bGrid®

built to adapt

Giving Alkmaar's municipal offices a green facelift

Shiny new eco-buildings are celebrated for their state-of-the-art technology and eye-catching designs. But, it's just as vital to maintain and improve older buildings so they are suited to the modern economy. This is one of the major challenges we face as we look to make our cities more sustainable.

Retro-fitting is an effective way to make older office buildings more energy efficient. Adding new smart technology can also make them healthier and more pleasant places to work, as well as better suited to 21st century flexible business practices.

Photo: Marcel van de berg

Project scope, implementation and benefits

To meet the objective of providing a modern, flexible office, the building was completely gutted to create 4,500 square metres of open working spaces. A café in the centre of the building now provides an attractive, light-filled meeting place. This encourages idea sharing and project collaboration, as well as giving employees a pleasant environment to relax and socialise.

"We're introducing huge cultural changes to the way we work," explains Patrick. "With cloud computing and mobile devices, people can work remotely and flexibly. We no longer evaluate performance based on the number of hours an employee spends in the office. We are much more task, team and project oriented."

Alkmaar's project team worked with bGrid to implement a node network, applied to the climate and space control of the building. This gives them an end-user application that makes it easier to find their colleagues around the building. It also enables the Facilities team to control the use of space in the building and the indoor climate.

"We chose to work with bGrid in part because their building management system could be easily integrated with our own systems," says Patrick. "Our employees are starting to enjoy the benefits of flexible working and bGrid's technology is helping people to adapt. For example, we can find out where our colleagues are at any given time inside the building using bGrid® in combination with the Mapiq application. This also gives us dynamic meeting room booking, based on real time occupancy."

"bGrid's technology is helping our employees explore the benefits of flexible and collaborative working."

Photo: Marcel van de berg

Project challenges and future potential

Embedding new technology and cultural change is never easy. *"We have people who have worked in the same department for many years,"* explains Patrick. *"They are very experienced and knowledgeable professionals but change is not always welcome. One way we overcame resistance and scepticism was by choosing early adopters of the technology from each department to act as champions."*
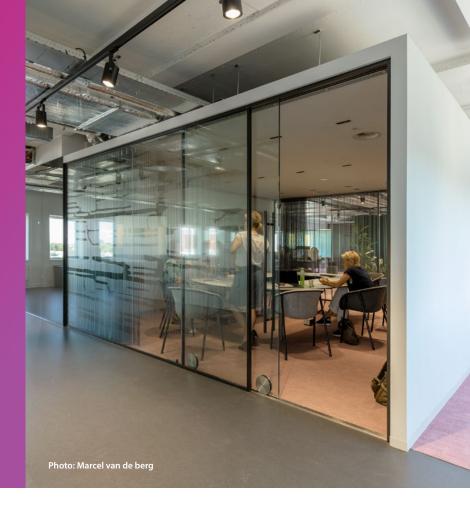
"We also had challenging budgets and tight time constraints to meet. We were successful because bGrid is an open system and we were able to work collaboratively with them. They were always available to talk through any issues and we solved problems together."

It is early days for this project, in terms of data collection and analysis. But the bGrid technology enables Alkmaar's data science team to monitor temperature, humidity, and occupancy levels across the entire building. In the future, this data will help them become more energy efficient and save money.

"We now have a beautiful environment that our employees love working in," concludes Patrick. *"And, over the next year we will be collecting data and gaining insight on how we are using the building. This will help us to continuously improve the employee environment in terms of health and efficiency."*

bGrid®

built to adapt

bGrid
built to adapt

"We worked in partnership with bGrid, talking through problems and working them out together."

Over recent years, the high profile retro-fitting of the Empire State building proved that age is no barrier to going green and being smart. This Alkmaar local government project has proved that retro-fitting can also be hugely beneficial on a more modest scale and budget.

Key facts

Location	:	Alkmaar, the Netherlands
Industry	:	Local government
Smart building functionalities	:	Building Analytics, Colleague Finder, Room Booking, Building Management System (BMS).

bGrid®
built to adapt