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Together makes progress

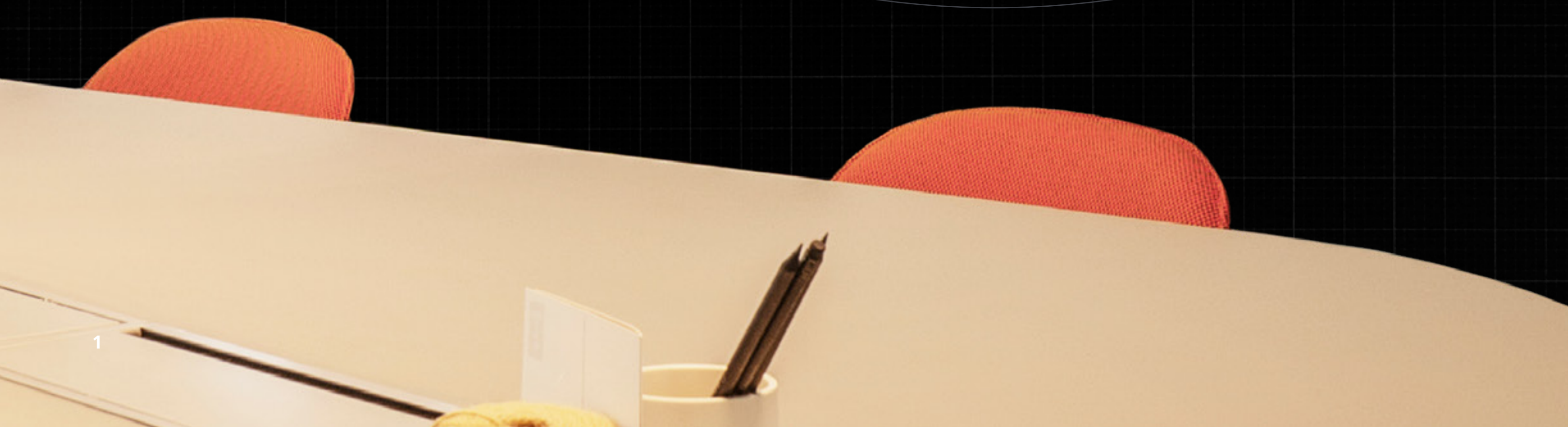
The power of place

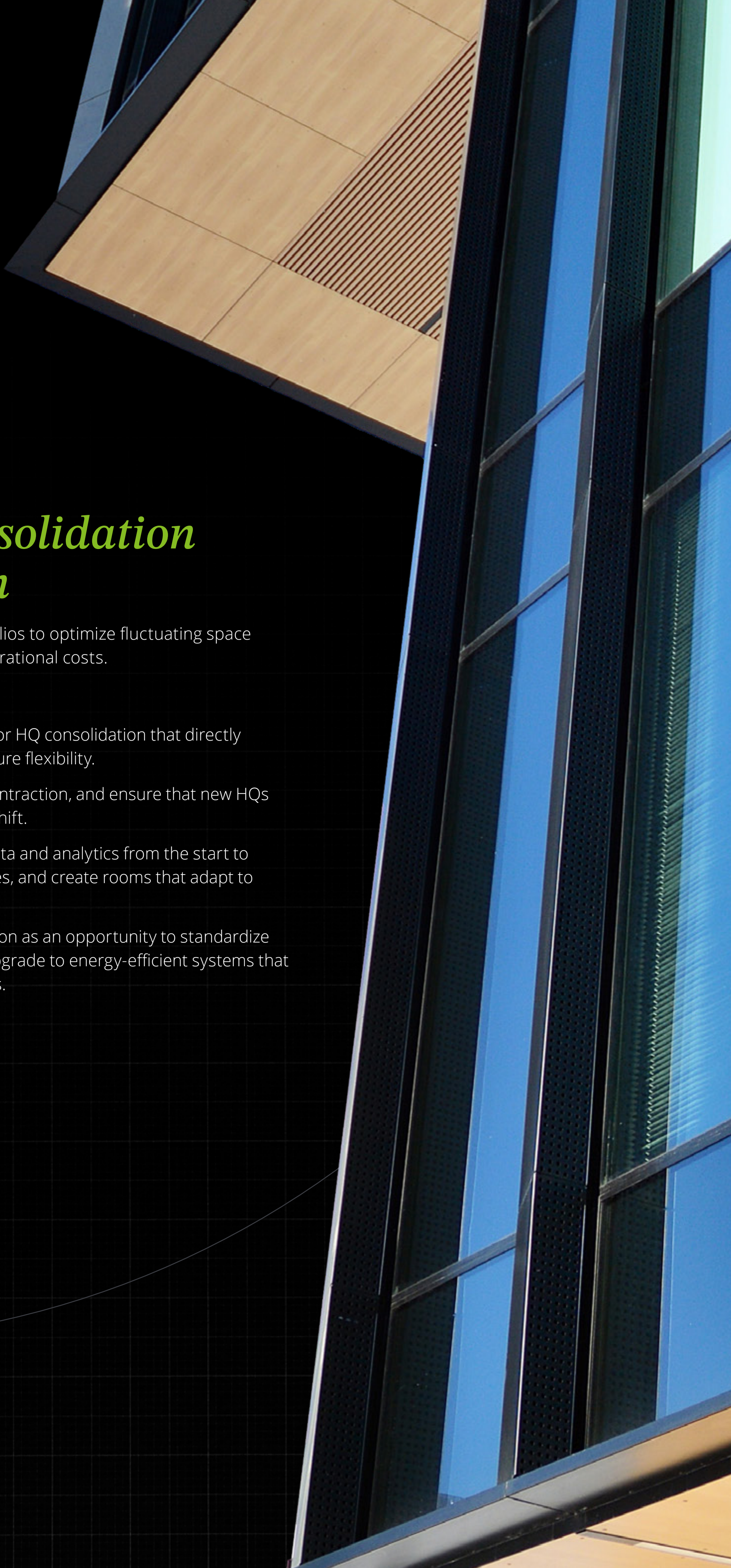
The new golden age of the corporate headquarters

