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Free trial to show the true benefits of connected boiler control

**Vericon Systems**

Housing Associations and Social Housing providers who are yet to realise the financial and operational benefits of monitoring a boiler’s health and status remotely are being offered a free trial of a new technology from Vericon Systems - BCM:Connect.

BCM:Connect is an intelligent device that not only monitors a boiler’s condition in real time, but also predicts when it might fail. It enables landlords and M&E providers to plan forward maintenance and/or increase the likelihood of a first-time fix should an engineer be needed on site, while avoiding costly and unexpected failures.

Bernard Cook, Managing Director at Vericon Systems, says his team is offering housing providers a chance to trial the technology at no cost for 90 days and without any future commitment. “We want them to experience first-hand how remote diagnostics and monitoring can significantly reduce the need for engineer call-outs, reduce costs and give tenants a better service.”

BCM:Connect does more than just test or monitor a boiler remotely; it can also limit and reset the boiler off-site, and even change the heating temperature. Performance data can be recorded and analysed (through a dedicated portal - VS:Connect) to predict and identify common failures such as low pressure, loss of gas and even a frozen condensate pipe. Through integration with external sensors the device can also report environmental concerns such as damp and mould.

The innovative cellular device is easy to fit in under 10 minutes and is simply mounted adjacent to the boiler thus not affecting any boiler warranties or safety qualifications. It connects in the same way as a traditional smart thermostat via GSM without any dependence on an occupants Wi-Fi network, using cellular technology to communicate to the cloud.

Bernard concludes: “BCM:Connect creates greater efficiencies for housing providers, building managers and tenants alike. Preventative maintenance programmes can be put in place that not only save money in the long term, but also ensure legal and regulatory compliance is consistently maintained.

“We have launched this free trial because we want to give social housing providers and other organisations the opportunity to experience these benefits first-hand and evaluate the portfolio-wide potential of connected boiler control without risk.”

The 90-day trial includes five BCM:Connect devices, unlimited access to the VS:Connect Portal, and full product training and support for the duration. To find out more, download an application pack or visit www.vericonsystems.com/bcmconnect

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RPM International Inc. launches Construction Products Group (CPG) Europe, a new umbrella brand for top UK construction names

**RPM International Inc.**

RPM International Inc, one of the global leaders in specialty construction products, has unveiled a new identity for its regional construction division in Europe.

Launching in the UK on June 1st, and already active across the continent, Construction Products Group (CPG) Europe, is the new umbrella for RPM’s leading construction product brands, including illbruck, Flowcrete, Nullifire, Tremco, Vandex and Dryvit.

CPG Europe manufactures high-performance building materials, covering a wide variety of different construction needs, ranging from sealing, bonding and insulation to flooring, fire protection, waterproofing and roofing solutions.

Melissa Schoger, President of CPG Europe, said: “We’re excited to announce this new family of brands which have all been united together for the first time, bringing such exceptional teams, products and services together means that we can harness the collective expertise, skills and innovations to offer the construction industry a truly special combination of products and services.”

With over 1,400 employees across Europe and a long list of high performance, market-leading products, CPG Europe is ideally placed to provide chemically engineered solutions to service the European construction market.

John Gordon, Managing Director of CPG UK, states: “We have exciting development plans for CPG UK, which is a key market within the group. The company has invested in a new 90,000 square foot distribution centre in Leicester, which is now up and running, offering improved stock availability and service. And even during these challenging times, we have been recruiting additional technical, sales and specification personnel to increase coverage and penetration within our core markets.”

“Today’s architects, contractors, developers and tradespeople face complex challenges. CPG’s unique mix of brands, services and expertise means that it is the ideal partner to work with to develop buildings which save energy, last longer and exceed sustainability benchmarks.”

For further information, please visit www.cpg-europe.com

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e-mail your news to shirley@qubeonline.co.uk
Award-winning, RIBA Chartered Architectural Practice, HSSP, reveals new look and showcases outstanding work

HSSP Architects

The multi-award-winning architecture company, HSSP Architects, has launched its new website and branding to better reflect its passion for creating beautiful buildings, places and spaces.

HSSP Architects is based in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire and has a rich history which stretches back over 50 years. Led by three RIBA Chartered Architects, the company has evolved into an exceptionally creative practice, designing great places with fresh thinking that respect the environment and meet the client’s brief.

The update of the branding and the website aligns with HSSP’s creative direction and showcases its outstanding residential, healthcare, commercial and historical specialist projects.

Nick Cooper, HSSP Director, said: “We’re delighted with both our new branding and our website. We’ve created a new platform for our growing practice that confirms our ethos, our strong design principles and demonstrates our partnership approach to working with our clients.

“As a diverse company working across the architectural landscape, it’s been hard to choose which of our many exceptional projects to showcase in our portfolio. We believe our new website reflects the company, its people and its design passion.”

The practice employs 19 including 6 RIBA Chartered Architects and has a strong support team. HSSP Architects offers its clients a full range of architectural services, managing specialist teams and contractors throughout, ensuring a high-quality service and outstanding level of detail.

HSSP works nationwide and across specialisms, from residential home extensions and bespoke new builds, to residential housing developments, regeneration and heritage listed building projects, senior living and care home developments, education and community projects and larger commercial, industrial and retail developments.

Nick went on to comment: “Despite everything this year has thrown at us, we believe we are on solid foundations for when the restrictions lift. Launching our website and new brand is a sign of our belief in the industry at this unprecedented time.”

