



Forthcoming events

RSBPG Annual Conference 2011

09:00 - 12:30 on Thursday 23rd June 2011 at PRUPIM

City Place House, 55 Basinghall Street, London EC2V 5DU

Service Charge Compliance Index Presentation

08:30 - 10:30 on 12th July 2011 at British Land

York House, 45 Seymour Street, London W1H 7LX

Dear,

This issue of the newsletter contains:

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Welcome Soho Housing Association and EMCOR UK

Since our last newsletter we warmly welcome two new members to our Group, Soho Housing Association and EMCOR UK. We look forward to getting to know champions Joe Chambers from Soho Housing Association and Claire Harman from EMCOR UK at our meetings and events.

Soho Housing Association was set up in 1973 by people living in Soho to try to improve local housing conditions and to ensure that its existing homes were not destroyed by redevelopment. Almost 40 years on, Soho Housing Association is a flourishing organisation with more than 800 homes and 30 commercial occupiers.

EMCOR UK is a leader in construction engineering, facilities, and energy solutions. It designs, builds, installs and maintains sophisticated mechanical and electrical systems on behalf of businesses in virtually every economic sector throughout the UK.

See Q&A with Joe Chambers below

Retail customer service expert Alf Dunbar tops bill at AGM – 23 June

The AGM promises to be a highlight of the RSBPG year. In addition to the usual Steering Group updates, case studies and priorities for the year ahead, we have a great speaker lined up for you.

Retail coaching expert Alf Dunbar will be giving you a taste of his unique customer service coaching programme 'You Are The Difference' that's used by a wide range of retailing and business organisations throughout the UK and over 25 countries around the world.

The AGM takes place at PRUPIM, City Place House, 55 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DU, on Thursday 23 June from 9am to noon, followed by a buffet lunch.

Please email [Andrea](#) or [Louise](#) if you or any of your colleagues would like to attend.

Best Practice Index breaks new ground

It's been a ground-breaking year for the Best Practice Index (BPI) with the revised and more rigorous Best Practice Framework applied for the first time and the introduction of a more critical, independent eye provided by the new Audit

Committee.

Here's what our chairman, Paul Harding, had to say: "This year introduced a number of important changes to make the Index more relevant and more stretching. Particularly we have made the Index more all-encompassing as you have to prove you are delivering across your entire portfolio; more occupier focussed with the input from CoreNet and PMA; more stringent test on measurement of evidence; and more relevant for the customers that we serve."

"The result of this is an even more meaningful Index report to use to drive all our companies customer service initiatives."

BPI Audit Committee applies new 'measurement test' to decide Outstanding

The new BPI Audit Committee is made up of the new occupier members of the Steering Group; the PMA and CoreNet, as well as the BPF and a member of the RealService BPI team. Its role is to ensure that the BPI verification process is 'consistent, fair and objective'.

The Audit Committee met for the first time after all BPI verification meetings with members had taken place and followed the 'tone of the list' meeting when the RealService verification team collates the results of each assessment to ensure consistency.

Committee members reviewed evidence of measurement and applied the new 'measurement test' to any members seeking 'Outstanding' to decide whether this level of achievement should be awarded.

Service Charge Compliance Index (SCCI) Round 2 is underway

The second SCCI is now in full swing, with members now in the throes of submitting their evidence data. Eleven member organisations are participating compared with nine last year. Results will be published in July ahead of the SCCI Results Seminar on Tuesday 12th July at 08:30 – 10:30 am at British Land's office, details in events. All members are welcome to attend please email [Andrea](#) for details.

Diverse range of events receive strong support

It's been a busy few months on the RSBPG events front with an assortment of visits and presentations laid on to inform, inspire and motivate.

Members have turned out in force to support these events which have covered topics as diverse as hotels, holidays and airports to insurance, social media and online retailing.

Below is a brief description of five events in recent months.

I'm leaving on a jet plane...with Virgin Holidays

Pauline Wilson, Head of Customer Services at Virgin Holidays, gave an insightful presentation about how she and her team set about improving its customer service and refocusing its corporate culture.

Winner of the Customer Service Manager of the Year in the National Customer Service Awards 2010, Pauline described how 'passion for the customer' was put at the heart of her approach with emphasis put on addressing a number of key areas including 'understanding our customers', 'putting the customer in the driving seat', 'team engagement', 'culture change' 'acting on feedback' and 'Measurement KPI's'.

She described how the customer service team had been trained in the art of S.C.R.I.B.E. – a 'toolkit' for the written word when dealing with customers. It stands for Straight Customer Responses In Better English – with less of the 'formal' and more of the 'friendly' Virgin spirit.

John Lee, GVA National Front of House Manager, who attended the seminar said afterwards: "The two things I found especially relevant were the need for less formal and more friendly communication with customers and the importance of allowing your team members' personalities to really come through so they can develop a rapport with the customer/client and make a real connection."

The social media revolution

Members were enthralled by Rachel Clarke of Engagement Intelligence, which develops and implements social media strategies designed to spark 'conversations' about their clients' brands.

She described how the likes of Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, Flickr, My Space and Digg are being used by businesses across all sectors to increase delivery of customer service to customers, raise brand awareness and increase financial gain.

If you missed the event, please find the slides on the RSBPG website.

One last word on social media – we are now Twitter! You'll find our tweets on the homepage of the website.

