

## **Property sector needs to face the sustainable future**

The building sector is not doing enough to deliver sustainable construction solutions, according to a survey of senior property professionals.

The research, compiled by global architecture practice Woods Bagot, revealed that 82 per cent of respondents support the statement that the industry is not doing enough to deliver sustainable solutions

Earle Arney, Director at Woods Bagot's London office, said "The property sector needs to refocus. Buildings currently represent 40 per cent of global CO2 emissions: if we continue on our current trajectory then the world's buildings will be at the top of the environment's epitaph."

Woods Bagot surveyed more than 200 senior property professionals in the Europe, the Middle East, Asia United States, and Australasia to determine an honest appraisal of a sustainable future for the construction industry.

The respondents felt that despite the awareness of climate change, the property industry's two most significant challenges are the lack of industry support to deliver sustainable solutions, and the ability to provide a convincing argument for the benefit of sustainability to clients.

The survey revealed that energy efficiency and generation is the most important issue for the future. This was followed by reducing carbon footprints of new and refurbished developments as well as the reduction of water usage.

There was industry awareness of the potential for sustainable construction. 86 per cent of respondents believed that green buildings improved corporate reputation, reduced operational costs and risk, and improved staff productivity. And 73 per cent believed that going green was an effective tool for attracting and retaining key talent in the industry.

A third of respondents from the poll believed that the cost premium for creating a sustainable building was 6-10 per cent more than the cost of a standard building.

Earle Arney said: "The industry is more than aware of the convincing arguments for sustainable developments and the benefits are well known. What we need to move beyond is apprehension at increase in construction costs as these are more than offset by staff retention, attraction, and improvements in productivity over the long term.

“Encouragingly what we have found of late is that the challenges the global financial crisis has imposed mean that there is now a growing appreciation that old developments approaches need to be aligned to the change in attitude and a realisation that the workplace is an effective instrument to drive organisation change and business effectiveness”.

42 per cent identified delivery expertise and process compliance to be two major challenges faced when trying to deliver sustainable built environments. The underlying issue driving process compliance is the relative lack of knowledge and delivery expertise required to satisfy compliance objectives.

This was a surprise as a significant proportion of respondents consider themselves to be totally committed to supporting the drive for a more sustainable future through the delivery of a more sustainable built environment.

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## About Woods Bagot

International design practice Woods Bagot provides its clients with innovative design solutions that are both functional and inspiring. This is demonstrated by the successful delivery of a range of high profile projects within the commercial workplace, hospitality, mixed-use, education and science sectors.

Established in 2001, Woods Bagot's London studio now has a dynamic team of over 60. Since its inception, its young, integrated team has developed a diverse portfolio of significant projects including:

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- Minthis Hills Resort, Cyprus
- Rolls House, London
- Walkers, Cayman Islands
- Eversheds, London