

Building the Ultimate Tech Stack for Flexible Office Environments

HUMAN EXPERIENCE FIRST,
TECHNOLOGY SECOND

essensys
we power ambition



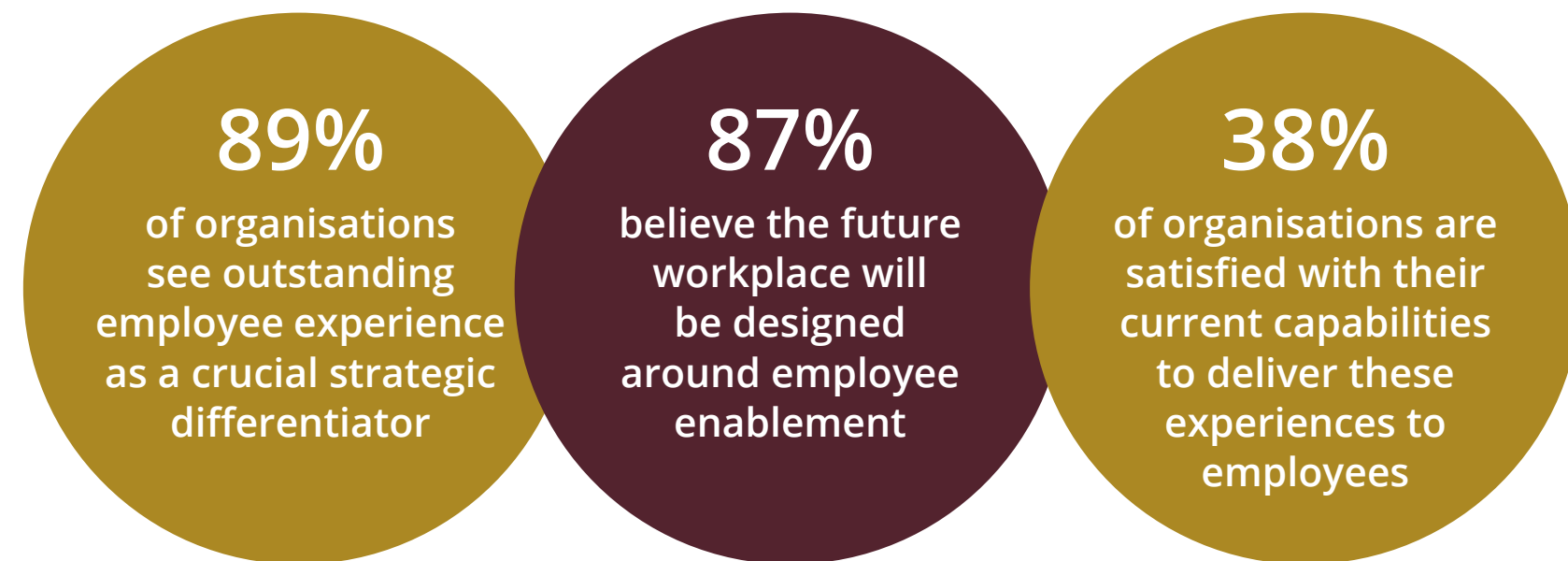
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Executive Summary: Human Experience First, Technology Second

The events of 2020 have thrust the long-term role of flex into the spotlight. Understandably, workplace occupancy rates have dropped, but the dip is temporary ([4 Reasons the Office is Not Dead](#)). What isn't temporary is people's shifting perception of what an office should provide, and it's because of this, the future for landlords and operators is brimming with opportunity.

Research from global tech services company NTT ([2020 Intelligent Workplace Report](#)) highlights the opportunity;



That identifies a considerable gap between what companies want from their workplaces versus what they're currently getting.

Bridging this gap is difficult; in a traditional office environment, it involves large CapEx outlays for new space, considerable time spent getting space 'move-in' ready, and forces staff to focus on non-core activities such as fitting out space.