Projects showcased includes:

- Wyndham Lodge: The sympathetic restoration and renovation of a Grade II former hunting lodge and Melton Mowbray War Memorial Hospital into luxury stunning apartments, as part of a wider bespoke residential development.
- CMS Warehouse & HQ: The design of a new, high bay warehouse to maximise storage capacity, with an integrated new head office.
- Strawberry Farm: A ground-breaking, boundary-pushing, low-carbon family home built using reclaimed and reused materials.
- Paradise Lane: A stunning transformation of a 1960’s detached house, into a stunning modern family home using natural materials, such as stone, oak and lead.

The website can be found: www.hssparchitects.co.uk

HSSP Architects prides itself on working with local experts and supporting growth in the local economy. The branding, website production and content was managed by Middleton Davies, a boutique PR and branding agency that specialises in strategic communications and creative design (www.middletondavies.com).

Website delivered by Herdl, an award-winning digital marketing agency (https://herdl.com/). Both businesses are based in Leicestershire.

Urgent review of Stamp Duty and Land Tax review

Industry expert calls on Government to reduce tax on property transactions to kickstart UK economy

Recent data produced by HM Revenue and Customs shows half the number of residential properties were sold in May compared with a year ago amid coronavirus lockdown measures. A total of 46,230 property transactions were completed during the month, down 52% on the same month last year.

Although demand is increasing post lockdown, there is an urgent need to kickstart the UK economy with a review of Stamp Duty Land Tax and Land and Building Transaction Tax in Scotland. The state of the housing market is an accurate indicator of the UK economy, and in order to strengthen our economy, it is vital for the government to review the rate of tax on property transactions across the country.

David Alexander, joint managing director of apropos commented: “Now is an opportune time for the government to make necessary changes and a reduction in tax on certain transactions could directly increase the volume of properties being sold, subsequently benefitting the government and what can be obtained.

“As it stands, the rate of tax on a second property prevents many individuals from buying an additional dwelling, either as a second home or a property to let. This tax varies from 3–4% depending on which part of the country you are in. It is important to remember that not everybody who purchases a property is a multi-millionaire, for example there are many people who have worked extremely hard and have an aspiration to buy a second property to supplement their pension.”

e-mail your news to shirley@qubeonline.co.uk
BoKlok UK Ltd, the sustainable, quality, and low-cost home provider jointly owned by Skanska and IKEA, is pleased to announce the unanimous decision to grant planning consent for its first UK housing development at Airport Road, Bristol.

The new development in Bristol will provide 173 family homes which will be available for market sale as well as support social housing schemes by Bristol City Council and local housing associations.

Graeme Culliton, BoKlok UK Managing Director and Country Manager said:

“We are delighted that we are able to bring forward our first project in the UK. On Wednesday 24 June, Bristol City Council’s Planning Committee unanimously approved resolution to grant planning consent for new BoKlok homes at Airport Road, Bristol.

“We particularly welcome the councillors’ positive comments on the family and child friendly design of our development, as well as their recognition that we strive to build inclusive communities.

“Throughout the evolution of this project we have partnered with the local community, Bristol City Council, and the Bristol Housing Festival to create quality, sustainable homes at a lower price. We continue to work with the planning officers to ensure that the proposed cycleway is safe for pedestrians and cyclists as they travel alongside our development.”

BoKlok’s first homes are expected to complete in 2021.

Guardian Glass signs a strategic partnership with ML System

Guardian Glass, a major business unit of Guardian Industries, a global company headquartered in Auburn Hills, Michigan, operates facilities throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. 

ML System S.A. is a highly specialised technology company offering innovative building-integrated photovoltaics (BIPV) solutions.

Guardian Glass has signed a strategic partnership agreement with ML System S.A., a technologically advanced company in the building-integrated photovoltaics (BIPV) market. Within the framework of this agreement, Guardian Glass will offer a complete range of BIPV product solutions – both semi-transparent and opaque – that help contribute to Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) regulations.

The cooperation will lead to the coordination of projects based on Guardian Glass’ sales network and distribution channels with ML System’s expertise in BIPV and integrated structural solutions. New opportunities for Guardian Glass will be created in architectural projects across the world through their capability to offer innovative BIPV technologies in the field of energy generation on-site.

Dawid Cycon, CEO of ML System commented: “For ML System, this agreement opens up completely new opportunities, providing us with access to large architectural projects across the world, while Guardian Glass will benefit from supplementing its offering with innovative BIPV technologies in the advanced energy area.”

Guus Boekhoudt, Vice President, General Manager of Guardian Glass in Europe added: “Our experienced team can now take a more holistic approach to projects and can help architects, glass cladders and façade consultants find the best product solutions for energy-generating facades, in terms of their power requirements, integration, aesthetics and matched with the best performance coated solar control glass. The appearance of these reliable, high performance BIPV solutions can be tailored to best match the visual expectations of projects.”

The drivers of cooperation between the two companies are, among other factors, the current regulatory environment and increasingly popular trends in the application of innovative building solutions and the use of advanced energy savings and generation. In January 2019, an EU Directive came into force that aims to drive the large-scale deployment of Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB). The objective of this directive is to considerably lower the energy consumption of buildings while using to a significant extent renewable energy, including energy produced on-site or nearby.

“A key benefit of BIPV is its contribution towards transforming the building into a Nearly Zero Energy Building and helping to achieve the best green building certifications such as BREEAM and LEED. Modern glazing together with BIPV will not only help save energy, generate energy and therefore help reduce carbon emissions, but will also make the building itself more valuable, as higher ranking in green building certification is proven to result in higher rents. Current technology advancements also allow the photovoltaics to be integrated in a way that makes them unnoticeable,” added Guus Boekhoudt.

