



Money Penny



PEOPLE-CENTRIC WORKPLACE

Leading outsourced communications service Money Penny created an award-winning £15 million flagship headquarters in the UK with the sole aim to make their workforce happy. Now, its 91,000sqft HQ is known as the 'happiest office in the land'.

Money Penny is a world leading outsourced reception and customer support service for businesses of all shapes and sizes, from one-man bands to Magic Circle law firms and large financial corporations. The company started its journey to workplace transformation in 2016 when it set out to answer the question: how can we make our staff happy?

Since Money Penny's inception in 2000, it has expanded globally yet the workforce has consistently remained a top priority for leadership. When it created its new headquarters, the aim was to create a 'happy inspiring place for people to visit and work in with people and sustainability at the heart of design', according to the company's Group CEO Joanna Swash.

The rationale

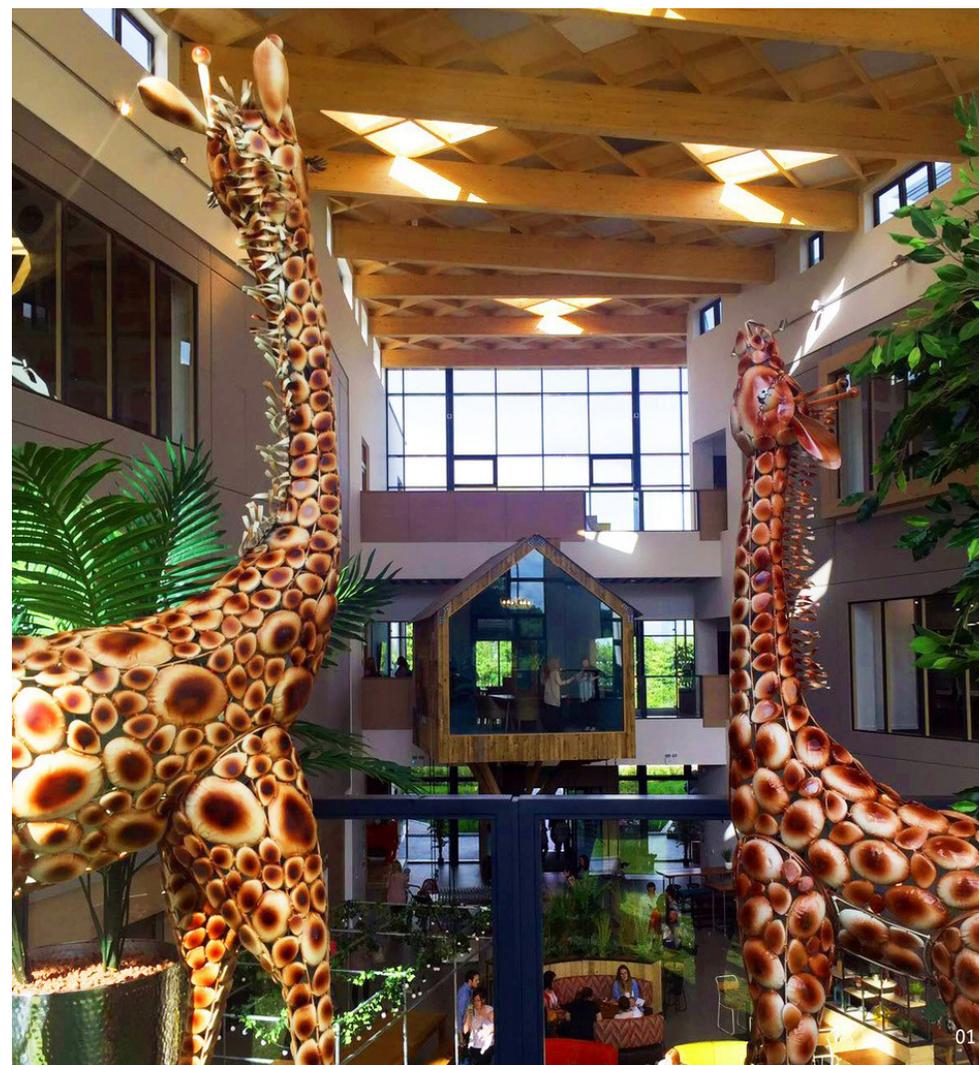
The Money Penny leadership team acknowledged that before the pandemic employees spent the majority of the time in the office; therefore, the office should be somewhere where people want to be. The company is based on the idea that 'happy people equate to happy clients' and this sentiment runs through the entire Money Penny community.

Joanna Swash Group CEO of Money Penny said: 'There are countless studies which have proven that staff are more productive when they enjoy coming to work - but what are companies doing to make this a reality? For us, the building is more than just bricks and mortar. It's a manifestation of our ethos, of our culture and of our aspirations.'

The process

In a unique move, Money Penny took an inclusive approach to co-creation and surveyed its employees. Employees were asked what their perfect office would look like and they were encouraged to take part in small focus groups, as well as send ideas directly to the company directors.

Alongside appointed architects AEW, Money Penny collated this information and used the ideas as the basis for the new office design. Joanna Swash, CEO of Money Penny, said: 'As a company we've never done anything



01. The height atrium featuring the treehouse meeting room

Key Facts

Year	2016
City	Wrexham
Country	UK
Size	91,000sqft
Sector	Communications
Number of People	1,000
Architect	AEW Architects



the conventional way. So, when we made the decision to build a new headquarters, we questioned how we can make sure staff will be happy there? The answer was simple - ask them. We didn't want to create a great workplace based on someone else's vision of brilliant; we wanted it to be somewhere that our staff love.'

