

whitepaper

People in property

3 concepts for human-centric real estate



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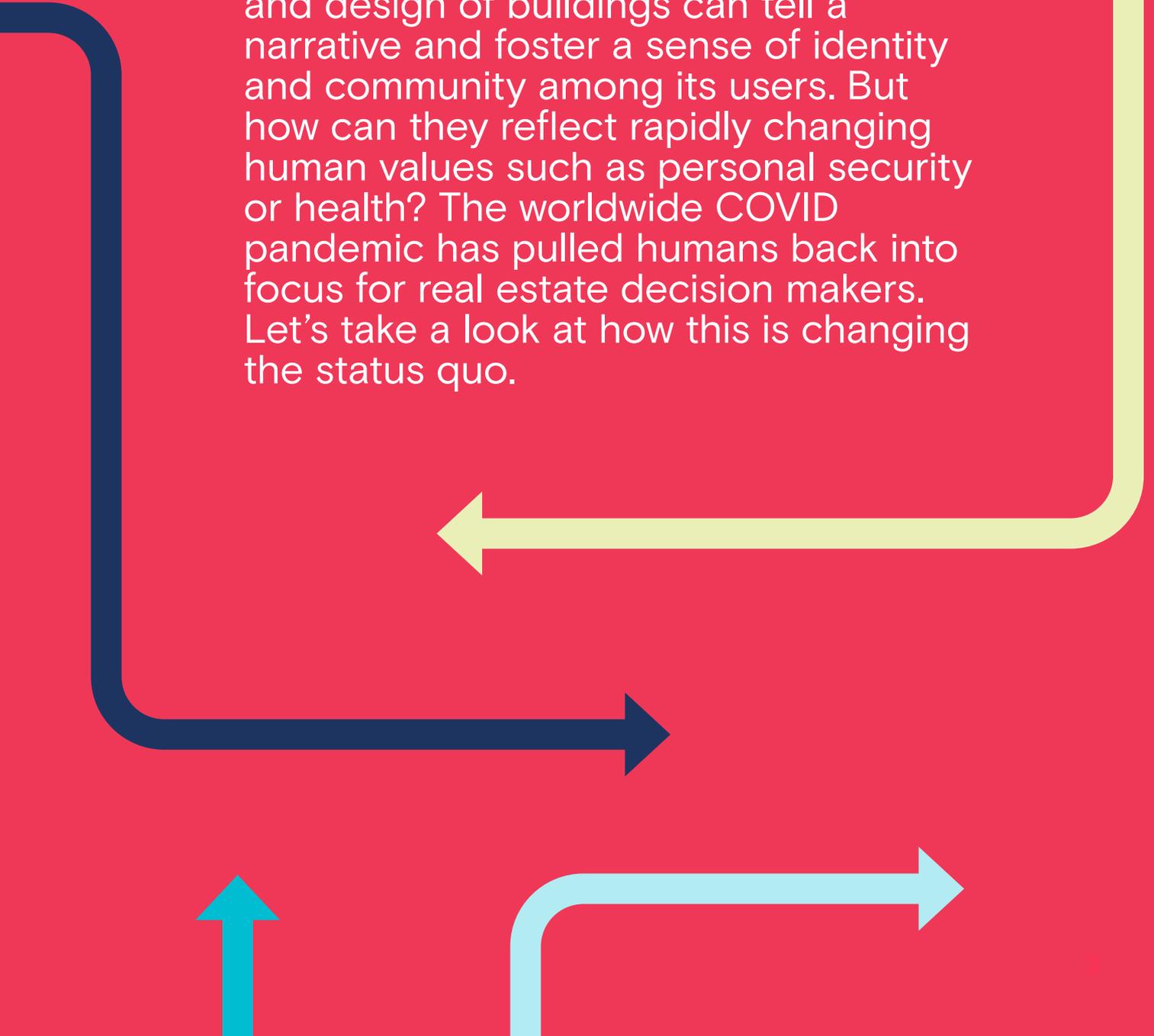
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introduction

Humanising the built world

At their most essential level, buildings serve the key function to house and protect their occupants. But that's not all they do. Winston Churchill once famously said, "We shape our buildings, and afterwards, our buildings shape us". Buildings tell a story and are an extension of our values. Architecture and design of buildings can tell a narrative and foster a sense of identity and community among its users. But how can they reflect rapidly changing human values such as personal security or health? The worldwide COVID pandemic has pulled humans back into focus for real estate decision makers. Let's take a look at how this is changing the status quo.