Guardian Glass

Guardian Glass, a major business unit of Guardian Industries.

Guardian Industries

A global company headquartered in Auburn Hills, Michigan, operates facilities throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. 

ML System S.A.

A highly specialised technology company offering innovative building-integrated photovoltaics (BIPV) solutions.
New multisensor for building automation and the Internet of Things (IoT)

EnOcean’s new solar-powered multisensor represents a step change in capability for self-powered wireless sensors, providing monitoring and reporting of five separate parameters from a solar cell, integrated into a single case. The EnOcean STM 550 combines sensors for temperature, humidity, lighting, acceleration and magnetic contact within a single case, offering data for a wide range of applications in digitized buildings and the IoT.

EnOcean, the pioneer of energy harvesting, has developed a new multisensor, the all-round talent among self-powered wireless sensors. In the new original PTM form factor the sensor module supplies data for a wide range of applications in digitized buildings and the IoT. The integrated solar cell generates all the energy required for operation - both for measurement and for data communication. The gathered energy is stored internally to ensure that the sensor will function even when there is little or no light. This means that the self-powered sensor can be used flexibly in buildings. Moreover, it can easily be configured and commissioned via an NFC (Near Field Communication) interface.

EnOcean is constantly creating new developments in the field of battery-free wireless technology as digitization advances through IoT, making buildings intelligent and sustainable. Thanks to energy harvesting, the power generation through movement, light and temperature differences, EnOcean products are both self-powered and maintenance-free and therefore can be used flexibly and exactly where data is needed.

New sensor module in the standardized form factor

The new STM 550 multisensor family combines temperature, humidity, lighting, acceleration and magnetic contact sensors in a small case. The multisensor is available both for the EnOcean wireless standard and for Bluetooth® systems. This makes the sensor particularly attractive for a variety of applications in the IoT and in digitized buildings. For the first time, EnOcean has transferred the original PTM form factor of its proven PTM switch module to sensors, so the multisensor module fits into all common switch frames. Manufacturers of existing switch solutions based on PTM module therefore only need to develop new front panels adapted to the respective frame design. The new multisensor is available as Easyfit product, which allows new applications to be implemented quickly. Thanks to the integrated solar cell, the sensor can be used exactly where data is needed.

Commissioning via NFC

The new STM 550 multisensor in use.

Via an NFC (Near Field Communication) interface.

The new STM 550 multisensor family combines temperature, humidity, lighting, acceleration and magnetic contact sensors in a small case. The multisensor is available both for the EnOcean wireless standard and for Bluetooth® systems. This makes the sensor particularly attractive for a variety of applications in the IoT and in digitized buildings. For the first time, EnOcean has transferred the original PTM form factor of its proven PTM switch module to sensors, so the multisensor module fits into all common switch frames. Manufacturers of existing switch solutions based on PTM module therefore only need to develop new front panels adapted to the respective frame design. The new multisensor is also available as Easyfit product, which allows new applications to be implemented quickly. Thanks to the integrated solar cell, the sensor supplies itself with energy independently and stores it for uninterrupted operation over several days with little or no light. It also sends reports on the internal energy level and the amount of light available on the solar cell. As a result, STM 550 operates completely maintenance-free. Being a wireless product, the multisensor can be flexibly installed anywhere in the room. It can also be integrated directly into a wide variety of assets and therefore can be used exactly where the data is needed: on walls, ceilings, windows, doors, furniture, active devices such as air conditioners, towel dispensers and objects such as printers, copiers, medical equipment or vending machines.

"The increasing spread of IoT applications requires more and more data that can be generated maintenance-free and in real time in any place," says Matthias Kassner, Vice President Product Marketing, EnOcean GmbH. "The new EnOcean multisensor supplies exactly this data. Thanks to the widely used original PTM form factor it can be quickly integrated into existing customer designs, enabling innovative sensor solutions to be implemented in the shortest possible time."

Multisensor can be used flexibly in buildings.

Kopp expands portfolio with multisensor

Heinrich Kopp GmbH, supplier for innovative and high-quality solutions in the fields of switch systems, mobile personal protection, building automation and e-mobility, already has the new multisensor in use.

"The self-powered multisensor supports our idea of a comprehensive house automation concept outstandingly. Thanks to its flexible use, we can detect a wide range of situations and are able to let corresponding scenarios and reactions of the building automation take place", says Stephan Dörrschuck, CEO of Heinrich Kopp GmbH. "The smooth integration via Bluetooth fits perfectly into our strategy of a simple and intuitive installation. We are pleased that this cooperation has come about."

Eltako implements multisensor into their switch frames

Eltako, one of the leading companies in the development, manufacture and sale of switchgear, power supply units and electronic power meters, has also added the new multisensor to its product portfolio: "The solar multisensor is the perfect addition to our extensive product range", Ulrich Horst Ziegler, CEO of Eltako, states. "Due to the original PTM form factor, we can easily integrate the sensor into our switch designs and thus provide the end user with an unprecedented range of functions. Additionally, we have also developed a mini housing for the wireless mini-multisensor FMMS44. We are very excited about this new sensor all-rounder."
With employers looking to provide a safe environment for when office workers get the go-ahead to return to work, Onduline Building Products has launched a workplace protective screen system to help shield against the threat of COVID-19.

The ‘safe, secure and simple to install’ protective screens are made from durable, easy to clean polycarbonate (PC) plastics and are designed to sit in between desks and workstations to act as a dividing and protective screen.

They make use of the same technology found in Onduline’s plastic sheet products that form part of the company’s extensive range of lightweight roofing solutions.

As well as offices and other commercial buildings, the screens can also be used in public buildings such as schools and colleges.

