



Flexible working concept improves communications

The more opportunities there are for people to communicate with each other the more successful an organisation actually is. When opening new offices in Peterborough, Nokia Telecommunications UK had a chance to get it right from the start. With professional advice from Richard K Watts Associates, the company created the model for a highly flexible and interactive workplace that would support its rapidly growing business.

A decade of dramatic growth since it entered the UK market demanded Nokia Telecommunications recruit more personnel and open additional offices. To help assess the most appropriate

accommodation to house its expanding operations, and to support its staff with more flexible ways of working, the company commissioned Richard K Watts Associates to carry out space and occupation surveys.

A broad consultative approach involving regular meetings with a steering group, combined with detailed analysis of user questionnaires, led to the development of a model for a sales team office, where individual working styles were effectively absorbed into an innovative working environment. Existing office layouts had made team-working difficult. The new concept encouraged good communications and supported team-working by introducing a mix of structured

workstations, enclosed study rooms, unassigned meeting offices and more informal meeting areas. It provided a modern, efficient, safe and healthy environment in which the potential of new technologies and new ways of working could be fully exploited.

The first location to adopt the new concept in April 1996 was Nokia's Peterborough office, where Richard K Watts Associates continued to work with the user group in planning the layout for 130 workstations and selecting office furniture. Staff reaction to their new surroundings is positive. Recognising the value of a satisfied workforce to Nokia's sustained success, the company hopes to use similar layouts and styling in offices around the world.