3 concepts for human-centric real estate

From investment to design, development and operations –

We've collected ideas on 3 concepts to put the 'people' back into property:

→ 1. Spaces that adapt

Changing the way a space looks, feels and functions is one of the key actions that can help extend the use of buildings and increase its flexibility. We're looking at some of the smart technologies and hybrid workplace advancements that can help adapt a building to ever-changing conditions.

→ 2. A home away from home

Occupants are now demanding optimal conditions in the office with the comforts of home. Property developers can take inspiration from their natural environment as well as human psychology to create optimal and inviting spaces.

→ 3. Building a community

From work space to meeting place: the function of the office is shifting. We share several insights to create more social, engaging and inclusive experiences that will draw people to their workplace.

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1. Spaces that adapt

Gen Z is a new type of tenant that wants digital solutions for everything: paying rent, signing agreements and smart features like unlocking doors or touring properties virtually. Scaling up or down in space, depending on what their situation requires, seems to meet the modern requirement for flexibility. That's why hybrid spaces are on the rise as a new real estate proposition. In fact, the stock of these buildings is expected to increase by 30% in Europe. Not only are they seen as viable investments; enabling building owners to change the way a space looks, feels and functions can help extend the use of it significantly. How can you effectively integrate flexible options into your portfolio? Below are a few ideas to consider.



The hybrid office

Open floor plans in the office have become a topic of debate during the Covid pandemic. Distraction, intrusiveness and a potential risk to health are just a few things people are now more concerned about. Luckily, there have been many advancements to inspire your reconfiguration to a hybrid workspace. One of these are 'neighbourhood structures.' Office neighbourhoods are essentially multiple activity-based working environments that each serve a specific segment of the workforce. This could be employees who have similar job functions or cross-functional teams that work together frequently. Another concept designed to maximise space utilisation is eliminating assigned seats, or 'hot desking'.

In this new trend of increasing the flexibility of spaces, a new idea has emerged that shifts focus from asset ownership to creating services around space: the 'Spaces as a service' model (SPaaS) offers real estate owners a way to diversify their assets.

Smart and savvy buildings

The basis of offering smart features and qualitative tools is to start with getting your data in order. The best way to do that is to pursue a single source of truth (SSOT). This is the practice of aggregating the data from many systems within an organisation to a single location. One way to start collecting data and real-time insights is using a ['digital twin'](#) for your building. This is a virtual model of your building that captures information from outside your spaces and displays it in an interactive and easy-to-understand way. It allows for information to be displayed so that everyone can interact with it and save valuable insights in your organisation. Collecting data isn't just necessary to increase the performance and sustainability of your building, it also helps transfer knowledge within your team.

Google garage: wheel of creativity

Google Garage, an innovative concept where every piece of furniture in the office is on wheels, helps create a flexible and fun workspace.

[Source: Fastcompany.com](https://www.fastcompany.com)



“When your best building operators retire, they take with them a lot of hands-on experience and institutional knowledge that they’ve acquired over the years that they’ve been working at this site.”

[Subhan Mansoor, Client Success Manager at Enertiv](#)

Other ways to add to your building's 'smartness' are connecting IoT sensors that can help you optimise the use of space and make it adaptable to its users and environment, such as detecting occupancy levels or air quality. Smart technology may increase [building operability](#), or even help [generate power](#).



“Real-time data can be a strong ally to improve the employee experience when returning to the office. This data can be mined from badging systems, WiFi networks and sensors.”

Christina Franken, Product Manager at Lone Rooftop

hello energy customer story: HNK Den Bosch

The HNK office in Den Bosch is a stunning example of adaptability and innovation.

Den Bosch, known as the Venice of the Netherlands, is the gate to the southern part of our country. Between the modern and historic industrial hotspots, it's the perfect place to settle as a business with lots of opportunities for networking and growing.

HNK, Het Nieuwe Kantoor BV is a concept by NSI that allows tenants to flexibly scale up or down and choose an office space that perfectly fits their needs. By providing high-quality customer-centric service, tenants can fully focus on their work and maximise their productivity. hello energy helps translate HNK's ESG ambitions into visual touchpoints with daily sustainability tips for visitors and tenants, right next to the reception desk. hello energy also helps with:

- Giving actionable insights in the lobby and reception areas with fun & inspiring content for visitors and tenants
- Giving all tenants their own login to hello energy, so they can see how the building is performing
- Collecting and showing real-time data of the building
- Helping HNK to benchmark the performance of their portfolio against similar buildings

Together with TPEX International, HNK has installed a detection system to monitor the occupancy of its buildings. In doing so, HNK ensures a healthy, safe and optimal use of its spaces. hello energy assists in this by visualising the gathered data on screens in the reception area.