Manufactured in the UK, no specialist equipment is required to fit them and as they are lightweight, they are very easy to handle and manoeuvre.

Paul Duffy, Managing Director at Onduline Building Products, said: “Onduline is best known for its lightweight roofing systems and plastics for agricultural, industrial, leisure and DIY applications, which continue to form 99% of our product range.

“But in the same way that we’ve all had to adapt to what is an evolving situation at home and at work, we’ve taken the opportunity presented by the technology and these challenging times to bring this new product to market.

“Although a lot of people are still working at home, many employers and facilities managers will already be considering how they can safely accommodate people back in the workplace when the lockdown ends.

“This system is safe, secure, simple to install and cost effective, and is readily available. It’s a solution that can play a small part in helping kick-start the economy, providing protection while they get on with their work.”

Paul added that Onduline will be donating £10 from each processed order to NHS Charities Together, https://www.nhscharitiestogether.co.uk/, which collectively represents charities supporting NHS staff and volunteers caring for COVID-19 patients.

For more information on Onduline’s lightweight and durable roofing solutions please visit www.onduline.co.uk.

CBRE joins the world’s largest commitment to ‘Social procurement’

CBRE Global Workplace Solutions (GWS) has joined the Buy Social Corporate Challenge, a ground-breaking initiative led by Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) which will see CBRE commit to engaging with more social enterprises.

CBRE and a selection of other high-profile businesses have committed to contributing to the overall target of collectively spending £1 billion with social enterprise suppliers.

Social enterprises are businesses which use their profits to help tackle pressing social or environmental issues; from creating jobs for the homeless, diverting waste resources away from landfill, to rehabilitating ex-offenders. There are approximately 100,000 social enterprises in the UK, contributing £60 billion to GDP, and an increasing number of them operate in B2B markets.

Through purchasing from social enterprises, we are going beyond the traditional conceptions of corporate social responsibility to embed diversity and inclusion into our core business. For example, 40% of social enterprise leaders are women (compared with just 17% of mainstream SMEs), 13% of social enterprise leaders are from a BAME background (compared with just 5% of mainstream SMEs) and 37% of social enterprises have a director with a disability.

Kerry-Anne Dilley, EMEA Regional Sourcing Director at CBRE GWS said, “The government backed Challenge aligns to CBRE’s commitment to responsible and sustainable business practices and will help social enterprise suppliers to grow their revenues and impact by tapping into CBRE’s corporate purchasing power. Furthermore, engaging with social enterprises will further our dedication to delivering innovation – according to SEUK research 56% of social enterprises introduced a new product or service in the previous 12 months, far outstripping mainstream SMEs at 36%.”

Peter Holbrook, CEO at SEUK, said, “Through buying from social enterprises, businesses are using their procurement spend to help build stronger communities and a better world. It is fantastic to have CBRE officially join the Buy Social Corporate Challenge – taking the next steps to further embed positive social and environmental impact into their supply chains. We look forward to working with them on the Challenge and introducing them to more social enterprise suppliers.”
Swiss company SANITIZED AG is pleased to confirm validation from impartial labs that several Sanitized® products are also effective against viruses (in accordance with ISO 21702:2019). The viral efficacy was confirmed in various polymer carriers. Tests were performed using a feline coronavirus with structures and mechanisms similar to SARS-CoV2.

Sanitized® additives are the perfect tool for an antiviral and antibacterial treatment of different polymer types which play a central role in healthcare applications, technical applications, mattress protectors, public transportation, food industry or everyday necessities.

Before any product’s antiviral properties can be claimed, viral tests must be performed of the treated articles in specialized laboratories. Compliance with local legal regulations is essential here. SANITIZED AG explicitly points out that this is a standard procedure and has composed a preliminary SANITIZED Regulatory Guide: Placing antiviral and antimicrobial treated polymers on the market.

SANITIZED AG has been offering antimicrobial additives to enhance the functionality of polymers for plastics for over 80 years. Many of its customers from various industries value its broad product portfolio and high level of service. Especially in the hospital environment, in old people’s homes, public spaces and transportation, Sanitized® material and hygiene protection becomes an important piece of equipment that contributes to comprehensive hygiene management.

The SANITIZED team is available to producers to answer their specific questions.

Customer Service Desk: csd@sanitized.com

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Covid-19 to cause a 9% decline for the Window Coverings Market in 2020

Revised forecasts from AMA Research suggest Covid-19 and lockdown will deliver a 9% drop in the value of the window coverings market this year.

However, prospects for the medium and longer term were positive, with moderate but sustained growth forecast through to 2022. The global nature of the Covid-19 virus has meant that the slowdown in manufacturing has been on an international scale and has affected the availability of cheaper imports into the UK, which could lead to increased demand for UK produced window coverings products into the medium-term.

As consumer confidence levels increase and job securities issues begin to fade into the medium-term, consumers are likely to return to more normal buying behaviour including trading-up to higher quality and more innovative products when replacing existing window coverings.

The domestic window coverings market in the UK consists of four key product sectors, which are: curtains (including lightweight curtains), blinds, shutters and curtain suspension systems.

The shutters and blinds sectors have continued to grow at a faster pace than other areas of the domestic window coverings market, such as curtains. This has been driven by the appeal of additional features such as motorised blinds and the introduction of fashionable designs.

Curtains are estimated to account for around 48% of the total market in 2019-20. Whilst this has declined slightly in recent years, it highlights the competitive nature of the window coverings market, as well as the growing appeal of different types of window coverings. A notable trend has been the increase in demand for made to measure curtains, which are also offered online.

