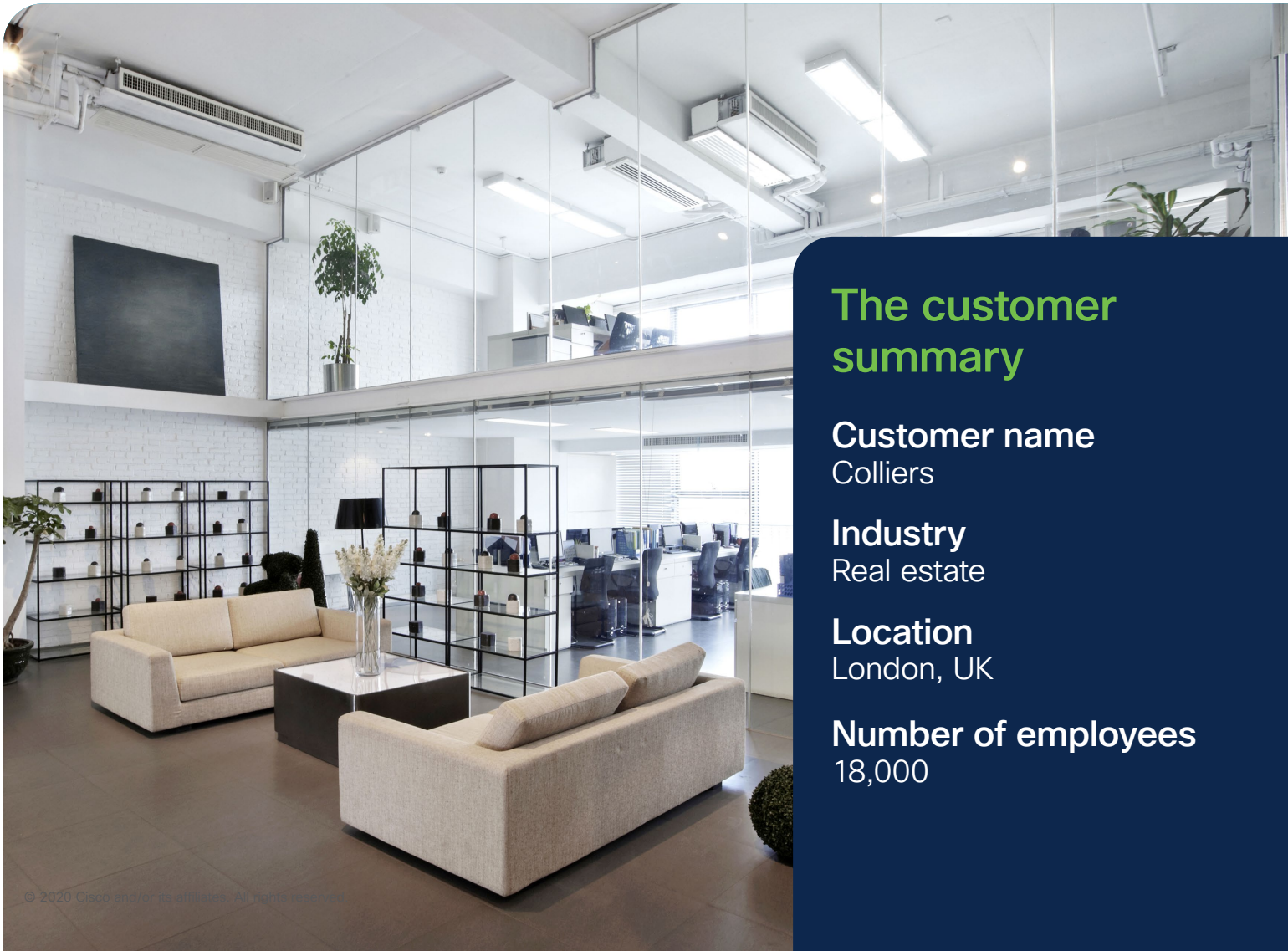


Colliers

Colliers Plans Office of the Future With User Insight Based on Real-Time Analytics

As workers return to the office, global real estate giant maps changing office usage with Cisco Meraki and Basking.io



The customer summary

Customer name
Colliers

Industry
Real estate

Location
London, UK

Number of employees
18,000



Challenges

- Gain visibility into the changing usage of office space
- Inform dynamic decision making with real-time analytics
- Ensure consistent results across all offices



Solutions

- Tracks devices connecting to the Meraki network through the Basking.io app
- Gathers actionable insight within two days, having been deployed within three weeks
- Fine tunes the machine-learning algorithms at each location



Results

- Ensures the safe return to the office with clear occupancy rate controls
- Reveals hotspots and quiet spaces, helping redefine physical office space
- Establishes platform for smart facilities management

Making best use of a changing workplace environment

In many countries, the return to the office is on. After a year of homeworking and video conferencing, of online quizzes and virtual coffee breaks, big business can see the day we return to our corporate offices.

But the office experience is unlikely to be the same as we remember it.

Most experts predict a future of hybrid working. For many of us, this may mean two or three days working from home, focused on tasks: two or three days in the office, meeting colleagues, developing ideas, bonding. Some of us may embrace the opportunity to return to the office full time, while others may decide the five-day WFH approach works for them. Businesses may adapt their offices into hubs for internal and external meetings.

