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MIKKO NISSINEN, SERVICE MANAGER, THL



The development project concerning the office work and premises of the Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) in the metropolitan area started in the autumn 2011. In cooperation with the Senate Properties' experts, the situation of the premises as a whole was worked out. According to Service Manager Mikko Nissinen, the starting point for development was the merger of the two institutes, and the target drew up in the year of foundation 2009 to concentrate the operations in the metropolitan area effectively in one place, the area of Tilkanmäki.

“The situation of the properties of THL as a whole was worked out in 2010 with Senate Properties and Haahtela. After that, plans for concentration of operations in Tilkanmäki were made. This same decision on organisational geography included a need for two new buildings.

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*The targets were clear in the beginning but soon we realised that we wanted more; the need for intensification of the use of space came up more and we needed experts to help us in this question.”*

Workspace and FSRC were selected together with Senate Properties as experts to cooperate in the project.

With the work environment project, a vision of campus was created for THL in which the marginal term is the efficiency of the use of space and the strategy guides strongly the work environment design. As the development went further, the original task of concept design of the two new buildings was extended to develop the campus area of Tilkanmäki.



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*Campus development has been a multiphase and developing process that has proceeded stepwise. There has not been a clear end result planned in advance but the project directs towards the result.”*

## **From the model of two new buildings to single building**

The development of work environment in co-operation with the experts has been regarded as useful in THL. Mikko Nissinen appreciates particularly challenging the conventional thinking patterns and old modes of action. In the course of the project, the objectives of redeveloping were changed radically: from the model of two new buildings we moved to the much more effective model of one building.

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*As a matter of fact, both the modern work environment and space efficiency are such things that they would have been difficult to achieve without the experts. We would have proceeded with a much more traditional model if there were not work environment specialists involved in the project. This current concept includes modern work environment elements and takes into account the premises efficiency requirements set by the state. With this, the space efficiency can be increased. It is good that Workspace has been challenging us all the time.”*

There is top expertise in many health and welfare related fields in THL and we wanted to assure in every phase that the newest research findings and the best practices will be taken

into account in designing our own premises. For example, we have been aware of health risks related to sedentary jobs since a long time and that is why the work environment concept of THL supports the natural human need for changing working position. It also encourages to move around between work phases spent in work place and to use stairs instead of taking the lift.

” “In the work environment design of THL, we also used our own expertise. We used expertise in public health as well as mental health. We have cooperated with the occupational health care when considering the ergonomics of work places. We will have a health point, bright light areas and meeting spaces for standing meetings. Natural routes direct towards the stairs - not to the lifts. At the same time, we are experts in accessibility and it had to be taken into account in the facility design. Our food specialist has considered staff restaurant solutions and people’s possibility to select healthy options. All this is also part of the THL brand.”

Since it was a question of change that affects staff’s work in many levels, it was very important to involve the staff in planning process. In the different units of THL, the nature of work and facility requirements vary and special groups such as visiting researchers must be taken into account. In the project, we utilised piloting and received feedback of the solutions before final realisation. Mikko Nissinen regards

involving the staff as a very important part of the project even though it increases work load.

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*When we decided to start this process, we were troubled by the question of how we could manage to involve people in this and would we have enough energy to involve everyone until the end. This is extensive and demanding enough even without it. But now when we are looking back, we have managed to involve people very well. There have been a great desire and interest to participate and impact.”*



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*In advance, the users have been afraid and anxious of the question of where are we going. People have thought that multi space environment or teamwork space concept is the same thing as the open plan office. All these new projects, which have both involved Workspace and have been designed following this new concept with the respect for the old facilities have received positive feedback. Spaciousness, lightness and comfort have resulted positive feedback. The staff has a positive impression on work environment development.”*



Work environment solutions and methods are regarded as realisations of THL strategy in every day life. The objective is to maintain and promote the position and reputation of pioneer in the own field and take care that the employees and partners will have a productive and motivating work environment in their use.

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*The redeveloped building, our new main building, will be wonderful and completely different than our other offices have been! In the main campus of THL, it is a gathering, representative and easy to use facility both for the employees and our partners and visitors – who it will certainly draw more.*

*At the same time, this building enables the realisation of our objectives in ever tougher economic situations; savings*

*per square metre have been remarkable. Already with the decision of constructing only one building instead of two, THL saves many million euros in construction costs. In annual basis, our goal is to save 10% in facility costs by developing work environment. We will keep this goal – and maybe even exceed it.*

*A challenge remains: it is to raise the usage rate of working places to our ambitious objective of 65% (now 47%). If we managed to realise this, we will get rid of part of the facilities.”*

# Ask more information!

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