IN STEPS FLEX

Flex not only bridges the gap for occupiers but does it in a way that eradicates the challenges listed above. To do this successfully, it's vital the flex offering is wrapped around a space that's equipped with the technology occupiers need to deliver outstanding experiences for their employees. [Technology here is not the goal; delivering exceptional employee experiences is.](#) It's through this lens of experience that technology should be considered.

As a [landlord](#) or [operator](#) with the goal of delivering outstanding occupier experiences, where do you begin when it comes to equipping your space with the necessary software and technology?

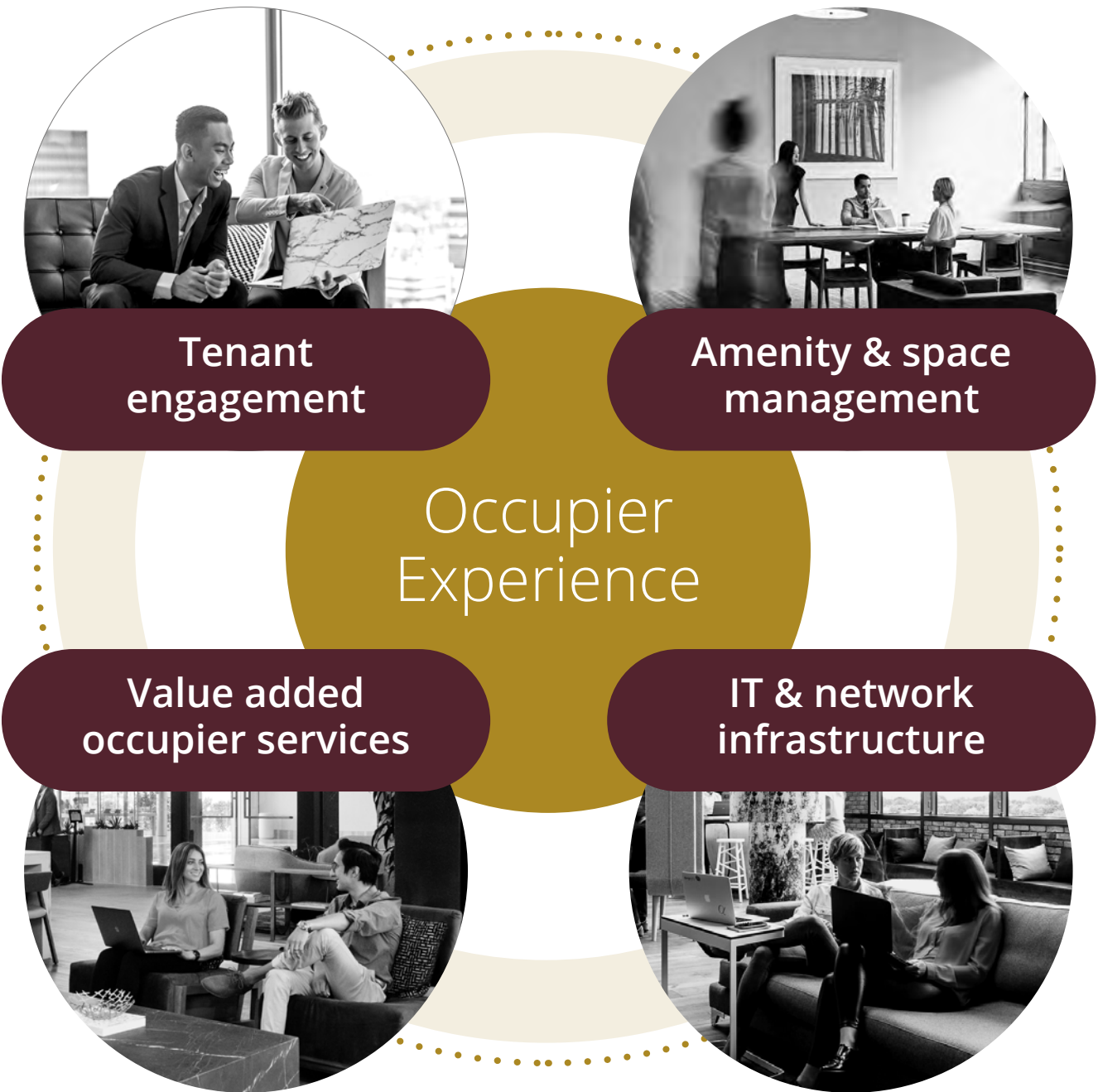
This eBook will act as a guide for that process and help you identify the ultimate tech stack for flex.