Blinds account for nearly a third of the domestic window coverings market and this has remained consistent over the past two years. However, there has been greater uptake of automated blinds and more ‘technical’ blinds, such as energy efficient, blackout and combination day/night blinds. Competition, both online and in-store has however intensified.

The shutters sector has continued to grow year on year, as consumers seek a more aspirational look. Key to this growth has been the wider availability of these products, including online.

The forecast assumes a “short, sharp shock” in 2020 with a value decline of 9% as the market adjusts to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions. This will be followed by glimmers of good growth potential of up to 16% to 2024 underpinned by a certain amount of pent-up consumer demand. As a mature market sector, but one that contains many innovative products, the window coverings market has tended to be relatively robust in the face of slowing consumer confidence and spending with evidence of down-trading when consumer spending is under pressure.

This information was taken from the Domestic Window Coverings Market Report – UK 2020-2024 by AMA Research, which is available to purchase now at www.amaresearch.co.uk or by calling 01242 235724.
Securing Empty Premises

By Peter Jackson, MD, Jacksons Fencing

With the UK’s furlough scheme being extended into October, many companies are continuing to work remotely where possible. As a result, their regular working premises will be left empty much longer than they probably anticipated. While cyber and data security are top of the agenda, particularly for remote workers, the physical security of buildings must not be forgotten. Vandalism and burglary remain very real threats.

Below we outline key things to consider when evaluating your company’s physical security strategy.

Maintaining quality

Conducting regular maintenance is essential, especially while premises are left empty, as any issues are unlikely to be identified in a timely manner.

Regularly inspect your fencing for disrepair or damage as this can compromise the perimeter’s integrity. Alternatively, choosing high quality galvanised and preferably powder coated steel fencing with a 25-year guarantee will last longer and offer greater protection against rust and corrosion.

Inspecting the fence line may seem obvious and straightforward, but it needs to be a deliberate, scheduled event. From our experience that’s rarely the case. According to research we recently conducted, 63% of companies admit to never testing physical security.

Below we outline key things to consider when evaluating your company’s physical security strategy.

The perimeter needs to be checked on both sides. Look for attempted breaches and note if foliage, weather conditions or topography changes have affected security integrity. Check all fixtures and fittings, looking for damage and corrosion, and clear all litter and debris.

Long term value

Poorly executed design or cheap, low quality products can lead to costly, long-term remediation or worse, significant loss to the business. Specify solutions based on your organisation’s security needs, rather than its bottom line.

While generic steel palisade is a popular option, owing to its intimidating aesthetic, it is easily compromised. It’s a common misconception that it offers an adequate perimeter security solution and has inherent weaknesses that belie its capability. Its wide pales can hamper surveillance, while the bolted construction is a security risk. Simply removing or breaking the lower fixing on one or two pales would allow them to swing aside to give repeated access to the site without leaving an easily visible sign that the perimeter had been breached.

It’s a false economy, as the initial lower price is offset by the costs and inconvenience incurred by regular repairs.

Fortunately, there are a number of security accreditations that facilities managers can refer to when specifying security measures at their site, helping them choose solutions commensurate to the risks they face.
Proven performance

Certifications and approvals, such as The Loss Prevention Certification Board’s (LPCB) LPS 1175 and the British Standards Institution’s (BSI) PAS, prove a product has been thoroughly tested to a specific standard. They demonstrate the item’s strength and durability in various situations. Investing in effective perimeter protection can actually deliver a positive return by reducing the incidence of burglary and vandalism, and their associated costs.

LPCB conducts extremely thorough technical evaluation work and rigorous quality audit processes to ensure the security products tested by BRE deliver proven levels of protection. All LPS 1175 rated products are vigorously tested before receiving an accreditation. The recently revised standard defines a new performance classification system, recognising the increasingly diverse relationship between the tools that a hostile actor might use and attack times.

By predicting a likely toolset, specifiers can construct multiple defensive layers to maximise how much time a facility has to respond to an attack. Different levels of security are crucial for the ‘5D defence’ concept, whereby a quintet of security assets work together to prevent access to your site, resulting in a strategy that will:

• Deter – Dissuade potential intruders from making attempts to breach
• Detect – Make it easier to detect intruders
• Deny – Refuse entry to a site, or its most sensitive areas
• Delay – Maximise the time your security team has to respond to a breach
• Defend – The innermost ring of security which leads to successfully apprehending intruders

360° security

There is no single solution when it comes to securing a building. Every situation must be considered on an individual basis, starting with a full risk assessment.

We recommend an integrated approach where appropriate. Along with a secure perimeter, this might also include effective lighting in shaded areas and at doors, gates and vulnerable windows, Perimeter Intrusion Detection Systems (PIDS) and well-placed CCTV. These measures can hinder entry and escape, or increase the chance of discovery and detection.
Universities must embrace tech to survive

By Kas Mohammed, VP of Digital Energy at Schneider Electric

UK Universities face an uncertain future. Rapidly changing student expectations, technological disruption, internationalisation and cuts to funding, combine to create a challenging future for higher education establishments. Universities must adapt now, or they face falling behind.

Universities must take a long-term view if they are to overcome the challenges. Fundamentally, they need to design strategies that factor in the tough future environment. This means proactively developing a futureproof infrastructure that can adapt and flex to any and all developments. All universities must rethink their investments with future challenges in mind.

Four ways to futureproof universities:

1. **Student Experience**

Prioritising student experience has always been important, but it is growing increasingly critical to securing the future success of universities. The higher-education sector is hugely competitive; therefore, institutions must effectively invest in improving student services.

