Meet The Brains Powering the Smartest Building in Canada

The Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) International organization recently had its signature international conference in Boston.

At the event, this premier organization for commercial real estate firms gave a select group of buildings across North America its most prestigious prize; The Outstanding Building of the Year (TOBY) award.

According to BOMA, the award "is the most prestigious and comprehensive program of its kind in the commercial real estate industry recognizing quality in commercial buildings and rewarding excellence in building management." Buildings are judged on everything from community involvement, tenant relations and site management to environmental and "green" policies and procedures.

One of the short list of winners was 745 Thurlow, a state-of-the-art office and retail building in the heart of downtown Vancouver.

The building is remarkable for many reasons, and the TOBY award is just the latest in a broad suit of recognition and achievements. The structure is LEED Core and Shell Gold certified, Operation and Maintenance Platinum, WiredScore Gold, BEST Smart Buildings Certification, and Fitwel Energy Star and Rick Hansen Foundation accessibility certification. It also has other recognition from BOMA, including BOMA Best Gold and BOMA 360.

The Software That Earns the Hardware

That's quite a trophy case, earned through a lot of hard work and visionary leadership from the building's property management team at QuadReal.

But those achievements also wouldn't be possible without an extraordinary stream of data and insights that enable unprecedented efficiency which helps 745 Thurlow rise above the rest.

What makes this structure unique is just how thoroughly its owners and managers understand the intricacies of exactly how it's being used at any moment.

Many design and management decisions made for properties of this scale are based on assumptions. In the past, they would be dependent on movement detectors and noise sensors and the like to detect and track space usage. Building management systems operate programmatically, turning on lights, HVAC, elevators and so on at 7am and turning them off around 7pm. These kinds of smart guesses are better than nothing, but they do not reflect reality nor address the need of sustainability.

You Know What Assuming Does

Fortunately, the team at 745 Thurlow doesn't have to assume. Thanks to a perfect pairing of building management, access control and analytics technology, they can know with certainty how and when each part of the building is used.

The building recently retrofit its access control system with Zerv to obtain access to a brand-new source of real-time data. Zerv provides actionable information from all access points: parking garages, doors, gates, and elevators – anything considered an "access point." The retrofit also added new, modern features like mobile access via smartphone.

That data gets fed into the advanced [Kode Labs BMS](#) and translates it into decisions based on real information, not guesswork. It's no longer dependent on imperfect sensors that are incapable of relaying complex data and don't paint a complete picture of what's going on.
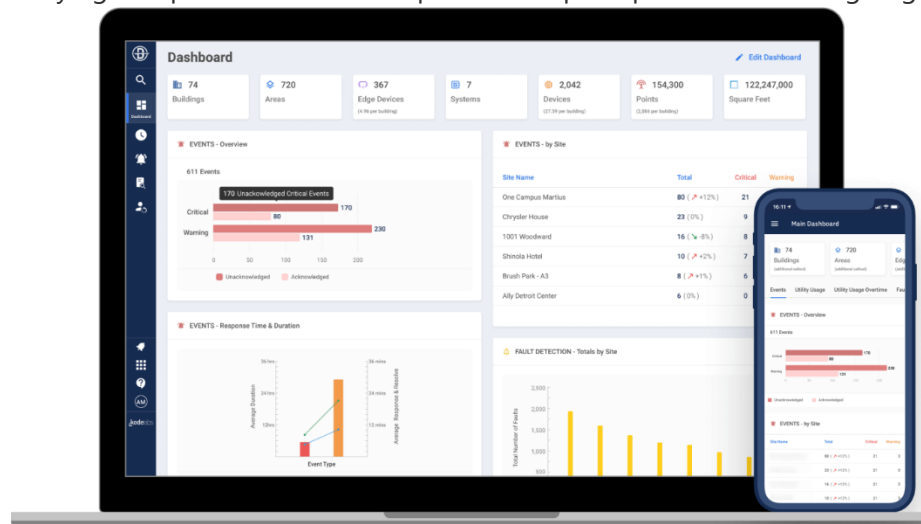
This building is *actually* smart, instead of just saying it is.

With this new source of granular, insightful data and a centralized hub to make use of it, 745 Thurlow achieves incredible efficiency and improves the experience for its users and managers alike.