What are the Components of an Outstanding Occupier Experience

We've established that your tech stack should be a direct consequence of your goal to deliver outstanding occupier experiences. So that begs the question, what makes for a premium occupier experience?

We believe it's constructed of **4 key components**.



THE 4 KEY COMPONENTS OF OCCUPIER EXPERIENCE

1 Tenant Engagement



Do occupiers feel well connected to their space and with those operating it? Do they feel they have control of their space where needed? Do they have a means of communicating with those who operate and co-habit their space so that they feel supported, connected, and listened to?

2 Value Added Occupier Services

Do occupiers have frictionless experiences when it comes to requiring office functionality such as print, private networks, video conferencing, paying for space and amenities usage, and voice calls? Are you doing all you can to make their day-to-day easy? Have you made it simple and easy for occupier organisations to do business with you?



What are the Components of an Outstanding Occupier Experience

3 Amenity & Space Management



Can occupiers quickly identify and book different types of space based on the kind of work they want to conduct? It could be a meeting room, conference room with AV, informal spaces for catching up, or quieter space for when there's a tight deadline to hit. Is the process behind this system secure, and does it ensure that only those who have the right to access your space can access it? Can necessary changes to access control be made instantly?

4 IT & Network Infrastructure



Are you able to ensure all physical, network, and cyber security concerns are addressed and proactively monitored? Do occupiers have access to high-performance IT capabilities and their own private networks?

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This helps us focus our thoughts on what a flex tech stack should incorporate. It empowers landlords and operators to think strategically about what's required to help hit occupier experience goals and differentiate their assets and space.

For the next step, let's build upon this and assess what technology categories directly impact these occupier experience components.



What Technologies Impact the Components of Occupier Experience?

