

Case study: BE Offices



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As a flexible workspace provider in the City of London and throughout the UK, BE Offices, like every other workspace provider, was obviously hugely impacted by the government's work from home directive throughout the pandemic. While all our business centres remained open to support clients who were either key worker businesses or businesses which support key workers, it was soul destroying to see the once vibrant City turned in to a ghost town.

BE's association with the Culture and Commerce Taskforce came about as the direct result of a LinkedIn post made by the Lord Mayor back in March 2021. Spotted and immediately acted upon by our PR and Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Julie Tucker, the post was an appeal to 'City businesses with office space for exploration of creative space opportunities within the City of London.' The Culture and Commerce Taskforce was looking to develop stronger collaboration between culture and business sectors to boost London's economic recovery and secure the City's creature future, something we were very keen to support.

Culture and creativity have long been integral to BE's business model, creating inspirational spaces for our clients and commissioning artists to create bespoke installations throughout our centres. We've also accumulated a vast art collection from which clients may select pieces for their office suites. In addition, throughout our 25 years of operating as a business in the City of London, we've taken full advantage of the myriad cultural experiences the City has to offer for client entertaining and staff social events.

It was without any hesitation that we responded to the Lord Mayor's call and contacted Tim Harper at The Trampery, appointed to conduct research on behalf the City of London Corporation, who in turn put us in touch with Sian Bird, Head of Partnerships and Strategic Projects for Culture Mile.

The only office space provider to come forward and offer immediate support to the taskforce, we were delighted to join the Enhance Project Group to explore how we might support the initiative. For our PR & CSR manager it was a wonderful opportunity to meet virtually, bi-weekly, with a whole new group of people from a diverse range of backgrounds and businesses, all united in a common purpose.

Whilst it transpired that we were unable to accommodate an art installation, we were more than delighted to be able to house the entire Culture Mile team in offices which couldn't have been more suitably located.

Situated on Beech Street, BE Offices Barbican is right at the heart of Culture Mile which runs from Farringdon to Moorgate. With the 21-person strong project team made up of representatives from the City of London Corporation, along with its partners Barbican, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London Symphony Orchestra and Museum of London, Beech Street was also a most convenient location, being moments away from each of the five partner organisations.

We were able to offer the team free-of-charge (Covid-secure) office space for a 3-month period, as a hub for creative collaboration over the summer, and as of 14th September we agreed a month long extension to the arrangement to enable the team to stay on longer until the end of October.

Our main motivation for joining the taskforce was to play our part in what has to be a joint effort to build back after the devastating blow dealt to the cultural sector during the pandemic. Throughout the City of London's long history, culture and commerce have worked alongside each other, and it is only right that one supports the other in times of need.

BE's involvement with Culture Mile sits perfectly as an activity within our overall CSR strategy, as well as offering positive PR opportunities at a time when office space has struggled for good news stories.

Indeed, early fruit, from a PR perspective, came in the form of a visit from the Lord Mayor on 18th May as part of a series of events to mark the reopening of indoor hospitality, cultural and heritage institutions in the Square Mile. We were delighted to welcome the Lord Mayor, Alderman William Russell to our Beech Street location, home to our head office team, where he met with BE's finance director and co-founder Simon Rusk to view the space on offer to the Culture Mile team as well as take the opportunity to see how BE was enabling a safe return to office space.

Since the Culture Mile team took up occupancy at Beech Street, we have seen more and more clients returning to their office space, and it has been wonderful to have the building buzzing again with creativity and collaboration, two key elements of work life which were entirely lost during the long months of isolation working from home.

"This has been a win-win partnership in terms of BE Offices being able to play its small part in aiding the City's cultural recovery, as well as offering us an opportunity to develop new relationships and benefit from the positive PR surrounding our involvement. Any activity which encourages people back to the City and accelerates economic recovery can only be a good thing and we've been delighted and indeed honoured to play our small part."

JULIE TUCKER
BE OFFICES, PR & CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MANAGER



"This partnership between Culture Mile and BE Offices is exactly the sort of initiative that we need to start to bring people back to the City and help the area once again to be a dynamic, vibrant place to be. Sitting alongside a diverse mix of SMEs, start ups and growing businesses from across different sectors, this partnership will explore how physical spaces can provide an opportunity to truly share knowledge and skills across the commercial, creative and civic sectors, growing a deeper relationship across sectors that will really boost London's economic growth, particularly supporting the area's post Covid recovery."

ALDERMAN WILLIAM RUSSELL
LORD MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LONDON

"The BE Office space has been extremely valuable to Culture Mile, providing the team for the first time with collaboration space where multiple organisations can come together in an exceptionally high-quality work environment. After over a year of remote working, returning to the City and having a base in the heart of Culture Mile (which could not otherwise have been accommodated) has energised the team, enabled them to work more effectively together, and established a partnership with a new commercial partner that we hope to continue beyond this project."

SIAN BIRD
HEAD OF PARTNERSHIPS & STRATEGIC PROJECTS
CULTURE MILE



For more information

<https://allwork.space/2021/07/city-of-london-corporations-culture-mile-partners-with-be-offices/>

Culture & Commerce Taskforce

