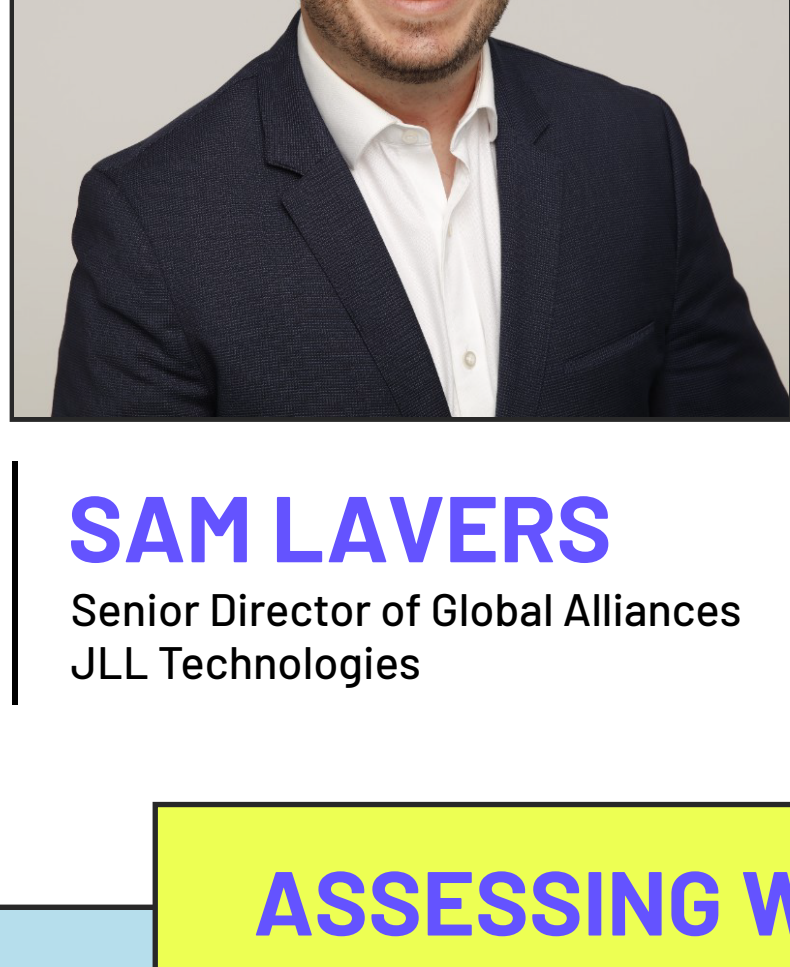




7 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN BUYING WORKPLACE SOFTWARE



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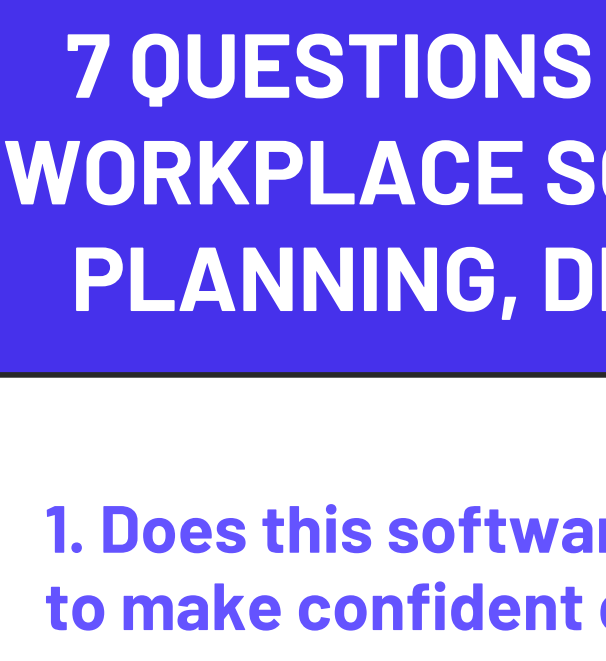
Sam Lavers is a Senior Director of Global Alliances at JLL Technologies. Sam has successfully led the global delivery of real estate technologies and is passionate about topics such as workplace digitalization, IoT, and digital twin.

The JLL Technologies Global Alliances group connects property owners and occupiers to best of breed intelligent real-estate innovation and solutions. They facilitate a world class partner ecosystem consisting of industry thought leaders and are working with major tech companies around the world.



ASSESSING WORKPLACE SOFTWARE

When it comes to planning, designing, and optimizing workspace, many are trying to use old processes and methodologies to adapt their real estate portfolios for the future.



As dynamic times continue to challenge our understanding of what the office's purpose is, a lot of software is emerging to help address these shifts.

As companies look to consolidate and optimize their real estate portfolios, new and innovative software must be leveraged in order to reanalyze, redesign, and reimagine office space, at large.

This guide will help you establish a baseline criteria when shopping for workplace software.

