

HIX 2023: HANSGROHE ASKS THE HOTEL DESIGN INDUSTRY – HOW DO WE BUILD BETTER TOGETHER?

This month at HIX, the annual exhibition for hospitality interiors, visitors to premium bathroom brand Hansgrohe did not stop by a stand – instead they were invited to the *Unfinished Works* installation to experience ‘a window to the world and a place where we escape excess stimuli, a space where we can achieve a state of purity’.

Presented by MIXD Interiors and sponsored by Hansgrohe, the installation was imagined as a blueprint for a hotel room and designed to be a multifunctional, flexible space. It also provided the ideal backdrop for a panel discussion on the future of hotel design.

Held on Thursday 16 November, *Build Better Together*, with Hansgrohe in collaboration with MIXD and Always Thinking, explored in depth the themes that emerged from the bathroom brand's recent roundtable discussions with the commercial hotel supply chain.

In the last 18 months it has held events for architects, specifiers, interior designers, contractors, and hotel operators working across limited service, lifestyle, and luxury hotel projects to better understand the challenges and opportunities the supply chain is facing – both now and in the future.

Price versus value, the undeniable impact of the sustainability agenda and the predicted role technology development and AI will have, became key themes of these discussions. These findings were brought together in Hansgrohe's latest white paper; *Commercial Hotel Projects: Challenges and Opportunities for the Construction Supply Chain*, which debuted at HIX.

Karen Willey from Always Thinking introduced the panel, which included Piotr Kalinowski, Design Director at MIXD; Mehrnoush Rad, Partner at Make Architects; and Sophia Stylianou, Project Director at AECOM, and invited them to deep dive into the white paper themes to develop the conversation further.

Value engineering once work is already underway was a key focus of the ‘price versus value, theme. Here, Sophia commented: “It is important to consider cost, quality, and programme criticality. There are often things that can impact a programme of work, witnessed recently with real anomalies such as Brexit, the pandemic, and global

conflict, all of which have influenced unpredicted cost increases, shortage of labour and materials, delays, and other issues. It's a question of how we manage these things, how we work together to bring a project back to budget with a design that everyone is happy with, and within a timescale to ensure minimal delay."

Whilst a realistic design that reflected the client's budget restrictions works in principle, participants in the discussion maintained that this could be a challenge when clients were not prepared to share their budgets at the ideas stage. Piotr added: "As a designer, if we know the budget we can focus on creativity. If we don't know the budget, we will design the best hotel for the client – but it will probably be too expensive!"

It was agreed that this was starting to change, with a growing number of clients seeing the value in being more transparent about their budgets in order to obtain a more realistic 'dream' from their design teams.

Mehrnoush introduced AI as a potential solution to cost planning. "As architects and designers, it's common to find ourselves with several material samples on our desks – a top favourite and a close second that is a more economical price. Imagine a scenario where the data for these two samples seamlessly enters a digital realm during the concept stage, producing a thorough breakdown of quantities, sustainability data and associated costs for both the preferred and more cost-effective options. The thing is this isn't just a vision – the technology to make this a reality already exists. Taking inspiration from agile industries like gaming, we can adeptly navigate the fast-paced landscape, staying ahead and evolving our design processes."

The topic of technology focused significantly on the growing impact of AI, with a fairly positive outlook to those involved in the discussion. Piotr pointed out this could be a gamechanger for global projects, saying: "AI will actually help to streamline communications for international projects, particularly where you might have an English-speaking design team and a non-English speaking client. By being able to have instant translation through AI the flow ideas will be much easier and project management can be more efficient."

It was clear that sustainability was a growing priority for operators, and the discussion concluded with a conversation about EPDs and how this might impact future design projects. EPDs provide architects, builders and designers with important information

for the sustainability of their construction projects and is particularly important for building projects that are subject to international certification systems such as BREEAM.

Ben Foran from My Construction was in the audience and had this to say: "We will always look to work to a technical specification. This reduces ambiguity for our clients and ensures they get what they want. We recently completed the world's first whole life carbon net zero hotel. The industry is still finding its way on sustainability, with a near constant stream of new products coming on to the market. When working with our clients, we find EPDs form a critical part of the design and construction process, providing all the data we need to ensure we meet the environmental credentials for a project."

Earlier this year Hansgrohe rolled-out EPDs for around 1,400 of its best-selling chrome products from the standard AXOR and hansgrohe product ranges, providing information on flow rates, water and energy consumption and CO2 balances, as well as on the origin and composition of materials and recycling options in the event of dismantling.

Jay Phillips, Managing Director, Hansgrohe UK & Ireland, said: "We want our latest white paper to start conversations in the hotel design industry, to help encourage more cross industry collaboration and develop a mutual understanding of differing perspectives. This will help to deliver better and future proofed outcomes for all, from architects to hotel operators.

"Facilitating discussions like these at HIX and other industry events allow us to understand our customer needs better and work together with stakeholders to deliver solutions".

Download a free copy of the white paper – **Commercial Hotel Projects: Challenges and Opportunities for the Construction Supply Chain** – by visiting: <https://www.hansgrohe.co.uk/service/brochures-and-prospects/whitepaper/hotelprojects>

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About the Hansgrohe Group – Setting the Beat of Water. Since 1901.

With its brands AXOR and hansgrohe, the Hansgrohe Group, based in Schiltach/Southern Germany, enjoys a reputation as a leader in innovation, design and quality within the bath and kitchen industry. Founded in 1901 in the Black Forest, the company gives water form and function with its faucets, showerheads and shower systems. The 120-year history of the company is marked by innovations, such as the first hand-held shower with multiple spray types, the first pull-out kitchen faucet, and the first wall bar to hold a hand-held shower. The company holds more than 18,500 active property rights. The Hansgrohe Group stands for long-lasting quality products and for responsibility towards people and the environment. Sustainable production of resource-conserving products is central to the company's business activities around the globe. With 34 subsidiaries and 20 sales offices supplying products in 152 countries, the globally active company in the sanitary industry is a reliable partner to its customers in all regions of the world. The Hansgrohe Group, its brands and products have won numerous awards, including more than 700 design prizes since 1974. The products of the Hansgrohe Group are found worldwide: on renowned cruise ships, in luxurious 5-star and boutique hotels, in international metropolitan cities, in extraordinary spas, exclusive bathrooms of lodges and luxury villas, public facilities, as well as in countless private homes. The Group's high quality standards are ensured by seven wholly-owned production facilities: four in Germany, one each in France, the United States and China. In 2021, the Hansgrohe Group generated a turnover of EUR 1.365 billion. It employs around 5,400 people worldwide, about 60 percent of whom work in Germany.

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