THE 8 CATEGORIES OF TECH FOR FLEX

1

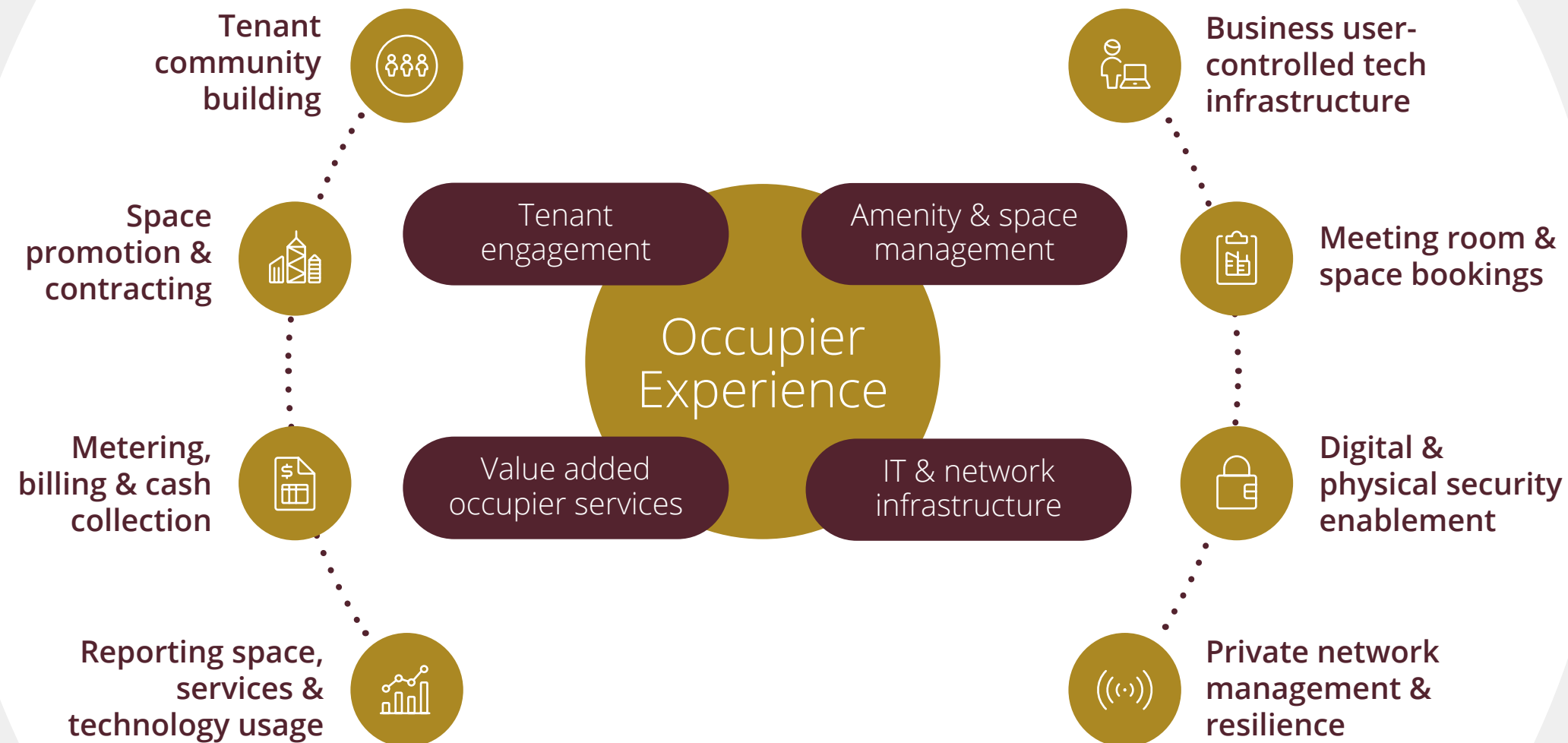
Tenant Community Building

Make communication a top priority with your occupiers by building a community using your own custom mobile app.

2

Space Promotion & Contracting

Expose your space and reach a broad audience by utilising brokers, web booking forms and space promotion tools.



3

Metering, Billing & Cash Collection

Automate key business processes to save money, reduce manual errors, streamline resources, and eliminate time taken for tedious but crucial tasks.

4

Reporting Space, Services & Technology Usage

Remove the guesswork for how your space is being used by having real-time insights at your fingertips. Obtain insights across operational, technology, and financial processes and space environments.

What Technologies Impact the Components of Occupier Experience?

5

Business User-Controlled Tech Infrastructure

A non-technical member of your team can provision and manage occupier services and technology infrastructure instantly. It is now possible to empower front office staff rather than having them stuck between vendors or waiting on IT tickets.

6

Meeting Room & Space Bookings

Make it easy for your occupiers to book space and meeting rooms with a comprehensive solution. Booking, billing, and reporting on meeting rooms can quickly become a significant bottleneck – especially when seen in isolation from other operational processes.

7

Digital & Physical Security Enablement

Offer end-to-end security for critical data and services through enterprise-grade private cloud technology. Securely manage network traffic, touchless access, access control data, sensors, and devices via a private network infrastructure with a minimal onsite hardware footprint.

8

Private Network Management & Resilience

Confidently deliver high quality and secure services to even the most demanding enterprise customers. Utilise connectivity that provides instant failover and a very high quality of service.