HNK believes that people can work in the most optimal way when they have an inspiring and professional working environment with a good atmosphere. All 11 HNK locations feature top-notch services, including comfortable desks, modern office spaces, a coffee bar and a warm welcome by the HNK manager.



Want to read more customer stories or case studies? [Go to our website.](#)

2. A home away from home

In a post-pandemic workplace, health is an urgent matter. But it's about more than just air quality. The definition of the World Health Organization (WHO) highlights that it's not only the absence of disease or illness, but rather a holistic, comprehensive state of wellbeing on all levels: physical, mental and social. Putting humans at the centre of the performance of buildings is a topic that's long been overdue. How can you make health and wellness key performance indicators of your building? Let's dive deeper into psychology, design and the certifications that can inform and guide towards optimal spaces.



Sick building syndrome

Ever feel tired during a meeting? That's because most conference rooms are not bringing in enough fresh air (also known as the '[Sick building syndrome](#)'). When that door opens, it literally breathes life back into the room. Humans spend approximately 90% of their time indoors, resulting in reduced exposure to nature and measurable physiological and psychological impacts.

Indoor spaces impact our creativity, focus and problem-solving ability and can make us sick—jeopardising our future and dragging down productivity in the process. In '[Healthy buildings](#)' Joseph Allen and John Macomber make a compelling case for businesses and homeowners to make certain low-cost investments, such as improving ventilation and air quality.

[The Center for Active Design \(CfAD\)](#) recently surveyed global institutional investors about how their sentiments around health had changed because of COVID-19. Roughly 90 percent of respondents said that they were now planning to incorporate health considerations into their environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) metrics.

Biophilic design

Studies show that immersive biophilic environments can improve occupants' satisfaction and cognitive performance, while reducing stress. Use of natural materials promotes the understanding that the office is an extension of the employee's ideal environment. An inspiring and pleasant space can impact productivity and happiness. Biophilic design centres around increasing occupant connectivity to the natural environment using direct nature, indirect nature

“The human need for movement, spontaneity, interaction, variety and other experiences hardwired into us as hunter-gatherers is only possible when we have access to multiple places and settings.”

[World Economic Forum](#)

MB4 by Avignon Capital and Savills Portugal

One of the largest office buildings in Lisbon dating back to the eighties is ready for the 21st century. 'MB4' by Avignon Capital and Savills Portugal is located in the epicentre of the prestigious business area of Lisbon.

Guests and tenants entering the building will be wowed by the stunning lobby featuring interactive screens showing engaging energy insights with hello energy. Although most of the glass façade and other original elements have been repurposed to keep its appealing aesthetic, the building's performance has been bumped way up into the green zone. With a pre-certification process for BREEAM In-Use, it's ready to welcome tenants with some amazing new features:

- Renewed electrical equipment
- New ventilation systems
- Green & renewable energy with photovoltaic panels
- Water-saving system
- Sensors on each floor to measure air quality and occupancy



and space and place conditions. But this focus on the natural environment is not entirely new. Bo-miljø or 'Living Environment', written by Danish environmental psychologist Ingrid Gehl in 1971 identified eight basic psychological needs that people have in relation to their living environments: human contact, privacy, varied experiences, purposefulness, play, structure and orientation within environment, ownership and identification with the community and space, and aesthetics and beauty.

Nature-centric amenities

As told by [several real estate leaders](#), tenants seem to be more intrigued by a building with access to outdoor terraces and nearby parks than during pre-COVID time. Following the latest trend in office perks, [Nuveen hired a beekeeper](#) to teach tenants about their tiny new neighbours and harvest honey for them to take home. Office workers who were sent home during pandemic lockdowns often sought refuge in nature. Making the office world feel more like the natural world is now something more people want. "There's a lot more focus on amenities and how to make an office better than working from your dining room table," said Richard A. Cook, a founding partner at CookFox Architects. Some companies say nature-centered amenities have won them over. And some workers find the outdoorsy vibe reassuring."

At the Foursquare head office, rooms are dedicated to some of the positive psychological triggers for employees, adopting a 'herbivore room' covered in plants to increase the quality of air and promote association with the outdoor world.

Last but not least, [healthy and convenient food options](#) are something more favourable than ever before.

“Modern real estate investors should focus on establishing opportunities for bo miljø activities like walking, playing and conversing in high-traffic areas, but also in public areas or neighborhoods with limited resources. Including these principles in commercial buildings can further establish a well-developed human psyche. Already, we’ve seen major cities like New York City and Philadelphia implement high-rise parks for walking, exercising and conversing. New construction should emphasize physical and mental stimulation through Bo-miljø principles by incorporating more interactive games and art, open space, and areas for recreational activities, with interconnected technologies for the spread of communication and information.”

