

Your Building is Your Brand



Jennifer Townsend
Partner, Occupier Insight
30th March 2026

On 12 March 2026, Google unveiled the name of its new King's Cross, London headquarters: Platform 37. The name is a double reference to the neighbouring railway station and to "Move 37", the pivotal play made by Google DeepMind's AlphaGo system in a legendary 2016 match against Go world champion Lee Sae Dol. Alongside the name, Google announced The AI Exchange, a public-facing community space dedicated to AI education, exhibitions and events.

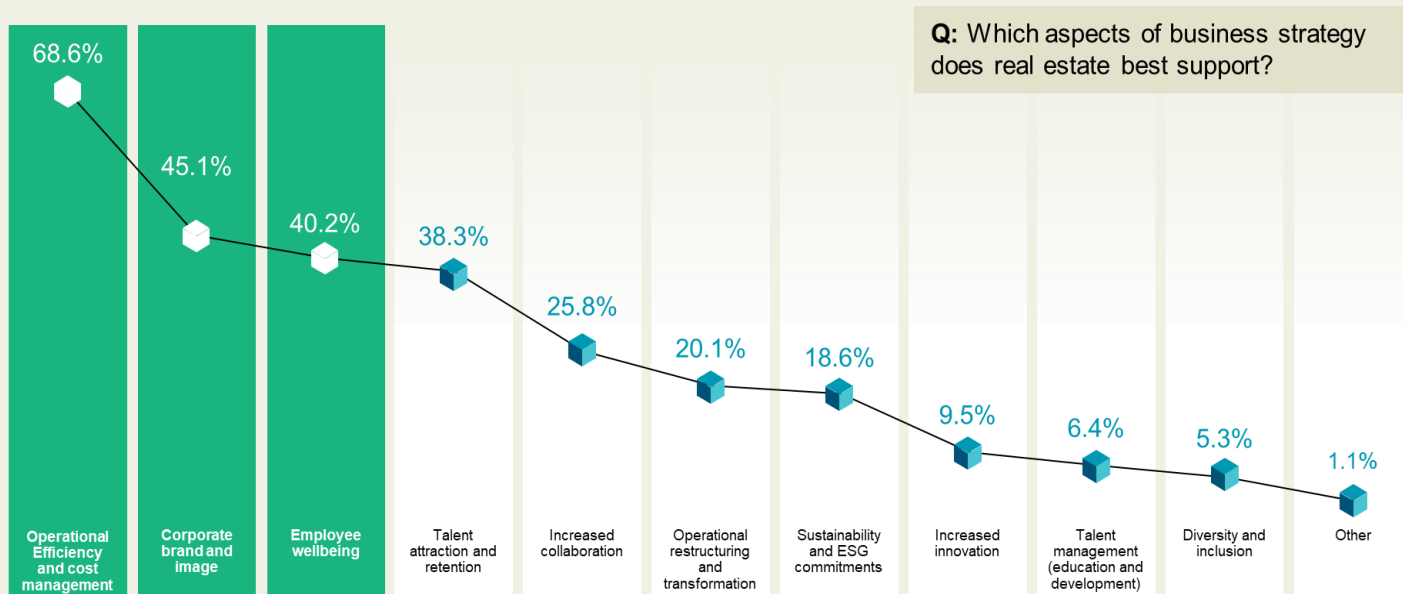
The announcement is a masterclass in using a building to embed brand. In a single stroke, Google has woven together its corporate origin story, its technological vision, its commitment to community and its relationship with place. The building is not merely an office. It is, as DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis put it, "a monument to science and intelligence."

Google is not alone. A growing cohort of firms are treating headquarters relocations not as real estate transactions but as brand-defining moments. The building itself has become a strategic communications asset: a three-dimensional expression of who a company is, what it values and where it is going.

Why this matters now

Companies today are transforming at a pace that would have been unimaginable a decade ago. AI is reshaping operating models, ESG commitments are redefining corporate purpose, hybrid working is altering how space is used, and M&A activity is at near record levels, creating newly merged entities that need to project a unified identity. Yet many of these same companies are occupying buildings secured on leases signed ten or more years ago. Spaces that were chosen for a version of the business that no longer exists. The brand may have been refreshed, the strategy pivoted entirely, but the building? It often remains a relic of a former era, communicating a message the company has moved on from.

That is not a trivial concern. Knight Frank's global [CRE survey](#) found that brand and image is ranked second in a list of strategic priorities that real estate best supports, behind only cost control and operational efficiency. In other words, senior real estate leaders recognise that physical workplaces are one of the most powerful tools available to express and reinforce corporate brand and image.



