

## Case Study, Working towards Dynamic Working.

Estates & Capital Development (ECD) are a little different to other Professional Service departments in that we cover a wide range of disciplines with a wide range of skill sets from grade 1 right up to Director level in the following areas.

- Cleaning, Porters, Post Room
- Maintenance
- Capital Development Projects
- Space Management
- Environment

We also have our own H&S Manager due to the nature of the work we carry out.

Within each of these areas there is a mix of on campus and hybrid workers.

It was obvious that some of our team needed to be based on campus all the time as it is not possible to carry out their work remotely for example the Cleaning or Maintenance Team. We then started to think about other members of the team and how they needed to work based on their roles and customer expectations. Early on during the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown for COVID we introduced a weekly Teams meeting for all of Estates to attend to share activities, challenges and just generally catch up. This has worked very well and has kept everyone informed.

The Senior Management team had various discussions about what would work best for them and who really needed to be on site to do their job and who could carry out their roles remotely. We concluded that whilst many of the Managers could carry out their jobs efficiently from home there was a degree of losing touch with what was happening on campus and in some cases a risk. We also recognised that while the team on campus were able to carry out their roles unsupervised and we trusted them to do this there may be the need to step in if an incident like loss of power happened and decisions needed to be made at a senior level. There was also an element of inequality and feeling they did not have the flexibility of more desk-based staff. We needed to ensure they remained part of the team and not create an “us and them” environment.

Having considered the above, we decided that there should be at least one Senior Manager on site where possible. We put together a rota, we also included in the rota a day when all Senior Managers were on site on the same day as we recognised the value add of connecting with each other. The rota is a live document and Senior Managers are free to move their days around based on the activity they are carrying out.

One caveat to the rota however is that there are certain times of the year such as Graduation, Exams etc, whereby there may need an increased presence on site to ensure they ran smoothly.

We then looked at the next level(s) down in terms of Managers and Admin staff. For example, the 2 Business Support Officers could carry out their roles by being 100% away from the office as most of their work is PC based. However, we recognised that they also needed to be part



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of the team and they needed information from others in ECD, so we suggested at least 1 day a week in the office. In terms of tasks and duties some of the managers such as the Project Managers are supervising physical works on site so again, they should be on site at least some of the time to ensure things go smoothly. We also wanted to consider well-being, there is a risk that if someone is working from home all the time, they become disengaged and could encounter mental health issues as for many the social interaction in the workplace is important.

We have not been prescriptive in terms of who works on site and when except where it is clear they need to be based on site all the time. However, there have been occasions where we have requested for example a PM be on site for a particularly challenging project. This has worked well so far.

We are still “experimenting” with different approaches and modifying as we go, for example everyone is expected to be on site at least twice a week. The Senior Managers are also ensuring that for 2 hours every Thursday they gather around a collaborative table on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor where they can share, discuss, and stay connected. This is in its infancy and is due to continue until the end of November, but early indications suggest this is useful.

From my perspective this is a journey, and we are not at the end of it. There are working well such as the weekly catch up meetings but there are other things we still need to iron out. For example, so many meetings happen on Teams now it is easy to assume that’s the case and recently I missed a face-to-face meeting because I was expecting to join remotely. I think that its important to try different approaches, learn from them, if they work carry on if they don’t stop them or change them.

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