When these technologies are fused into a space offering, they empower the ability to offer cost-effective, move-in ready, friction-free, productive workspaces, that deliver outstanding occupier, tenant, and employee experiences. They also enable simple, fast, and efficient control and management of the space itself for landlords and operators, alongside valuable insight into occupier behaviour patterns. All of this should be possible to do at scale; if a portfolio grows or new sites are opened, it's advantageous to expand what's already built, so it incorporates any new location. This approach reduces complexity and realises economies of scale.



How Do You Begin Building the Ultimate Flex Tech Stack?

There are several ways to approach this. Here are four routes to introducing flex; each one comes with its own unique considerations for implementing the ultimate flex tech stack, which we'll assess in the following section.



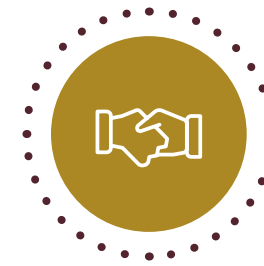
Build your own flex offering

A landlord can build their own brand. Don't forget, it's not just about the tech though, choosing this route requires you weave together the dynamic business components of a flexible office model such as marketing, sales, onboarding, and service delivery. The advantage is that it puts you in total control of the entire offering. The risk here, though, is that setting this up yourself is incredibly complex and most likely an entirely new business



Buy into an existing flex offering

Landlords can invest in operators with a track record of delivering flexible workspace and services. You can leverage the value of an existing brand within your portfolio, and it helps keep your business relevant to existing tenants and potential ones. Many successful operators have proven business models and have demonstrated effective use of tech within flex; this mitigates the 'build' strategy's risk when you start from scratch.



Partner to create your own flex offering

Align your objectives to space operators and flex tech providers via management agreements and joint ventures. A landlord will agree upon an exchange of operational services for a management fee with an operator in a partnership arrangement with an operator in a partnership arrangement.



Introduce flexibility into your office offering

Implement a software and technology solution within your portfolio to activate some flexibility and increase occupier experiences to make your offering more compelling and reduce churn. This means that you do not need to build a brand and can identify either the occupier, a facilities manager, or your own team to run the space offering without positioning it as a flex space.

A Guide to Assessing Your Potential Tech Stack & Capabilities

We've reviewed what technologies make up the ultimate flex tech and highlighted four different flex business models. Here's what you need to understand more deeply to determine whether you're on the right path to building the ultimate flex tech stack.

1

When adding technology to your space, will you have the competency and capability in-house to provide it?

Or do you need to go to a vendor who focuses on technology, invests in R&D, and has a roadmap?

Do you buy off the shelf, outsource, or build an IT team? When it comes to scaling, it could make more sense to deploy resources for growth and procure a solution that is continuously innovated and invested in.

2

Do you have the space required to deploy technology?

When thinking of total cost of ownership, can you afford to be upgrading and replacing hardware as you grow? Or do you need to utilise cloud infrastructure to bring tech to your environment?

Do you have a portfolio? Are you planning on expanding your portfolio? Cloud infrastructure enables you to focus more on occupiers rather than upgrades and capital expenditure. It also empowers the use of 'as-a-service' models.