Source: Knight Frank, 2025
N=264. Results as a % of respondents. Respondents chose their top three

The wider evidence is unambiguous. Research shows that consistent brand presentation can increase revenue by up to 23%. Conversely, inconsistent branding was found to create market confusion. When the physical workplace contradicts the narrative projected through other channels, the result is a drag on performance.

A lease event or new office opening is therefore one of the most strategically significant moments a company has to realign its physical presence with its brand. The firms profiled in this piece have used exactly these moments to make bold statements about who they are.



The building as a brand: Ten levers

Analysis of recent high-profile headquarters moves identifies ten distinct levers through which occupiers are embedding brand into the built environment.

Brand Lever

What It Communicates



Building name and signage
(acknowledging this is not always possible)

Heritage, ambition, narrative identity



Architecture & façade

Innovation, permanence, cultural weight



Location & neighbourhood

Talent strategy, ecosystem alignment, proximity to clients, cultural positioning



Arrival and overall user experience

First impression, prestige, hospitality, brand immersion, sensory cued



Interior design & fit-out

Values, culture, working style. This becomes more important as offices become ever more permeable to clients, not just for meetings but also for drop in facilities.



Technology integration

Modernity, efficiency, digital-first mindset, innovative



Amenity & wellness

Employee investment, talent magnetism, social impact, vibrancy



Community & public space

Civic purpose, openness, social licence



Co-occupiers & prestige

Peer group signalling



Sustainability credentials

Values alignment, future-readiness

Case studies: Brand in bricks and mortar

All case studies are based on publicly available information..



Salesforce

Salesforce uses its real estate to make culture and values visible, embedding brand language directly into the workplace. Its global towers carry the Salesforce name, reinforcing presence and scale, while specific levels are designated as ‘Ohana Floors’—event spaces that reflect the company’s emphasis on community, inclusion and shared purpose. These floors are designed to be used by nonprofits and foundations. By naming and programming space in this way, Salesforce turns its buildings into living expressions of brand, signaling openness, values-led leadership and long-term commitment to employees, clients and the cities it occupies



SEGA

SEGA uses its European headquarters at Chiswick Park, UK to celebrate brand, heritage and creative culture through the workplace. The office is designed as a showcase of SEGA’s gaming legacy, with corridors displaying timelines of consoles and franchises, game-themed meeting rooms and prominent Sonic the Hedgehog installations that make the brand immediately recognisable. By embedding its history and intellectual property directly into the fabric of the building rather than treating branding as surface decoration, SEGA reinforces a sense of identity, pride and continuity.



LEGO

LEGO uses its workplace as a direct expression of brand, designing offices that translate core values of creativity, play and quality into physical space.

Buildings typically feature bold colour palettes, playful detailing and large-scale LEGO elements that make the brand immediately legible. Crucially, these features are embedded into the architecture rather than applied as surface decoration, creating environments that feel authentic and purposeful. This approach reinforces culture, strengthens employee connection to the brand, and turns the office itself into a tangible statement of what LEGO stands for.



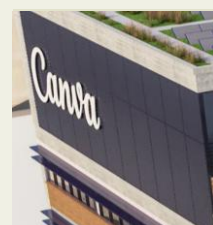
Google

Google uses its Ananta Campus in Bengaluru as a physical expression of scale, openness and human-centred innovation. Designed as a “city within a building,” the workplace is organised into neighbourhoods, streets and shared spaces that support both deep focus and spontaneous collaboration, with the central Sabha amphitheatre acting as a civic heart for community and connection. Strong biophilic design, a wide range of amenities and best-in-class sustainability features embed wellbeing and ESG into the everyday experience. In doing so, Ananta positions Google’s Indian headquarters not simply as an office, but as a global innovation campus that signals long-term commitment to talent, inclusion and responsible growth



GSK

GSK uses its London headquarters as a physical expression of its purpose as a healthcare and life sciences organisation, placing health and wellbeing at the centre of workplace design. The building is intentionally structured around evidence-based principles, with features that promote physical activity, mental wellbeing, inclusion and cognitive performance embedded into the fabric of the space rather than treated as add-ons. From wellness floors and active spaces to biophilic design, air quality monitoring and WELL-aligned standards, the workplace reinforces GSK’s credibility as a health-led organisation.



Canva

Canva is transforming an office building in Sydney into its flagship campus. Through adaptive reuse, the project reflects the company’s “do more with less” ethos by preserving the original structure, brickwork and character. It also brings to life Canva’s commitment to being a force for good, with spaces designed to connect teams and the wider community. The new Sydney campus will include shared areas for events, volunteering and collaboration, with the aim of bringing people together. Reflecting Australia’s Indigenous culture has also been a key part of the design, with input from First Nations communities. Canva also plans to feature murals and works from local galleries, including First Nations artists, throughout the campus.