7 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ASSESSING WORKPLACE SOFTWARE FOR WORKPLACE PLANNING, DESIGN, AND OPTIMIZATION



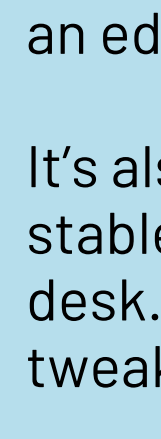
1. Does this software allow us to leverage our workplace data to make confident decisions?

If you're collecting any data to drive decision making—both at the project level with workplace teams and at the executive level with stakeholders—everyone involved has to be confident in the quality and provenance of the data.

From utilization data to employee sentiment data, a workplace software solution must be able to securely process and provide accurate representations of your real estate (RE) portfolio.

After capturing all these data points, the software should also provide actionable next steps on how space could be modified—when this occurs, workplace teams can act on data confidently.

Conversely, when teams start to question the quality of the data it can be a slippery slope to fall back into archaic and inefficient processes to gain confidence. Without data integrity information becomes meaningless.



2. Does this software allow us to redefine ratios for our distributed, hybrid workforce?

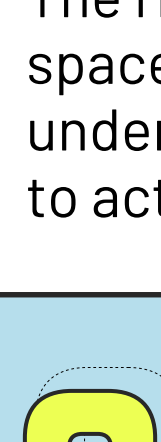
*In order to redefine **ratios** for hybrid work, workplace teams must have real time, granular visibility into the way office space is being used.*

Workplace teams can't depend on historical data for this because employees are using space in totally different ways—looking at the “now” of space utilization is critical.

A software that can enable this analysis and provide insights into what ratios will work based on current utilization and behavioral data, will give workplace teams an edge.

It's also important to be able to iterate ratios. Historically, ratios were stable—everyone came to the office 5 days a week and everyone had their own desk. Workplace teams may have done a space analysis once a year to make tweaks in design.

The workplace is no longer a static structure—the workplaces of the future will be a continual iteration fueled by rapid prototyping of digital environments that intake real-time utilization and behavioral data. Workplace teams must be able to adjust and play test the digital environment as evolving trends reveal how physical spaces could be altered.



3. Does this software allow us to benchmark our space against others in our industry?

Depending on the size of your workplace, benchmarking your spaces against others in your industry can be a great way to stay ahead of talent attraction and retention.

For example, a multinational, Fortune 500 organization—with a globally distributed workforce—can better position talent attraction and retention efforts by engaging in workplace benchmarking.

While this type of organization should ensure all offices are up to their workplace design standards, it's important for them to understand that with a distributed workforce, there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution.

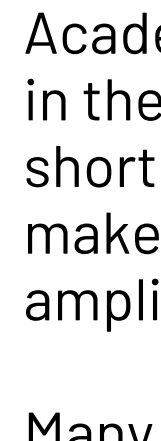
Different cultural trends in different cities and countries is one reason why there isn't a blanket spatial solution.

For example, **offices in the UK** are experiencing much greater rates of office re-entry than many **metropolitan offices in the US** where utilization rates remain much lower.

This type of geographic benchmarking, in conjunction with industry benchmarking, is a great way to align your space to the types of people you're trying to attract and retain.

Once you've benchmarked and deployed space offerings, the work isn't over—spaces will evolve over time as cultural and social shifts naturally occur.

The right workplace software must be able to measure not only the utilization of space but the experience of space as well. Getting a multidimensional understanding of how people interact with space, enables you to get clear calls to action to improve the experience and efficiency of your space, over time.



4. What sort of mechanisms does the software have to better position future capital projects?

As previously mentioned, how we use the office has changed and is continuing to change in a more fluid fashion.

While many folks are using **office space for activities like collaboration**, the employee perception of office space still matters.

For example, if someone comes into an office—expecting to see colleagues and collaborate in-person—and is stuck on Zoom calls all day, they may feel like their commute was a waste of time and their feelings towards the office will likely become increasingly negative.

Conversely, we can't over-index on collaborative and social spaces, and forget to have spaces where people can focus on individual work. Some people want to use office space for heads down work but if they can't find a quiet place to work, they'll just stay home—perpetuating the idea that “no one goes in.”

Striking the right balance between “me,” “we,” and “us” spaces won't happen overnight. Offices need to change and adapt as worker norms and trends evolve.

The right workplace software should illuminate how people are using the office, help you determine what will attract them, and enable you to model different designs that will allow you to plan capital projects efficiently and confidently—no matter what the future holds

This is what makes software so important—workplace teams have to frequently run scenarios and rapidly test floorplans digitally.

- “What if we plan for a 3:10 person to desk ratio but twice as many people show up?”
- “Are collaborative spaces actually being used for collaboration?”
- “We planned for people to come into the office two days a week but what if they come in three or four days a week?”