Manchester on course to be world airport of choice

We'd like to thank Manchester Airport Group for a fascinating behind the scenes visit to Manchester Airport to hear about the steps they are taking to make this a 'world airport of choice'.

Members heard about Manchester's mission to 'make the customer journey easy' which has involved tackling the 'basics brilliantly and consistently' including cleanliness, the arrivals process, security queue times, signage and comfort of waiting areas.

The group also learned how the commercial areas of the airport have been made more enticing for visitors and about the efforts that have gone into customer service training for staff. Another important aspect of the presentation was the emphasis Manchester Airport Group places on measuring customer satisfaction and benchmarking results with other European airports of similar size.

PRUPIM's David Woodman commented afterwards: "The team at Manchester Airport have their sights set clearly on the top prize – to become the "World's airport of choice".

"They have an impressive customer strategy made up of a combination of measures and employee engagement initiatives from the ASQ quality of service measure, through to their 'Customer Focus Teams' which allows thought leadership outside of the usual management structure. Most important is the clear annual incentive scheme directly linked to the targets set around this customer strategy."

Insurance expert captivates lunchtime crowd

It was all ears when insurance expert Bill Gloyn spoke at the last RSBPG networking lunch.

Bill is a partner in the European real estate team at Jardine Lloyd Thompson and immediate past-president of the City Property Association.

Howard Morgan, who was in the audience, says: "Bill Gloyn explained that with commendable leadership from the British Property Federation, the property world has done a lot to make the insurance situation far more acceptable than it was a decade ago.

"The various incarnations of the Code of Practice on Commercial Leases have gradually refined the insurance process and compliant landlords will now supply full information about the cover for which they are recovering premiums with a degree of transparency about costs that would have been unthinkable ten years ago. Bill endorsed the RSBPG's initiative to build this requirement into our Best Practice Index framework."

Howard adds: "Bill believes strongly that more communication and care over occupier insurance concerns could pay dividends in restoring the overall balance of occupier satisfaction."

Study Tour looks outside property industry for best practice

Twenty people from 14 member organisations boarded a bus in Hatfield in May for the start of The Phoenix Tour – the annual RSBPG study tour.

Why Hatfield? One of aims of this year's tour was to look outside the property industry for examples of best practice – so, first stop the Hatfield distribution centre of online retailer Ocado, former Green Retailer of the Year and market leader in customer service.

"A very interesting visit," said one member of the RSBPG group afterwards. "They demonstrated that they believed and

practised their values - proof that delivering great customer service will bear fruit.”

Next stop SEGRO for an overview of their approach to customer service. Said one member afterwards: “It was good to hear that SEGRO are doing the same things as others to improve customer service - the idea of having testimonials as positive advertising is useful.”

Final port of call for the day was The Vineyard, a privately owned 5 star hotel and spa, in Newbury, Berkshire, famous for its vast array of fine wines and gourmet food. The overnight stay included a behind the scenes tour of the wine cellar and kitchens followed by an evening sampling the culinary delights from their Michelin star chef that The Vineyard has to offer. An incredible insight into 5 star service from a market leader.

“Too many examples of good customer service to number,” commented one of the tour members. “Some great service and care, but also some lessons on not losing sight of the basics that don't need to be flowery,” added another. “Fantastic event, we saw complete dedication to customer service and how important it is in a competitive environment,” said a third.

Next day it was off to Swindon and a chance to see how Pure Offices develops and operates purpose built unfurnished serviced offices in a transparent way offering monthly easy in/easy out leases. “Interesting business model and a cost effective slant to delivering strong customer service,” was one of the comments afterwards.

The tour finished with an inspirational visit to Swindon's new 59,000 sq. ft. John Lewis at Home store. “A fascinating tour - empowered Partners who care about their business - customer service is ingrained into their culture,” said one RSBPG member afterwards. “Their methodology is so unique - elements can be picked up but the whole is impossible to recreate,” said another. “Great insight into how John Lewis motivate, train, develop and reward Partners for the best interest of the customer,” added another member.

Judging by the feedback we received, The Phoenix Tour was an inspiring few days and something of an eye opener for many.

Q&A with Joe Chambers, Chief Executive of Soho Housing Association

1: What do you hope to benefit from membership of the RSBPG?

We think we are a customer focused organisation, but it is important to have external validation of this and some objective measures to demonstrate improvement to the team and the Board. We want to compare ourselves to others managing property of the kind we manage - affordable, market residential and commercial as well as to engage with different types of organisations with different objectives but who need great customer service to deliver their objectives and thrive. The networking opportunities and the seminars and study tours are also very useful in enabling us to grow and learn as an organisation.

2: What can other RSBPG members learn from Soho Housing Association?

We have a strong customer service ethos, a high level of customer engagement and long-standing, successful relationships with our customers and community, all of which we feel are important when running a business. It has been my experience working in the private sector advising developers and owners about affordable housing that there are many misconceptions and misunderstandings about how affordable housing works, its value (financial), the agendas of local authorities and the relationship between affordable housing and the market. I would hope to help RSBPG members understand some of those issues and dispel some of the myths.

3: What is the single biggest challenge facing your organisation?

We have two challenges facing us. Inward looking, we want to be the most loved and valued housing provider our customers could imagine. In truth they have very little choice regarding their provider which places a moral responsibility on us to provide the best service we can without the commercial imperative to do so. We also want to grow - to develop affordable housing in central London without funding or interference from government. This means acting commercially to generate the subsidy required to provide affordable housing in a world property market – how exciting!!