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## Science + Technology Perspectives

### Are Core and Shell Spaces Appropriate for Your Lab?

The developer core and shell model has historically worked very well for office buildings: A developer builds a building, and the tenant comes in and completes the interior to meet their particular needs. Bam! The tenant is in business.

For laboratory and research spaces though, the traditional route for creating a new facility has been to create a company-owned, purpose-built facility... usually on the same premises as other company-owned buildings (e.g., a campus setting). Recently, though, there has been a trend away from this mode for new laboratory and research spaces and toward the developer core and shell model...a model which does offer advantages for labs and research facilities:

- **Financial.** By leasing smaller, lab-specific spaces, companies can avoid long-term financial commitment that comes with owning a facility.
- **Speed to Market.** Fitting out existing developer core and shell buildings obviously saves time...no need to wait for a new building to be constructed!
- **Location.** Rather than forcing talent to come to where the main campus is located, companies which choose the core and shell model can locate small

research/lab facilities specifically in areas known for having large talent pools.

At the same time, the developer core and shell model may not work quite as well for leased laboratory and research space. If your company is considering a core and shell space, make sure to:

- **Review spacing requirements.** Floor-to-ceiling heights, and column bay spacing within traditional developer-created buildings may not work for the equipment and other lab requirements.
- **Determine structural support capabilities.** Is the space robust enough to meet your needs: floor-to-floor support, framing, etc. Can it support the equipment that will be necessary for your operations?



- **Do a smell test.** Will the tests you run (or their output) generate noise, odors, or create other bad neighbor issues?

Another big issue with core and shell spaces is that of shared features. These shared features are not just limited to amenities such as workout rooms, cafeterias, parking, and even stairs and corridors. Other shared features which may pose issues depending on your operational requirements include:

- **Central utilities.** In a developer core and shell building, most tenants share core elements such as the central utility equipment. Lab functions requiring redundancy, backup and 24-hour operations may need their own utilities. Will the developer allow you to install an additional, dedicated HVAC systems or air handlers for critical air on the rooftop or in the mechanical room? Is there even room to do so?
- **Security.** Receiving docks are also shared in many multi-tenant buildings. If your lab requires chain-of-custody for materials, samples, etc., this may be an issue, as dedicated space for a private receiving dock may not be possible.
- **Drainage systems.** What's going to go down the drain? A typical commercial building has one drainage system...a sanitary drain picking up sinks, toilets, etc. A core and shell building will not have a separate process drainage system like those in a purpose-built lab. If you need to collect waste, and have it neutralized before it goes out into the sanitary sewer, you'll need to add equipment and processes to deal with this.

At some point, mitigating these elements may make the move to a developer core and shell space less financially attractive. Before embarking on this path, make sure you consider these factors for a smoother, and financially appropriate, experience.

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