CHECKLIST: EVALUATING YOUR TECH & CAPABILITIES



Roadmap & investment



Cloud infrastructure



Automation of key flex processes



Business user control



Secure private networks



Unique operational insights

A Guide to Assessing Your Potential Tech Stack & Capabilities

3

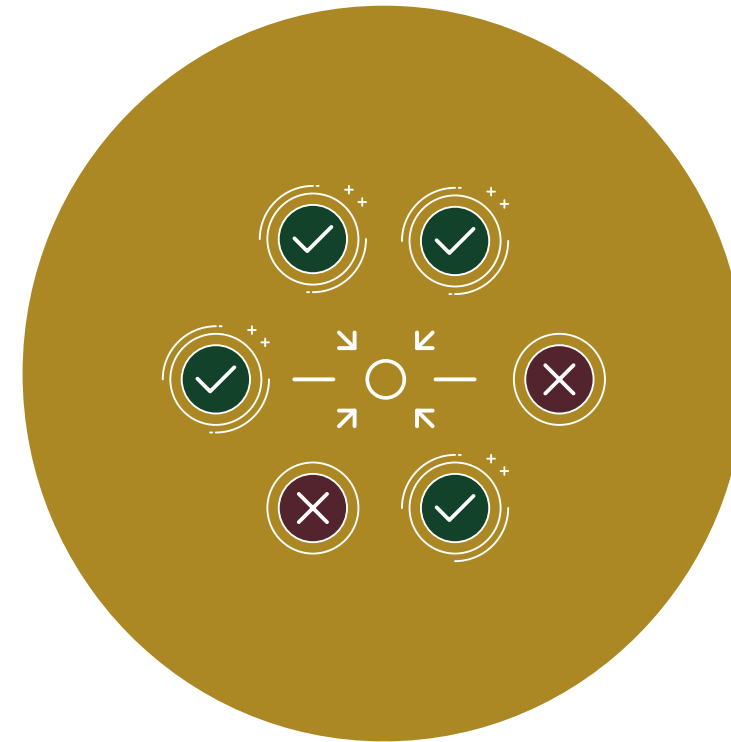
Which processes do you have automated today?

Think billing, space promotion, cash collection. What automation do you think you'll need?

a. Moves, adds and changes are the lifeblood of flexibility in the office environment. You'll need to move people in on the fly; it can't take weeks/months, which defeats the objective of flex.



b. Contactless access, Wi-Fi logins, wired access, secure and seamless printing, voice numbers, member experience apps, space management tools; you'll eventually want all of this automated. You could use multiple platforms to achieve this automation, but remember they don't talk to one another. With one platform, you make changes for a space user once, and the work's done automatically across other systems.



c. Furthermore, data in multiple systems gets forgotten about. From a security perspective, this leaves you vulnerable; if an individual occupier leaves their organisation and you don't update all systems, you may forget to disable an access card. Ideally, you'll want one action that removes access from all systems. This also minimises overhead in terms of the number of people you may need to carry out the actions.

4

Who is going to control the environment?

a. Will it be an outsourced partner or software that allows your non-technical staff to do it, or will you be building your own IT team?

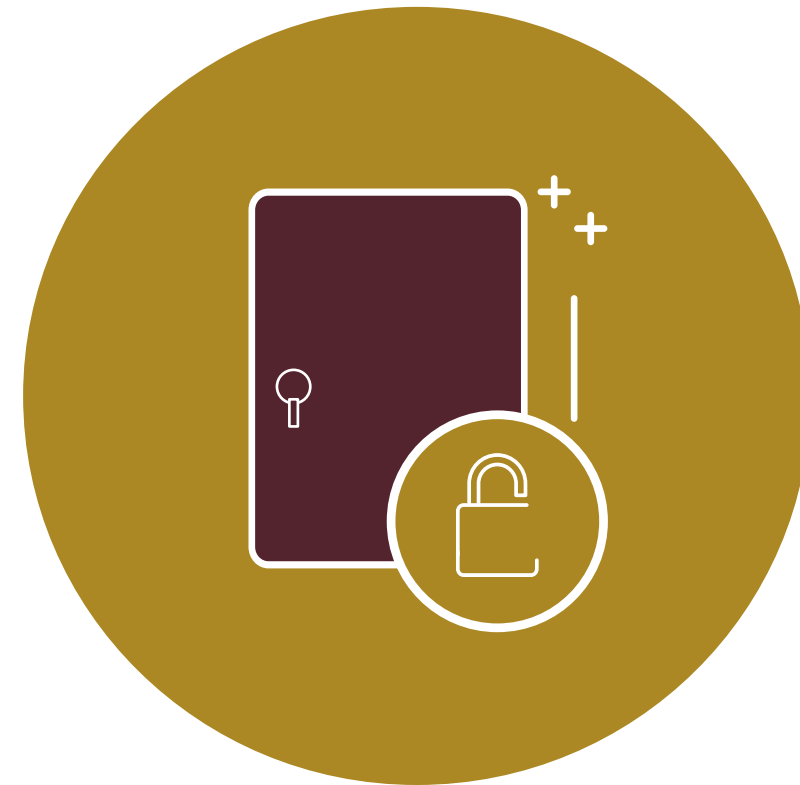
b. Ideally, you'll want simple provisioning of the software layer over your infrastructure layer.