Universities are looking to increase their digital offering in line with the wider economy. Online services, such as portals and mobile apps, are key to achieving this goal. Mobile apps can offer admissions information, orientation schedules, activities, and map progress toward academic goals.

Mobile apps are able to empower students to fully control their university experience. Sophisticated ‘engagement’ apps allow businesses and universities to host internal and external services on one user-friendly platform. For example, this could offer new students’ way-finding functionality, and combined with their induction timetable, can prevent any flustered late entries to their new classmates. Alternatively, catering services could be aligned with lecture timetables and attendance, to strategically forecast the amount of food required and prepare those coffees and toasties ahead of time.

For student's social life is just as critical as academic study, especially when it comes to their experience. Engagement apps can inform students of social events and provide travel information so they can arrive on time. This common platform can enable students to attend events and meet fellow students that they may not otherwise have.

Students joining universities are more digitally savvy than ever. Consequently, as technology plays a greater role in our lives, it will also be crucial to improve the student experiences.

2. **Security on and off campus**

Universities are an extremely high value target for hackers, as they are responsible for a vast amount of private and personal data. With cyber threats a growing issue across all sectors, universities must do everything in their power to safeguard the data of students and staff.

Many universities remain at risk of cyber-security breaches and attacks, as they often use multiple, disparate and
outdated systems. To combat this, they are increasingly partnering to create shared cybersecurity centres that monitor threats around the clock, while encouraging students and faculties to take extra steps to protect data.

However, constantly monitoring for threats takes up huge amounts of labour and can be extremely costly. Therefore, universities should consider emerging tech such as Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered tools to identify suspicious behaviours.

Another option is universities empowering students to wield more control over their academic credentials and data after graduation or using blockchain to create secure digital records of learning and credentials.

In addition to the threats from online hackers, universities need to protect students and their possessions. Campuses need to carefully consider the physical access controls integrated into buildings, as they play a vital role in the security of buildings, the people and high-value data within.

3. IT Infrastructure

The scale of a university campus means that the IT infrastructure requires continuous investment. It needs to service thousands of staff, and potentially tens of thousands of students 24/7. They, in turn, need a system with access to links and communication around the world.

Data management at large institutions, with a fluid user base, is especially challenging. Every university department needs to be on board with the most up-to-date systems, from communication to financial management, learning resources to student information.

Modern universities are turning to advanced analytics systems to inform and improve their decision making. These systems are particularly important as universities switch to smart campus systems. These can tell users where spare parking spaces can be found, allocate meeting rooms, detect a lightbulb failure, or organise campus dorms for new arrivals.

4. Facilities Management

While universities continue to expand, they are often operating at full capacity. Many have limited amount of space for the demands on their infrastructure. The pressure to accommodate a growing number of students continues to intensify, along with competing demands for facilities and resources. Thus, creating spaces that are flexible and reconfigured easily to suit different needs is an important part of the building management function.

Facilities are vital to the overall student experience. According to research of 1,000 students carried out by the London School of Economics (LSE) Estates Division and the Higher Education Design Quality Forum (HEDQF), 76% ranked campus facilities as either 'quite' or 'very' important to student life.

Putting in place the correct Building Management Solutions is critical when it comes to optimising occupant comfort. For students creating comfortable buildings has a huge positive impact on their experience.

Going forward, technologies such as Virtual Reality are set to unlock a new level of personalised learning experience. Students will no longer have to be in the classroom to receive the classroom experience. By combining digital content, classroom technology, and faculty training, universities can continue to offer the highest possible level of learning.

Successful Futureproofing

Universities must design their offerings with the future in mind, those that do will be primed to take advantage of any and all developments. Senior leaders must focus on transforming the way academics work, securing data, improving student services, and modernising IT to support future innovation on campus.

Investment in technology alone is not enough. Educational institutions must evaluate the systems that can improve service and efficiency today and tomorrow if they are to meet the challenges of an increasingly digital world.

For further information on the solutions Schneider Electric provides for campuses, visit here: https://www.se.com/uk/en/work/solutions/for-business/education/
Modern or traditional construction? ~ Exploring the differences ~

The history of brick and mortar construction is an established one, and many consider brick laying an art form. However, modern building methods, such as modular construction, have demonstrated multiple benefits for the construction industry. But how do you manufacture a building, rather than construct it? Here, Nick Cowley, managing director at window and door manufacturer Euramax, explains the differences between modular and traditional building methods.

The modern method of construction is defined as a way of working more effectively, to achieve more, while using less. This description lends itself heavily to offsite or modular construction techniques — the method of prefabricating parts of a building offsite, before transporting and assembling them at their final location.

Unlike traditional methods of linear construction, where the build is constructed onsite and each phase must be completed before the next one can proceed, a modular construction follows a less linear process.

The beginning

While modular construction methods are different to a traditionally constructed build, both processes have a similar starting point. Like all construction projects, a modular project must be planned and approved, the site must be prepared, and the foundation needs to be laid. It is at this stage that traditional and modular projects begin to differ.

Instead of waiting for foundations to be laid and set, modular construction can already get to work at an offsite prefabrication facility. Depending on the scale of the construction, modules can take up to four weeks to be manufactured. The ability to work on multiple phases of the project at the same time is not permitted with traditional construction, as the site preparation must be complete before next steps can be taken.

Next steps

As those working on modular projects can work on multiple aspects simultaneously, the construction can be completed quicker, saving time and money. In some cases, this can be as much as 50 per cent faster than a traditional construction project.

Once the foundation is prepared, the modules, which are manufactured on an assembly line, are shipped to site for assembly. The most common style of modules are manufactured from 2D panels, where four wall panels and ceiling panels are bolted together with screws. Depending on the desired building design and height, the modules can be stacked, laid or assembled in different ways to create the finished structure.