[Forbes.com](#)

A pathway to better spaces through certification

Fitwell, WELL and Reset are certification standards providing practical pathways to safety, health, indoor air quality and wellbeing. They help guide us on the best way to build and design the spaces we live in. But they can also be industry differentiators for landlords and tenants to promote their buildings. 'Healthy buildings' that use the certifications get between 4-7.7% more rent per square foot than their nearby peers that are not WELL or FITWEL certified.

Want to learn 20 interesting facts about healthy offices?

[Look at our infographic →](#)

BentallGreenOak: a Fitwel champion

BentallGreenOak is part of Fitwel Champion, a program for leading companies that commit to using Fitwel at scale across their portfolios.

BGO achieved Fitwel certification for three different projects, one of which was Two St. Thomas in Toronto, Canada's first Fitwel-certified multi-family residential building.

BGO has been awarded the Fitwel Best In Building Health Awards in 2021. Those included the prestigious Industry Leadership Award for co-authoring the "[A New Investor Consensus: The Rising Demand for Healthy Buildings](#)" Report and applying Fitwel's Viral Response Module (VRM) at scale across its U.S. office portfolio. In 2020, they've committed to expand the certification across their portfolio.



3. Building a community

The function of an office is slowly shifting. The office should offer an experience as comfortable as home, but with compelling, energetic spaces and a sense of community that isn't obtainable at home. Employees will come back to the office for team events and collaboration. There are several ways to create more social and inclusive experiences that your visitors will find appealing and engage them in different behaviours, such as offering health programs, sustainability efforts and gamification elements. What makes an office space inspire new behaviour? Discover our insights here.



Technology in the tenant journey



Having thoughtful strategies around the various stages of the tenant engagement process will cater to each individual's specific needs, and ensure that tenants and their employees have good reason to return to the workplace – and, better yet, are excited to do so. In the long run, this will increase net operating income and make sure your property remains desirable to tenants. [HQO defines three stages](#) where you can use technology to activate, engage and build loyalty. Each stage incorporates a variety of memorable experiences that keep tenants and their employees hooked from the moment they leave their houses, to the moment they step into the office and throughout their entire day.

“The office should be a sort of clubhouse where serendipity and creativity happen – something you didn’t know you were looking for.”

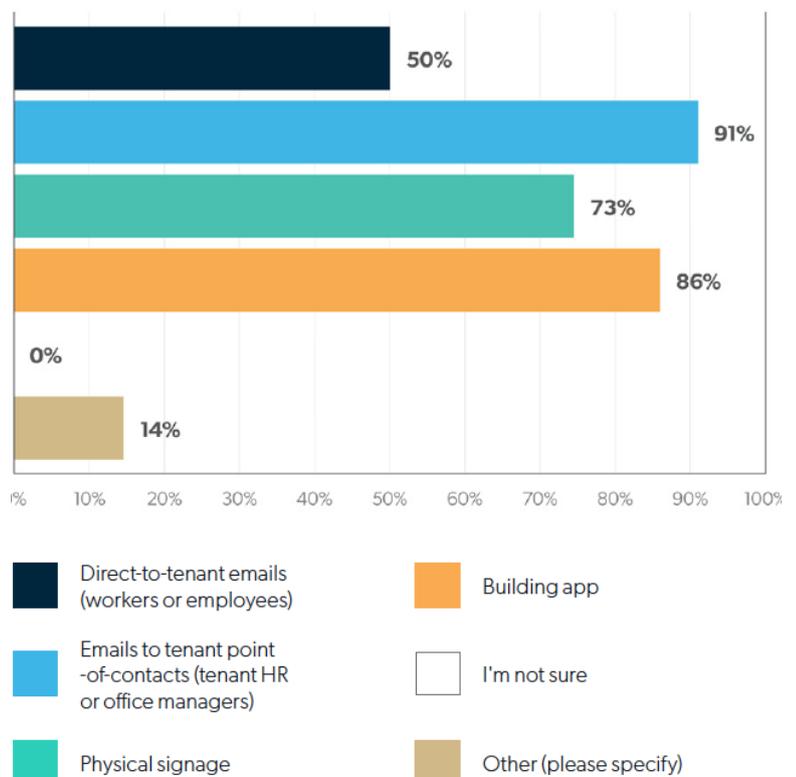
Hans Meyer, CEO Zoku

According to the transtheoretical model of behaviour change – a psychotherapy theory that assesses an individual's readiness to create healthier behaviours through strategies or guided stages – an important step is minimise intellectual overload with clear, easy-to-use functions. This is an important note for those looking to integrate technology into their tenant engagement programs. (Source: Forbes)

The four C's

“Engaging often comes down to the ‘Four C's,’” says Cushman & Wakefield Community Manager Cortney Haney: “competition, convenience, community, and conscience.” Making the life/work balance a little bit more convenient by bringing in things such as a shoeshine service, dry cleaning and onsite dining. But they also emphasise the advantages of integrating a company's tenants with the local community.