The so what for occupiers

Six actions for occupiers, informed by best-in-class case studies

01

Name it. A building name or prominent signage can carry an entire narrative connecting heritage, location and corporate mission. Occupiers should consider buildings that offer naming or signage flexibility.

02

Design the arrival. The arrival experience from pavement to reception to lift lobby is the physical equivalent of a homepage and sets the tone.

03

Let the space tell the story. The most effective headquarters don't just plaster logos or vision statements on walls. They embed brand through curated design and fit-out that includes selecting the right materials and paint colours, workplace design, furniture, lighting, tailored artwork, interactive screens and brand aligned user experiences.

04

Use relocation as a reset. A relocation to a new city or submarket can credibly redefine a firm's identity to employees, clients and the market simultaneously. The same is true in the choice of building, from newly constructed architecture to older heritage styles.

05

Convene, don't just occupy. Use the building as a platform for events, education, client and community building. The headquarters that hosts the industry conversation owns a share of the brand equity that comes with it.

06

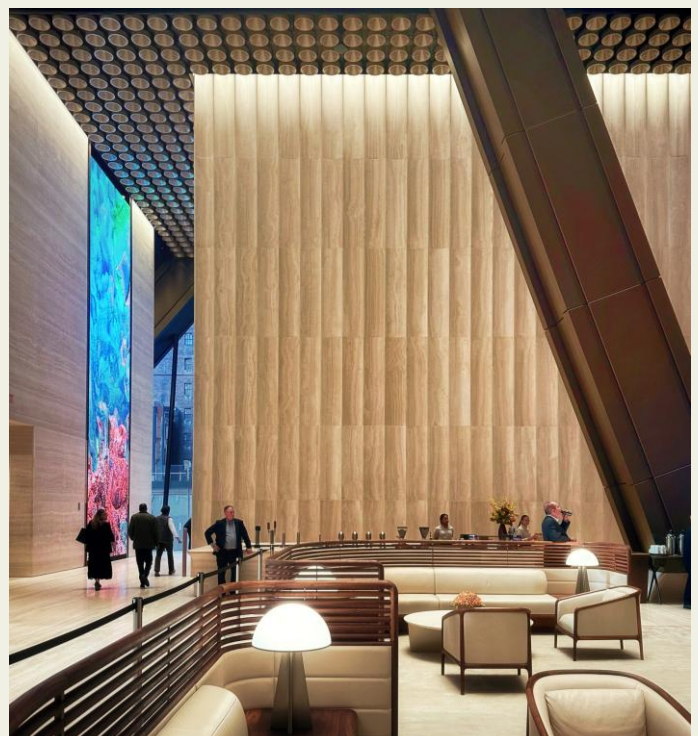
ESG and amenity provision as a visible declaration: Choosing assets with strong ESG credentials and richer amenity provision reinforces brand, culture and credibility.

In conclusion

A building that contradicts the brand is not merely a missed opportunity. It is an active liability. A 24-hour advertisement for the wrong message, running on what is often a ten-year plus contract. Get it right and the returns compound.

When building and brand align, the office accelerates hiring because candidates can feel the culture before they are offered a job. It deepens client relationships because the environment signals ambition, investment and permanence. It improves retention because employees develop an attachment to a workplace that reflects their own sense of purpose. It strengthens commercial negotiations because a prestigious address and design confers credibility.

The question for every occupier approaching a lease decision or considering a new office opening is “what should our building say about us.”



We like questions; if you've got one about our research,
or would like some property advice, we would love to hear from you.



**Head of Global
Occupier Research**

Dr. Lee Elliott
+44 7468 729 187
lee.elliott@knightfrank.com



**Global Head of Occupier
Strategy & Solutions**

Tim Armstrong
+65 6429 3531
tim.armstrong@asia.knightfrank.com



**EMEA Head of Occupier
Strategy & Solutions**

Philipp Ueberschaer
+44 7811 771 416
philipp.ueberschaer@knightfrank.com



**Partner, COO – Occupier
Strategy & Solutions**

Ross Criddle
+44 7870 379 519
ross.criddle@knightfrank.com



**Head of Global Portfolio
Solutions, EMEA**

Giulia Grigolato
+44 20 3967 8561
Giulia.grigolato@knightfrank.com



**Partner, Head of
International, Cross-Border**

Sam King
+44 20 3995 0760
sam.king@knightfrank.com



**Partner, Executive Director,
Strategic Client Development**

James Maddock
+44 20 3540 0030
james.maddock@knightfrank.com



**Head of Global Portfolio
Solutions, APAC**

Francesco Demarco
+61 3 9604 4621
francesco.demarco@au.knightfrank.com