

A new way of working

“Worldwide the way people work has changed dramatically in the past five years, and with that there has been a need for an adapted working environment,” says Daniel Wheble. He is CEO of The Boutique Workplace Company (TBWC), a member of the Tradehold group that specialises in the provision of serviced office space in the UK.

Daniel was the co-founder of Ventia, bought by TBWC in 2015. He says in his time, the flexible-office industry has changed “beyond recognition” adding “we have not nearly seen the end of this ongoing revolution that is forcing companies like ours to be finely attuned to changes in the type and nature of work space required by a new generation. It is testing our agility all the time!”

What is happening in the UK is part of a worldwide phenomenon with increasing demand for flexible office space in the US, Europe, Asia-Pacific and Australia, however, London remains globally the most mature market. Spawned by mobile technology, the new type of office accommodation goes by a variety of names – serviced/flexible/hybrid/co-working – all highlighting different aspects

of this new requirement for inspirational working environments. It is also starting to gain a foothold in South Africa, and several companies, especially in Johannesburg and Cape Town, are now offering a range of mostly shared accommodation for younger entrepreneurs, small businesses and digital nomads who need no more than a dedicated desk or two and basic support services.

Says Daniel: “Worldwide the work force is becoming more mobile, and the demand is growing for pay-as-you-go accommodation and services. A recent Harvard University study of millennial productivity in the workplace found members of this generation are more productive in a coffee shop environment than a traditional office environment. That’s why we are offering environments that replace the

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Henrietta Street, London. Covent Garden



Daniel Wheble
CEO of the Boutiques
Workplace company

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drudge of going to work with vibrant, interesting and entertaining spaces. Apart from exclusive work stations, these spaces offer private meeting rooms and breakout areas where people can gather and where free coffee and other beverages are available.

“Co-working has almost become the generic term for flexible work spaces and our centres are designed to offer shared working environments alongside private offices. We have also recently launched a membership scheme whereby customers whether from in or



TBWC's latest addition to its portfolio of flexible office accommodation is within a stone's throw of Christopher Wren's famous St Paul's Cathedral in central London. Located at 71-73 Carter Lane, TBWC's 30th boutique workplace in the capital is close to both the St Paul's and Blackfriars underground stations. The building offers 21 offices on five floors incorporating 237 workstations. It provides a range of amenities for tenants including showers, kitchens, lounge space, a courtyard and meeting rooms as well as a roof terrace overlooking the famous cathedral. The building is owned by TBWC's parent company, Moorgarth Group, which acquired it specifically for TBWC's use.



Newly renovated Grays Inn Road Centre

out of London can use any of our 30 facilities located throughout the capital.”

Increasingly it is no longer consultants, start-ups and creative businesses using flexible accommodation with their usually short-term rental obligations, but also corporates. Especially in the UK the uncertainty caused by Brexit has increased the hesitancy of corporates to commit themselves to conventional long-term space contracts. For them flexible office space offers an ideal alternative.

The corporate need for more flexible workspace has led to an increase in the scale/size of locations as more and more operations seek out flexible space rather than conventional longer-term leased office accommodation.

The indications are that the new way of working is here to stay. As flexible working also no longer focuses just on the short term, TBWC is offering licences for 1 to 3 years as a means of giving customers occupational certainty.

TBWC is focussed on smaller properties of between 500m² to 1500m², all of them of a boutique-style character. Each has a different ambience and is designed for a specific target market. “It is important to understand that different types of organisations have different occupational requirements. So our Mayfair office has, for example, a different feel and design from that of our Shoreditch office, or of our City offices or those located on the South Bank,” says Daniel.

TBWC continuously upgrade existing facilities while also adding new ones. “At present our main focus is Greater London. From there we want to expand into the UK's major university cities. At the same time, we are also looking at possibly expanding our offer into Europe and also South Africa, both being familiar markets to us. But that is something for the future.”

Expanding its operations to South Africa would, of course, make perfect sense as it would give TBWC access to Tradehold's local knowhow and infrastructure.



Tim Vaughan – Our man in the UK

Tim Vaughan as joint CEO of Tradehold is in charge of all of the company's property investments and operations in the UK. These are concentrated in two businesses: Moorgarth Holdings and The Boutique Workplace Company (TBWC).



Tim Vaughan
Tradehold,
Joint CEO

After Tradehold undertook a sale-and-leaseback transaction in 2002, Tim was appointed to manage the mainly retail-oriented properties and to build a real estate business for the group, using these assets as a base. The name Moorgarth was chosen for the business. At that time, the portfolio was valued at £8 million. Now, 15 years later, the group's holdings under management are valued at almost £300 million with a development pipeline of close to £160 million within the existing portfolio.

Much has happened since Tim took over the reins. The current portfolio bears no resemblance to the original which consisted of 31 tertiary properties. Of these, 28 were sold over time and replaced with larger, higher-value assets in prime and secondary centres. Of the remaining three, two are at present on offer for sale. At the same time, Tim and his team

have broadened the base of the portfolio. In addition to four large shopping complexes, it also includes ten office buildings, seven of them in central London, and a retail warehouse development.

Brought up in Yorkshire, Tim studied at Nottingham Trent University. After qualifying as a chartered surveyor in 1990, he joined the real estate division of Savills in London before moving on to Arthur Andersen where he ran its regional real estate consulting business. From there he moved on to Ernst & Young before joining Tradehold in 2003.

Early in 2013 Tim noticed there was growing demand in the market for a different kind of office accommodation and in May of that year started TBWC with an initial 150 workstations. In December 2015 Moorgarth acquired Ventia

whose activities were integrated with those of TBWC. This increased the combined operation's number of workstations in central London to 2 200.

Moorgarth has continued to grow the enlarged TBWC aggressively and it now operates 30 sites across London offering close to 4 000 workstations.

"Whatever you choose to call it, serviced office space is morphing into probably the most exciting offering in the property market with huge potential to be unleashed," Tim said. "However, innovation is not limited to flexible office accommodation. The retail market is changing massively and so is the conventional office market. For this reason we are focused on constant innovation to ensure we benefit to the maximum from these changes."



Upgraded website

Ps. We have just upgraded our website. It might well be worth a visit if you want to know about the latest developments in the business.

www.tradehold.co.za



Friedrich Esterhuyse, Tradehold, Joint CEO