A Guide to Assessing Your Potential Tech Stack & Capabilities

5 What kind of network will you be using? What are you going to plug into? Basic internet or a private network?

a. When you want to attract enterprise customers, they will discredit your offering if they see it's one shared username and password for Wi-Fi for members of the space. They want an individual, private network for their company. They'll want access control integrated with this too for security purposes; when you disable a user's access, you want to know it's across physical and digital channels.



b. Clients also want to know that their private network is being actively protected from malware and other security threats. They want managed firewall access and peace of mind that their network is protected.



6 What reporting do you need? How can you report on your operational environment today?



a. Ideally, you'll have access to operational data on your space; metrics that cover finance, tech, and operations.

b. What value-added services can you offer to your occupiers? Real-time space monitoring so staff can establish where the least busy meeting room is or where the most space available is? This will require sensors to provide real-time analytics.

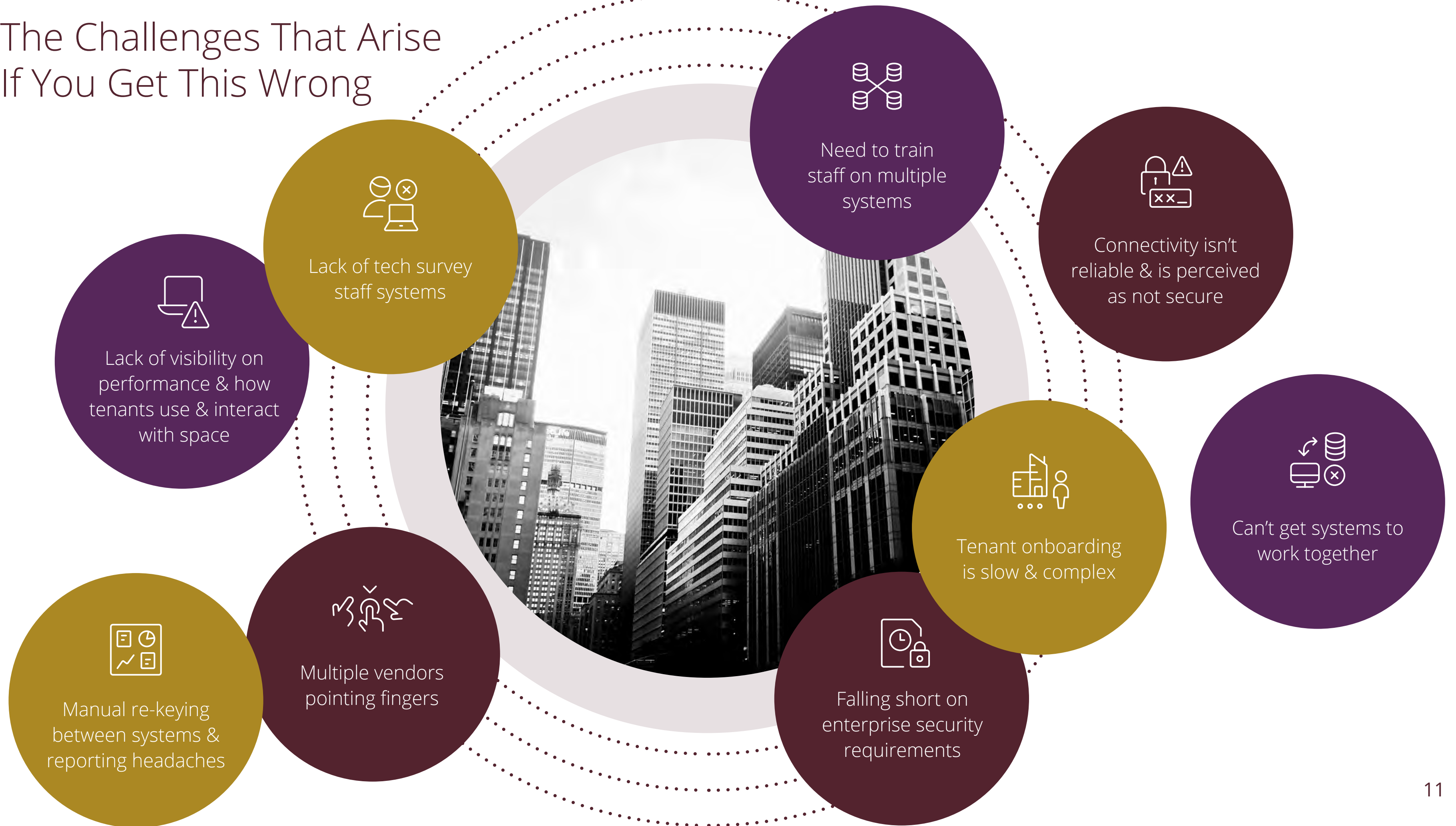
c. From your perspective, will you have access to data that helps you manage and deploy resources? Will you be able to tell where and how members are using the space?



