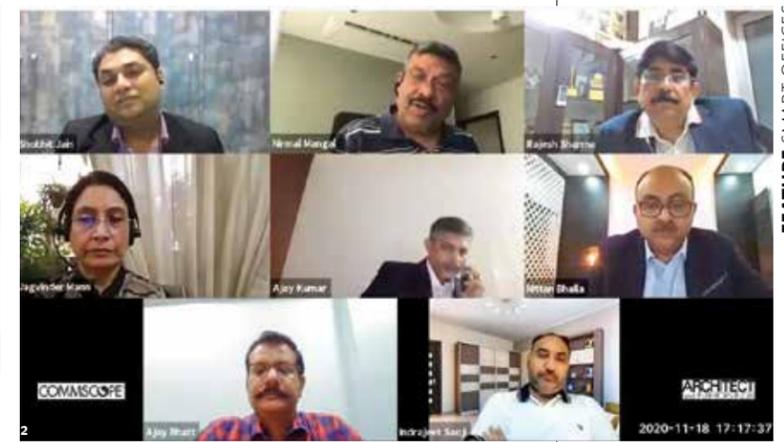
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# SMART CHOICE

THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY CAN BE HARNESSSED TO DESIGN AND BUILD OFFICES OF THE FUTURE

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO



progressed to applications and more. Today, high-tech integrated systems have changed the definition of smart offices. Ajay Bhatt, VP & head administration, Godrej Industries, explains, "The definition of smart offices depends on the organisation. The nomadic work approach in today's world means working smarter and achieving better productivity. Intelligent climate controls, voice controls, Internet of Things and sensors that can automatically adjust temperature, and artificial intelligence systems that can power down HVAC systems, have brought many benefits to the table. Better communication and collaboration, improved productivity and analytical insights are some of the benefits of the smart office."

### THE RIGHT CONNECTION

The modern office has changed and is all about an open environment. There are no longer cubicle modules. Commscope has identified three important changes in the new office as flexible seating where employees can work from any place. Collaborative centres, where people exchange ideas and come up with solutions, and open spaces are the other trends. Shobhit Jain, regional technical manager, CommScope, explains, "A flat design where there is a lot of connection is being seen. And in the background is a robust network and connectivity is required everywhere. Similarly, WiFi6 and 5G, power over ethernet and the like will become commonplace. Analytics will play an important role as they help in making decisions. Applications will converge on ethernet platforms and IT managers can coordinate with a single vendor to integrate solutions like security cameras, smart lighting and high-speed networks."

Cabling systems of category 6A have shown promise as far as handling this is concerned. Likewise, WiFi systems that can handle huge loads are able to handle even 10 gigabits of load per second.

### EVOLVING WORKSPACES

Adoption of smart offices is on the rise and, over the last two decades, there has been a paradigm shift in the way offices work. Nittan Bhalla, GM and head facilities, Wipro Digital, explains, "Today, centre of excellence units are also about employee experience alongside customer satisfaction. Technologies that steer collaboration and intensive brainstorming mean offices need resilient spaces and work cafés that deliver better results for a project."

Bhatt avers, "The COVID era has made us introspect on how we can make our offices smarter and create a system where people can come back to work in a safe manner."



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1. Office designs will need to take into consideration social distancing norms and use open layouts, going forward.

2. The panel discussion highlighted trends in modern workplace design.

3. Ajay Bhatt, VP & head administration, Godrej Industries.

4. Shobhit Jain, regional technical manager, CommScope.

5. Nittan Bhalla, GM and head facilities, Wipro Digital.

**H**eld on October 18, 2020, the eighth episode of Architect and Interiors India's webinar series on Designing for a New World – Post COVID-19 was about designing and building smart office campuses. Presented by CommScope India, it saw industry experts talk about the evolution of workplace design in the country and what designing and building today's smart offices entails.

### THE SPECIFICS

Smart offices started with laptops and the Internet and



**DATA ANALYTICS**

With so much data and information on hand, data is going to be the key driver for organisations to move ahead. Jagvinder Pinni, senior portfolio manager & facilities, Microsoft, opines, "It is important to analyse what is relevant and how we utilise the data from an office construction and people connect space. In the initial stages of research, people in India and China are saying that people are willing to come back to work from an office at least thrice a week. What will impact our future office space is something that needs to be seen."

Nirmal Mangal, India director - architecture, M Moser, adds, "We rely heavily on research and while people worked

from home, there were infrastructural challenges. Looking ahead, I think both business and employees want to get back to how things were before. There will be a segment of the population that will continue to work from home. Connectivity issues will remain and there will be a greater disparity between headcount and seat count and technology-enabled solutions will help map this."

Optimal utilisation of office space through analysis of data and insights will be the way offices work in future.

**THE THREE CS**

'Connectivity, Communication and Collaboration' explains the relationship between smart office technology/



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6. Data is going to be the key driver for organisations to move ahead.

7. Jagvinder Pinni, senior portfolio manager & facilities, Microsoft.

8. Nirmal Mangal, India director - architecture, M Moser.

9. Ajay Kumar D, executive director & head national operations, CBRE.

10. Intelligent controls and applications to manage HVAC, lighting, etc. will be regular features in the modern meeting room.



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IoT and productivity. Ajay Kumar D, executive director & head national operations, CBRE, explains, "Technology can offer you unprecedented work opportunities. Simply speaking, without technology, how could we all work from home? Technology was a disruptor even when the Internet was introduced. The last 6-8 months have seen advancements in technology that has given us an opportunity to change our ways of work and analyse multiple ways of doing the same work. Even managing projects remotely has been possible because of technology. For instance, we had to use touchless technology on our site that increased productivity."

Likewise, using technology effectively is as important to ensure that productivity is maintained.



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**TECHNOLOGY TAKE**

We are witnessing the integration of technology in designs to help employees work smarter, faster and better. Technology can also assist in prioritising employee safety, health and well-being. Wipro has developed a platform that gives access to people who must work from the office. Bhalla says, "We have ensured a touch-free environment end-to-end and even keyboards are sanitised periodically. Safety and security have become paramount and, through technology, we ensure there is enough gap between two batches, so workspace and common areas are sanitised. We have created zones and ensure no two groups interact with each other."

Offices today must have the ability to transform as changes in the way people work have become a reality. Hence, even from a construction point of view, it has become important to understand fundamentals like cable locations and how the office is layered and laid without disrupting the office space. Capt. Rajesh Sharma, MD, IFM and Asset Services, Cushman & Wakefield, concludes, "If you want to be in business tomorrow, do not use the technologies you use today if you want to be relevant in the long term."

It is important to relook at office spaces in light of the pandemic to remain relevant and smart. **AS**



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11. Sanitisation is going to be mandatory even at the work desk.

12. Technology is enabling communication and collaboration, especially in remote working scenarios.

13. Capt. Rajesh Sharma, MD, IFM and Asset Services, Cushman & Wakefield.