“Much will depend on user preference – what employees want from the office,” says JanJaap Boogaard, Head of Workplace Advisory EMEA, Director Corporate Solutions, Colliers. “That said, it is difficult to predict the future. If we can be certain of anything it is that office space will need to be more flexible.”

Colliers is an expert in real estate. It provides a range of services to real estate occupiers, developers, and investors. It aims to become the expert in planning the smart offices of the future.

“Companies understand the importance of the office, but they recognize the role of the office has changed,” says Boogaard. “They have big decisions to make around investing in office space. And they’re looking for guidance.”

To start, Colliers wanted to be more accurate in the way it mapped office occupancy. It wanted to be able to view occupancy levels in real-time and identify busy times and high-traffic areas. This data would then inform space usage, resource planning, or safety controls. With offices becoming dynamic spaces, rather than historical, paper-based estimates, it wanted to move into the digital age.

“The more data you can harvest, the better,” Boogaard explains, “especially if it’s live and organic.”

“Data allows us to bridge the gap between perception and reality. Data will help us visualize real usage.”

JanJaap Boogaard

Head of Workplace Advisory EMEA
Director Corporate Solutions, Colliers

Tracking devices and users throughout the office

Colliers knew that the key to gathering occupancy and usage data was right there in front of them: the network.

Colliers' smart office ambitions are built on Cisco Meraki. The business chose Cisco Meraki to standardize and streamline its IT infrastructure, a key element of its cloud-first strategy. It enables Colliers to put all its EMEA sites on a unified technological platform, and remotely manage all wireless infrastructure across the region from a single dashboard.

And thanks to its Techstars Proptech Accelerator program, a project to support interesting tech start-ups, Colliers had the right partner to help it turn that data into insight.

Basking.io uses AI and machine learning to track devices that connect to a Wi-Fi network. It can detect the different 'behavior' patterns of a laptop, desktop, or mobile phone and apply statistical methods to estimate whether devices remaining within proximity of one another indicate one person instead of two.

"The technology is so easy to use and integrates seamlessly with Cisco Meraki. You can power up Basking.io, and within a couple of hours you'll start seeing site-occupancy metrics," says Eldar Gizzatov, CEO and Co-Founder of Basking.io.

Before offering Basking.io as a service to clients, Colliers wanted to investigate the use of its own office spaces.

It took just three weeks to deploy Basking.io in 28 offices across EMEA, and only two days to begin collecting actionable data.

"First, we had to determine the location of our access points in relation to the floor plans at our various offices to get a better sense of how people were using our spaces," Boogaard says. "Once connected, Basking.io took a couple of weeks to automatically fine tune the machine-learning algorithms at each location."

Delivering instant insight to inform better, safer working

The adoption of Basking.io arrived at a most fortunate moment. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of offices worldwide. Colliers was quickly able to pivot the use of Basking.io from monitoring workplace efficiency to keeping workers and offices safe.

The primary difference between its initial scope and this repurposed application was changing the nature of the questions asked, Boogaard explains:

"Rather than looking for ways to make our offices more energy- and space-efficient, we started asking how many people were in our workplaces and whether they maintained safe distances from one another. Basking.io provides near instantaneous occupancy data so we can monitor employee safety almost in real time. It will generate an alert if there are too many people in an office or a part of a floor."

"Many companies are already on a journey towards healthier, more sustainable workplaces. We can create offices that are more productive, more of a destination, and the type of places that people are prepared to travel to work and connect with colleagues."

JanJaap Boogaard

Head of Workplace Advisory EMEA, Director Corporate Solutions, Colliers

This detail will be important as workers return to the office, and employers build confidence in the office as a safe space.

“We know the importance of the office in helping onboard new recruits or communicating a corporate culture. People miss the serendipity of those unplanned meetings. Data will help us understand when and where these moments take place,” says Boogaard.

Colliers estimates a typical office currently dedicates 70 percent of floorspace to desks. The new office dynamic may flip this ratio, with more space for collaborative set-ups or relaxed seating. The Basking.io solution will enable Colliers to test and adjust different options.

“Data allows us to bridge the gap between perception and reality,” Boogaard states. “As we return to the office, people will have different ideas on capacity, busy areas, or busy periods. The data will help us visualize real usage.”

The data will also inform smarter facilities management. Employers may be able to close off certain space in anticipation of quieter days (Fridays are expected to be peak working-from-home days), cleaning rotas can be adjusted to focus on high-traffic areas, and the canteen can order extra stock for busy days.

“We see data as key in accelerating the change of the office. Many companies are already on a journey towards healthier, more sustainable workplaces. We can create offices that are more productive, more of a destination, and the type of places that people are prepared to travel to work and connect with colleagues.”

Going forward

The future is likely to involve further digital integration. Colliers continues to explore and invest in new proptech. The Meraki network provides a platform on which to build a digital ecosystem. This may involve an app where employees can book a desk, search for a colleague, manage their IT, or order food to be delivered to their desk.

“We see the office as the heart of an organization. We want to help clients create a unique experience for their employees,” says Boogaard. “This means connecting with the right people, at the right moment, in the right place.”

For more information

Please visit <https://www.cisco.com/site/us/en/solutions/networking/sdwan/index.html>

Product list

Colliers:

- [Cisco Meraki](#)