After the modules have been assembled onsite, final exterior finishes remain. Whereas electrical, plumbing and heating services must be installed onsite for a traditionally constructed build, these components can be fitted in the modules for a
modular build. This increases the speed of completion and reduces delays.

**Easy installation**

One of the biggest differences of modular builds in comparison to traditional methods is their quality-controlled production environment. Manufacturing the modules offsite means that errors with quality can be resolved before assembly, streamlining the construction process. It also eliminates the chance of damage from vandalism and harsh weather conditions — factors that can cause disruption and increase the cost of traditional construction projects.

As quality is optimised, the process of installing fittings such as windows and doors also becomes smoother. For modular builds, specifications of windows and doors must be determined in the early stages of the project, otherwise inaccuracy can delay completion times, creating more work for the builders.

Windows and doors for modular builds must be manufactured to the same standard as windows and doors for a traditional build, but they must consider the specific requirements needed for a modular build. Euramax works closely with buying and specification teams to manufacture precise, high quality windows and doors for modular construction projects. Furthermore, Euramax products are rated A by The British Fenestration Ratings Council (BFRC), helping to improve the energy efficiency of the build.

It’s important to remember the history of brick and mortar construction and why it has been fundamental in the construction industry for many years. However, modular construction methods offer precision, time-saving and quality control that is difficult to obtain on a building site.
With the aim, laid out by the World Green Building Council (WorldGBC), to make all buildings Net Zero by 2050, the construction industry must make changes — starting with material choice. Here, Nick Cowley, managing director at exterior cladding and outdoor living product supplier Endurawood, explains why aluminium plays an important role in making the construction industry more sustainable.

Innovation organisation InnovateUK states that construction, operation and maintenance of the built environment account for 45 per cent of total UK carbon emissions. By 2031, it’s predicted that the United Kingdom’s population will exceed 70 million. With a rising population, and an increasing need for buildings and homes, it’s imperative that the industry takes action to reduce its carbon emissions.

Carbon construction

Common building materials such as concrete and timber are harmful to the environment. Concrete is the most commonly used man-made material on Earth, and is used in a variety of construction applications including interior and exterior cladding.

However, concrete is also responsible for up to eight per cent of the world’s carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions — only coal, oil and gas are greater sources of greenhouse gases. The majority of CO2 emissions are produced during the making of cement clinker, a nodular material that is produced by heating ground limestone and clay at a temperature of up to 1,500 degrees Celsius (°C). These nodules are then ground up to a fine powder to produce cement.

Using wood as a building product does not directly emit greenhouse gases like the production of concrete, but deforestation for this purpose is also detrimental to the Earth's atmosphere.

Fortunately, there are alternatives to these materials that can support sustainable resource management while still delivering on quality.

Aluminium benefits

Aluminium possesses many benefits that make it an ideal building material. Its high ductility allows it to be formed into many different shaped profiles, without weakening. Furthermore, aluminium is nearly as strong as and is lighter than steel, which makes it more manageable on site. Compared to other metals, aluminium is corrosion resistant as its surface is naturally protected by a layer of aluminium oxide — reducing the frequency of maintenance on a building.

From an environmental perspective, perhaps the most significant benefit of using aluminium lies with its recyclable and sustainable possibilities. Although there are sustainable options such as timber, straw and compressed earth, which can be used in the construction industry, these materials do not offer the required strength needed for a buildings structure.
Sustainable construction

Although 40 per cent of the UK’s annual aluminium production is used in the construction industry, the equivalent of 150,000 tonnes, steel is still the most use metal.

Like all metals though, aluminium production is not a hazard free process. Aluminium is chemically extracted from bauxite, an ore that must be mined. This is known as alumina, which is then smelted to form pure aluminium. While aluminium production is still impactful on the environment, these affects can be counteracted by the metal's circularity potential.

It’s thought that around 75 per cent of all aluminium produced remains in circulation, in some form or another. Aluminium can be melted and reused without any impact on its mechanical properties. This means that aluminium products can be manufactured over and over again to the same high standard.

Aluminium applications

The benefits of aluminium make it an ideal building material as it can be applied to different areas of a build including roofing, wall panels, windows and doors. Aluminium can also be used as an alternative material to replace concrete and timber exterior cladding and batten systems. Cladding and batten systems can be used to enhance the appearance of a building, as well as for structural reinforcement.

Depending on the design of the build, the aesthetic of aluminium is not always desired. Endurawood is available in a range of powder coat and woodgrain coatings, which replicate the look of natural wood. In addition, these coatings are volatile organic compound (VOC) and lead free, which also contributes to the environmental benefits of aluminium.

Lastly, although aluminium is highly durable, when it’s time to replace the cladding and battens, they can be recycled and reused for another building product — ensuring minimal waste.

While there are a number of steps that must be taken to achieve Net Zero emissions in the construction industry, considering a material such as aluminium could make a significant impact. If the industry wants to reduce its carbon footprint, harnessing the benefits of a lighter weight, sustainable material could help to make this possible.
With the UN projecting that 68% of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2050, the need for comfortable living and working environments in the heart of cities is also on the rise. Alongside this, greater levels of sustainability must also be achieved, pushing the boundaries of modern architecture to ensure performance and aesthetics are never compromised. As John McComb, Director Technical Services at Reynaers Aluminium discusses, building materials play a critical role in creating this balance and delivering desirable city living.

