

How office technology investments can help landlords stay competitive

With commercial real estate tenants increasingly demanding more advanced technologies, landlords must be prepared to invest in digital to stay competitive in the market. But with innovative technologies being such big-ticket capex line items, it's crucial for landlords to invest wisely, says High Street Auctions director Greg Dart.

Landlords need to prioritise digital systems that significantly improve the work environment or provide long-term cost benefits. "A simple example is upgrading security. Facial recognition software is overkill for most tenants' needs, but prospective tenants will appreciate a fingerprint access system.

"Fingerprint scanners do away with the need for access cards that are often lost, forgotten or shared by staff. Using fingerprints, management has an accurate record of comings and goings and negates the risk of unauthorised entry to the premises."

According to Dart, these top three technology investments will attract the right tenants and maximise rental revenue:

1. Connectivity

"Top of the list is installing convenient plug-and-play infrastructure for high-speed internet access, which tenants demand from day one in new premises.

"With every business now relying on cloud-based services and video conferencing, high-speed internet is a competitive necessity.

"Offering fast and reliable connectivity that's available in every space in the building isn't an optional expense for landlords anymore, and the lack of it will show in vacancy rates."



High Street Auctions director Greg Dart



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2. Energy

Dart says there are two aspects landlords should consider – renewables and intuitive smart systems.

"With the ongoing Eskom crisis, a huge selling point is offering renewable energy technology that keeps offices operational during load shedding.

"Renewables also help reduce costs and carbon footprint, and appeal to tenants who are environmentally conscious by choice or corporate policy.

"Solar panels, wind turbines and geothermal systems are all examples of renewable energy technologies that can be used to power commercial buildings and offer uninterrupted power supplies."

Certain smart, intuitive energy systems can also cut costs for landlords and tenants, one of the most beneficial being motion-activated lighting.



Source: Provided

3. Security

Dart says advanced security systems are essential investments in high-crime countries like South Africa.

“They keep assets safe for both landlords and tenants, which is especially important for businesses that handle sensitive data.

“Good investments for landlords include access control systems, surveillance cameras with off-site backup, perimeter security and intrusion detection systems.”

Smart buildings

Dart says if landlords have covered the top three on the list, another investment they should consider is smart building technology.

“Smart building systems can help landlords manage their properties more efficiently and effectively, reducing operating costs while improving the tenant experience.

“For example, installing climate control systems can help landlords cut energy costs, at the same time providing tenants with greater control over their workspace.

“Another aspect is offering online portals for tenant management. Online portals allow tenants to pay rent, report maintenance issues, and communicate with the landlord or property manager, all from the convenience of their computer or smartphone.

“This can save landlords time and resources, while also improving tenant satisfaction.”

Dart says in the post-Covid market, with office vacancies still high, commercial property tenants are spoilt for choice.

“By making the right technology investments, landlords can future-proof their properties and stay ahead of the competition. This short-term expenditure will pay off handsomely in long-term revenue gains.”

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