

## Property Week Article

By Howard Morgan

### **‘Occupiers are exercising right to improve customer service’**

It's mid April and the number of running machines available at the gym is back to normal now that the January “enthusiasts” have returned to their TV sets.

There's a similar commitment gap between those property organisations that talk a good game about customer service and the ones that are knuckling down and actually improving their customer fitness.

I continue to be impressed by those companies that are working hardest to collaborate with their occupier customers. A great example is Land Securities' 'Clear Let' standard lease that they devised with occupiers.

It is fascinating to observe how the people who are just getting on with making change happen within our industry are doing so with little bravado – just quiet, unassuming confidence.

I've had the pleasure of working with a group of such people for the past six years - members of the 20-strong RealService Best Practice Group (RSBPG) who include the likes of British Land, Land Securities, SEGRO, DTZ, GVA Grimley and Broadgate Estates. The Group's mission is to improve customer service to occupiers through benchmarking and the sharing of best practice.

It's interesting to see how much their customer fitness has improved by looking at the results of the RealService Best Practice Index (BPI) – an annual scorecard that measures the engagement and skills of member organisations in delivering high levels of customer service.

The average Benchmark Index among members has risen from an average of 54% in 2004 to 77% in 2010. Six years ago less than 20% of members scored an Index of over 70% compared to 60% today.

Occupiers are endorsing this approach with the Property Managers' Association (PMA) and CoreNet Global UK actively ensuring that the RSBPG remains 100% occupier focused.

John Gray from the PMA says: “The Group's focus on measurement and transparency is helping occupiers make an informed decision about who they do business with, which we fully support.”

Speaking on behalf of CoreNet, Harry Cole says: “CoreNet endorses the Best Practice Index which we view as a comprehensive and rigorous approach to driving improvements that will meet the needs of the occupier community.”

With occupiers setting the speed on the treadmill, there's a much greater chance that the industry' fitness level will improve.

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