d. Wi-Fi traffic monitoring can enable you to gauge how busy space is. Having access to a single pane of glass showing you how busy different spaces are and who is consuming which services is incredibly powerful.

e. Do the technologies you have become more than the sum of their parts when working together? If all your data is on separate platforms, there's lots of data lifting and shifting that needs to take place to derive insights, plus there's a time lag.

The Challenges That Arise If You Get This Wrong



Conclusion

The key takeaway is that we should always think about human experiences first, technology second. The ultimate tech stack for flex should drive outstanding occupier experiences; if you address your technology from this perspective, you're off to a good start.

6 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. Think Human Experience First, Technology Second
2. Focus on the four key components of occupier experience
 - a. Tenant Engagement
 - b. Value Added Occupier Services
 - c. Amenity & Space Management
 - d. IT & Network Infrastructure
3. Understand how your technology choices influence the components of occupier experience
4. Identify which flex delivery model suits your needs most effectively
5. Assess your potential tech stack against your capabilities and chosen delivery model
6. Recognise any possible risks to the occupier experience based on your chosen tech and delivery model



Once you think about your tech stack in this way, it helps focus your decision making. It empowers you to critically evaluate your options, not just about chosen tech but also around how it's delivered. **Taking this approach will help you work towards building your ultimate tech stack for flexible office environments.**

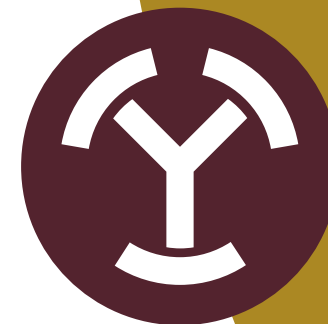
MISSION-CRITICAL SOFTWARE FOR THE FLEXIBLE WORKSPACE INDUSTRY.

At essensys, we work extensively with landlords and operators globally, providing them with the technology they need to successfully enable premium occupier experiences in flexible office environments.

Born from our unique first-hand industry experience, we empower ambitious operators to accelerate their growth. Our secure platform combines technology, infrastructure and operational processes into a simple, efficient and easy to manage service experience. At the touch of a button you have complete control of your business, allowing you to deliver amazing experiences while gaining valuable and actionable insights.

Visit **www.essensys.tech** for your product tour.

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Aldgate Tower | 2 Leman Street | London | E1 8FA
450 7th Avenue | New York | New York | 10123
2450 Colorado Ave | Santa Monica | California | 90404
marketing@essensys.tech
www.essensys.tech