A software that can help you forecast changes by playing with all the “what ifs”—based on utilization and employee sentiment data—helps workplace teams get educated up front and make better, more confident decisions when it's time to hit “go” on a project.



5. Can this software help us stay on budget and be more cost effective?

*With **more than half** of capital projects running over budget, it's more important than ever to make sure you have a software in place that allows you to track and manage budget with granularity.*

Academics will say that successful projects require the bulk of time to be spent in the planning phase. In practice, deadlines mean that planning is often shortened which exposes more risk to project success. A software that can make the planning phase more accurate and efficient, will see those benefits amplified downstream.

Many workplace teams are trying to complete capital projects faster but must still have a way to monitor costs. A software that centralizes and digitizes the bill of materials—outlining everything from furnishings to drywall—will help workplace teams track and manage costs, reduce the risk of budget overruns, and keep projects moving at a steady pace.



6. Can this software visually engage everyone involved in the process, no matter what design experience they may or may not have?

Providing a visually engaging digital environment democratizes stakeholder engagement and removes the need to be an architect or designer in order to participate in the conversation.

Floorplans can be abstract and a language not held in common by all stakeholders—think Workplace Strategist <> CEO—which can stifle efficient collaboration. Misinterpretations are bound to happen and causes a lot of back and forth, iterations to floorplans, confusing communication streams, and wasted time and money.

A workplace design software needs to be able to let everyone “experience” what their office might look like in a contextual, digital realm—especially if they don't have a background in design.

Leveraging a software that can help folks “walk” a virtual floorplan to properly visualize the design, can help engagement points and provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to provide feedback.

7. Does this software enhance collaboration across all stakeholders?

Stakeholder collaboration is critical if workplace teams are going to be aligned and complete capital projects with agility.

Using a waterfall approach—i.e., a linear approach to project management—has too many steps and can result in a game of “telephone.” People hear what they want to hear which can cause miscommunication and misalignment.

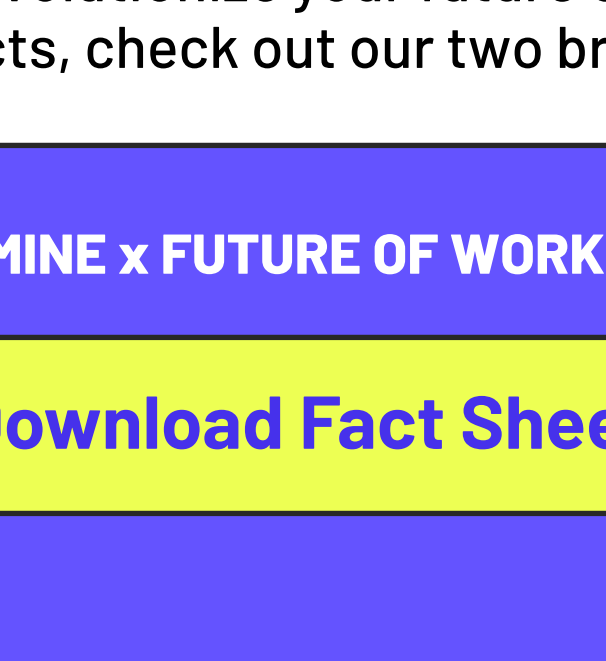
For example, let's say the architect goes to the contractor with a floorplan and the contractor says they've designed something physically impossible to build or a potential safety hazard. The architect makes tweaks, gets approval from the contractor, and then goes to the CFO who informs them it's over budget. From there, the architect makes another round of tweaks, gets approval from the CFO just to find out that the Sustainability Officer has issues with the cheaper materials because they're not eco-friendly.

By the time it gets to the CEO for final approval, the floorplan doesn't look anything like it did when it was first proposed. This scenario is all too common and is one of the reasons why **77% of capital projects** are behind schedule.

A software that can bring all stakeholders together—early on and throughout the process—and visually engage them so everyone can give feedback in real-time, is the only way to avoid endless approval spin cycles.

From pre-design to design approval, agile workplace software should provide accessibility and visibility to all project members and stakeholders in such a way that when it gets to construction, there are no gaps, misalignments, or discrepancies.

MAKING OFFICES BETTER FOR PEOPLE



Ultimately, the right workplace software should be centered around the idea of making offices better for the people who use them.

The new era of work is dynamic and driven by people who work in evolving ways. What's relevant now, may not be next year.

This new, evolving era of work requires new solutions that can positively impact the end-user's workplace experience.

Utilization and employee sentiment data should be the driving force behind capital projects. A software that can streamline workflows and leverage data to inform space iterations is a must have for any workplace tech stack.

HOW THE SALTMINES PLATFORM CHECKS ALL OF THESE BOXES

To learn how Saltmine's cloud-based workplace optimization platform can help you revolutionize your future of workplace planning and streamline capital projects, check out our two brief Fact Sheets below:

SALTMINES x FUTURE OF WORKPLACE

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