As the buildings of our cities continue to evolve to accommodate the rapid rate of urbanisation, it is critical that the very fabric of these buildings plays its part, not only in their visual appearance and strength, but also in how they stand up to the requirements of modern-day city living to provide greater levels of sustainability and occupant wellbeing.

Having evolved to meet the requirements of today's lifestyles, glass has become a highly desirable construction material and now plays an integral role in modern architecture, transforming a building's character and connecting it with its immediate environment. Buildings such as The Shard and The Gherkin are fantastic examples of how glazing is now used to make buildings completely unique and transform the experience of those living and working in them.

Just as glass has become more important in modern construction, innovations which facilitate greater levels of sustainability are becoming more heavily incorporated into the very fabric of modern buildings. The challenge for architects lies in incorporating these functional characteristics without compromising aesthetics and practicality.
Reducing unwanted noise and aiding natural ventilation to enhance sustainability

With indoor environmental quality being dependent on air quality and thermal and acoustic comfort, often-overlooked but essential characteristics such as effective cooling and ventilation play a significant role in creating these comfortable spaces. When a room is warm, the natural instinct is to open a window, effectively cooling and ventilating the room. In bustling urban environments, however, the threat of noise pollution often stands in the way of this natural solution. In the past, this has increased reliance on mechanical ventilation systems – and compromised the sustainability of buildings as a result.

For modern urban buildings to maximise the potential of increased volumes of glazing, while simultaneously incorporating natural ventilation systems to improve a building’s sustainable credentials and deliver comfort and practicality for occupants, the choice of materials is critical.

Providing superior performance where acoustics are concerned, aluminium continues to be a popular material in modern architecture which maximises air tightness through its intricately designed profiles. Alongside this, aluminium enables architects to fulfil their aesthetic vision, balancing slim sightlines with greater strength and versatility, in addition to delivering essentials such as safety and security to projects.

But, as trends like urbanisation continue to heighten the requirements of buildings, this essential material must also evolve. For Reynaers, that has seen the development of MasterLine SoftTone which facilitates effective natural ventilation, while limiting noise ingress from the surrounding urban environment.

Equipping buildings with natural ventilation and, therefore, improving their sustainability through a reduced reliance on mechanical solutions, SoftTone utilises a carefully designed interface between the frame and sash to enable natural ventilation while limiting noise. In practice, that enables windows to be opened for effective ventilation, without occupants having to suffer excessive noise from the bustling urban environment.

As we look to a more sustainable future for our urban living and working requirements, the buildings which define our skylines must be designed to maximise natural ventilation. Windows are the natural starting point in this journey, and to achieve the desired results, engaging the technical expertise of material specialists is imperative to ensure a solution which delivers on design and performance.
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1. Cashless

Covid-19 is speeding up the move for the UK to become a cashless society, from the previously reported 10 years to now aiming for just 2 years. R+R Hub is already there, it’s completely cashless and operates using a contactless self-serve till, just like the one’s we are used to seeing and using in the local supermarkets. Not only are self-service tills great for efficiency, but they keep things easy for consumers and reduce their waiting times.

How are we different from our competitors? We also have a mobile app that allows employees to make payments and collect rewards in the process!

2. Unattended

As our hubs are fitted with CCTV they can be completely unattended, which also makes them 24/7! And with no staff salary to cover, this has a huge cost saving benefit when you compare to a manned canteen facility. Our operators will come to site every day to restock and replenish the hub and will be onsite for between 1 – 2 hours depending on the size of your Hub. The added benefit for the current Covid-19 situation means that your employees will not need to come into contact with a member of staff to make their purchase.

3. Our Mobile App

Setting us apart from our competitors our Mobile App enables employees to upload credit, receive rewards + promotions, it enables employers to gift vouchers/tokens to staff as rewards, it records purchases so no need to print receipts, and a feature we are really excited about is it enables the consumer to order items ahead such as cakes and treat boxes. Perfect for that surprise birthday cake!

We will have constant offers on within the Hub but even more via our app. Promotions such as buy 6 hot drinks and get the 7th free, or afternoon treats such as coffee and cake for £2.50, we even have breakfast promotions such as any hot drink and porridge pot for £3.00.

Our app can also work alongside any wellbeing initiatives you
may want to run, such as encouraging staff to purchase ‘healthier refreshments’ for example purchase 2 healthy snack bars and the company will treat you to the 3rd.

4. Full Solution
As we will be visiting site daily we can also deliver your office consumables such as:
- fresh fruit: a daily top-up of fresh fruit items
- milk: all varieties including non-dairy options
- water: whether it be single drinking bottles, a large bottled water machine, a plumbed water machine, or a water tap we can deliver and clean daily.
- hot drinks: such as tea or flavoured tea bags, coffee granules, large sugar bags or sachets, milk capsules
- fresh, delicious buffet service: we have teamed up with the best local catering company and can cater for 4 to 1,000 employees
- staff treats: whether you want to treat your staff to something seasonal or just a job well done, we can deliver a number of treat options such as ice creams, cakes, and pastries with just 24 hours notice

Another added benefit following Covid-19 is that we now offer snack + wellbeing box deliveries to home workers to enable them to still feel part of a team and a part of a great company to work for.

5. The Employer Perks
- Subsidising: all items within our Hubs can be subsidised by the employer. Whether you want to offer hot drinks for free or at a reduced staff price, or if you want to offer a great value meal deal (normally set at £3.99) for £2.00 for all staff, the difference can be invoiced monthly with full reports to back the costings.
- Improve staff retention by offering a new modern way of workplace refreshments.
- Account Cards: to enable management to treat their teams or to cater for a staff or unexpected meeting, we simply add it to your monthly invoice
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