The outcome

The result of this people-centric approach was the creation of a three storey, 91,000sqft building which aims to respond to the elements of feedback from Moneypenny employees. The building was built with company growth in mind. When it was first opened only the ground and first floor were fitted out to accommodate the 500 employees. A year later, as the company grew the second floor required a full fit-out and now the building houses close to 1000 employees.

The office has a central triple height atrium

which features a restaurant, bleacher seating and a pub. Located in the atrium is a treehouse meeting room which is made from natural materials and enhances the unique experience of the building. The treehouse is bookable for all employees and there is no hierarchy in terms of who can use it and when. The atrium breaks out into 10 acres of landscaped grounds including a pond, wetlands, an orchard and a woodland nature trail for employees to enjoy.

The office was designed with employee feedback at the centre of the process. For example, socialising is a big part of the company's culture and the founders built a pub where staff can unwind. Feeling comfortable in the office was also an important factor, so every member of staff can personalise their desk space and control the lighting in their immediate area.

Location was also a key consideration in the project development phase. Employees

opted for an idyllic semi-rural setting rather than a city-centre postcode. Environmental considerations were also taken into account. A dislike for air conditioning and strip lighting was made clear, so the company installed a natural ventilation systems and a built in natural light through floor-to-ceiling height windows. The building is also one of the most acoustically innovative buildings in the UK, using a combination of bespoke sound absorption and elimination technology. Acoustic environment is critical to Moneypenny's business as it now handles over 20 million calls annually.

Despite the innovative design and additional amenities, the cost of the entire development was the same price as a standard brick 'box' office approach. 'We provided our architects, AEW, with the same budget we'd been quoted to build a standard office and said 'right, show us how we can create something amazing'. It was a challenge, but we ripped up the

Project Strategy & Partnerships

Moneypenny firmly believes that a happy workforce create happy customers. Therefore, it co-created its headquarters with its staff to develop a workplace that promotes happiness and wellbeing.

Moneypenny partnered with Manchester-based AEW Architects, and Cundall was appointed alongside AEW to provide building services, structural, fire engineering, and specialist AV and BREEAM services. Furness Partnership, Consulting Structural and Civil Engineers, was involved in the design of the central atrium roof structure. Bora Construction carried out the building work on the new office and CW Studio designed the landscape.



Photographs

02. Ground floor of the atrium featuring the restaurant and pub
03. The treehouse meeting room is made from natural materials

rulebook and that's exactly what they did.' As a result, the building has gone on to win several industry awards, including Best Corporate Workplace at the BCO Regional Awards.

While the office plays a central role to employee wellbeing, the staff were able to work remotely during the pandemic due to the cloud-based systems Moneypenny adopted in February 2020. The physical office was also designed with flexibility and adaptability in mind to accommodate for the changing needs of Moneypenny employees. This means that Moneypenny can be resilient to future disruptions.

A people-first approach

Moneypenny strongly believe in promoting wellbeing to its workforce. The company works hard to engage with staff and support their mental and physical wellbeing. During the pandemic Moneypenny introduced a number of new communication channels for its people, including daily team huddles on Teams and regular chats on Workplace by Facebook. This approach had a very high take up with 100 per cent of staff registered to use Workplace, of which 97 per cent use it monthly and 94 per cent use it weekly. The company also hosts virtual drinks, quizzes, yoga and cooking classes.

In addition, Moneypenny offer a free breakfast, free fruit, and subsidised lunches of healthy food, including a salad bar. Moneypenny has its own catering team and they create healthy meals using local produce, sometimes even using fresh ingredients from the office grounds. This was a result of the employee feedback and Moneypenny's commitment to staff wellbeing.

Moneypenny recognises that wellbeing is not

only physical, but also psychological. Joanna Swash commented: 'We carry out random acts of kindness which have a big impact on employee wellbeing and motivation. This could be, for example, we send out chocolate brownies of small gifts with a handwritten note to all employees'. These small acts create a culture of inclusivity and engagement with the company.

Next steps

Moneypenny is constantly consulting its staff to understand their changing needs and expectations. Chat bots are used to check-in with the workforce and find out how they are feeling, and line managers hold regular one-to-ones with their staff. For any big changes, consultations are always organised, and employee feedback is carefully considered.

In response to feedback, Moneypenny are continuing to add new features and adapting the office space to respond to the latest employee needs. For example, it is currently exploring the implementation of electric charging points in the car park as more employees travel to work using hybrid and electric vehicles.

As Moneypenny looks ahead, it is anticipating the needs of employees in the context of hybrid working. In the wake of more flexible working schedules, Moneypenny now has the option to further grow the business and scale teams beyond the current office capacity limit.



Key Features

- Colour-coded meeting room technology
- Bespoke sound absorption and elimination technology developed by sound engineers
- Internal 550sqft gym, shower room and changing area
- Three-storey atrium with treehouse meeting room
- Restaurant and pub
- 10 acres of landscaped grounds



04. The pub promotes the social culture embedded within Moneypenny

For more information:
www.worktechacademy.com