PART 2

From space to *experience*

Building on the four drivers outlined in part 1—market consolidation, evolving employee expectations, corporate brand embodiment, and tech-enabled efficiency— this part explores how CRE leaders can translate them into action and deliver a truly landmark headquarters.





Trend 1: Market consolidation and space utilization

Organizations are centralizing their real estate portfolios to optimize fluctuating space needs, simplify lease management, and reducing operational costs.

How CRE leaders should respond:

- **Establish clear objectives:** Build a business case for HQ consolidation that directly supports cost efficiency, space optimization, and future flexibility.
- **Scenario planning:** Evaluate potential growth or contraction, and ensure that new HQs are modular and able to flex as workforce patterns shift.
- **Optimize space utilization:** Leverage utilization data and analytics from the start to rightsize environments, design multifunctional spaces, and create rooms that adapt to changing occupancy levels.
- **Maximize operational efficiency:** Use consolidation as an opportunity to standardize leases, implement smart building technology, and upgrade to energy-efficient systems that drive down costs and support environmental targets.

Trend 2: Evolving employee expectations

A multigenerational workforce demands tech-enabled, frictionless destination hubs that earn the daily commute by prioritizing experience, wellness, and collaboration.

How CRE leaders should respond:

- **Prioritize location and accessibility:** Place HQs where they're accessible and attractive to top talent with reasonable commutes.
- **Human-centered design:** Integrate collaborative hubs, quiet zones, wellness amenities, and flexible work areas that cater to diverse working styles and well-being.
- **Invest in experience for all:** Create environments that attract and retain employees through a sense of belonging, while providing experiential touchpoints for clients. Use learning hubs as organizational showcases for both internal culture and external marketing.
- **Enable flexibility and choice:** Ensure employees and visiting clients encounter a workplace that supports both collaboration and individual needs, reinforcing your employee and client value proposition.

Trend 3: Embodying the corporate brand

As teams become increasingly dispersed, landmark headquarters must serve as physical statements of purpose that build community and turn abstract corporate values into a tangible experience.

How CRE leaders should respond:

- **Design for culture and community:** Create spaces for collaboration, social connection, and intentional encounters, both formal and informal, to rebuild a sense of belonging.
- **Champion employee engagement:** Involve employees in workspace design, communicate openly about purpose, and use pilot spaces and surveys to foster excitement and buy-in.
- **Cultivate brand identity:** Use architecture, design, and programming to physically express organizational values, purpose, and brand for both employees and visitors.
- **Host onsite events and initiatives:** Support affinity groups, cultural activities, and hybrid-inclusive programming to strengthen community, even for those who are not onsite daily.
- **Communicate and celebrate:** Share progress and impact stories to reinforce value and keep stakeholders, employees, and leadership engaged.
- **Design for experience and inspiration:** Move beyond “space as a service” to intentional, vibrant environments that support learning, creativity, and cross-functional teamwork.

Trend 4: Tech-enabled workplaces driving smarter, more efficient real estate operations

Modern building technologies and real-time data shift the office from a static asset into a dynamic platform capable of predicting operational needs and driving continuous portfolio optimization.

How CRE leaders should respond:

- **Build an integrated data ecosystem:** Consolidate operational technology, IT, integrated workplace management system (IWMS), HR, and space-booking data into a unified platform for a real-time, single-pane-of-glass view to monitor space usage, gather feedback, and refine environments to remain engaging and productive.
- **Shift from reactive to predictive operations:** Use AI and analytics to anticipate maintenance, occupancy, and energy needs before problems arise, minimizing disruption to occupants and optimizing the workplace experience.
- **Strategic alignment from day one:** Engage HR, IT, finance, and brand stakeholders to ensure workplace design advances organizational technology priorities, vision, and goals from the outset, and tie technology investment to outcomes.
- **Upskill and educate the team:** Embed data analysts and digital specialists; reposition the function as a technology-enabled strategic adviser to support technology adoption across the organization.

Build the *ecosystem*, not just the building

A landmark headquarters is more than a real estate asset; it is a living ecosystem where people, business, and place converge to drive resilience, innovation, and belonging. CRE leaders play a pivotal role in aligning strategic priorities with purposeful design, operational intelligence, and empowering workplace experiences. When these trends and responses come together, the potential result is a headquarters development that contributes to attracting and retaining talent, inspiring people to connect with the brand, and advancing organizational goals into the future.

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