How do you typically promote property events and communications? (Select all that apply)



Source: [Tenant Engagement report HQO](#)

Gamification

Gaming technology and its interaction with real-life situations is likely to play more of a role in the way we work in the future, especially in the office.

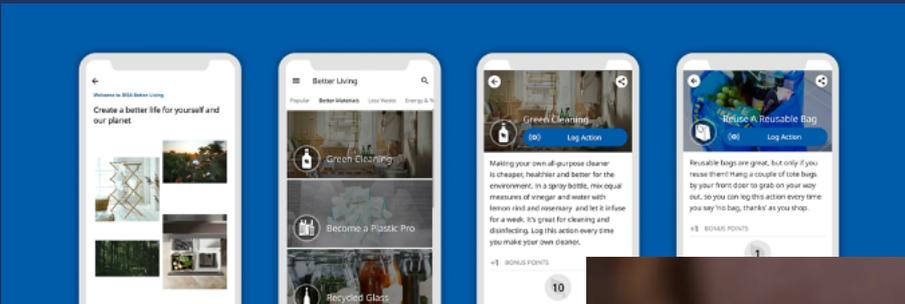
Interactive tech could overcome the downsides of working from home and create a sort of ‘mixed reality’, where people in a physical space and a digital space can interact. But gamification has a lot more potential, as you can read in our highlighted case study from IKEA & Joulebug.

“We have this new workforce that is a little more socially and eco-conscious, and we want to make sure we’re adhering to those values. We want our tenants to be able to support the local community through events and programs that maybe support minority-owned businesses or local nonprofits. We run free libraries, and offer philanthropic programs throughout the year to try to achieve those goals. Our buildings are not just physical spaces. They’re living, breathing communities.”

Cortney Haney, Cushman & Wakefield
Community Manager

IKEA& JouleBug’s planet-focused initiatives

IKEA wanted a way to showcase its considerable sustainable product offerings and planet-focused initiatives. They also wanted to engage coworkers and help them better understand their product line. The JouleBug platform helps IKEA track the impact of its Initiatives. IKEA hosts challenges throughout the world in 25 markets for coworkers and customers. They offer significant incentives and prizes and involve leadership and influencers to increase participation. The JouleBug platform helps them track the significant impact their initiatives have.



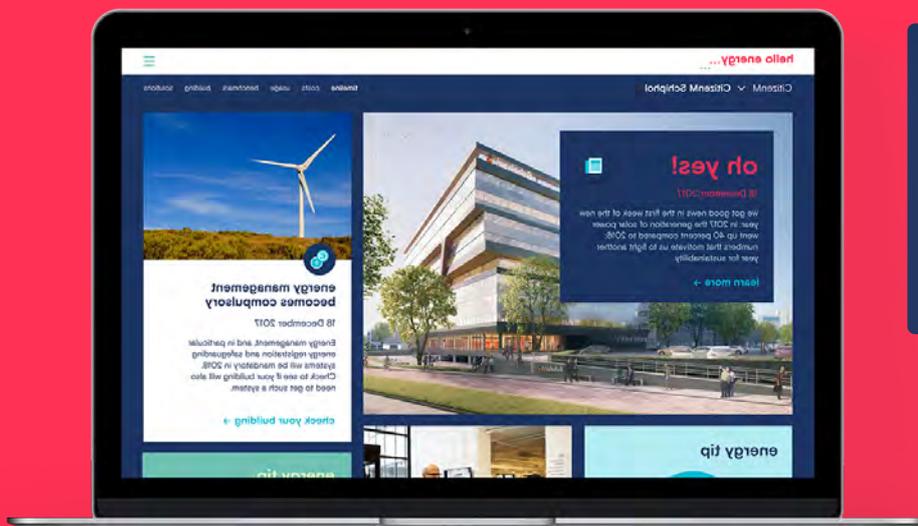
Thank you for reading our white paper

A bit more about us

Want to go net zero but don't know how to get there? That's simply impossible without involving others.

hello energy is a SaaS solution that allows real estate owners to create energy-positive buildings. It helps you to engage and align your stakeholders. It offers understandable and visual insights and lots of smart features. Everything you'll need to know about sustainability will be at your fingertips and in plain sight.

hello energy...



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about us here.

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