



essensys' Newly Launched Flex Services Platform: A Powerful Enabler for the Next Normal

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IDC's Quick Take

On March 16, essensys made a timely announcement regarding its new [Flex Services Platform](#), which is set to address many challenges encountered by flexible office space operators as they facilitate the resumption of office operations.

As well as providing details on how the new platform will be rolled out, this IDC Link discusses the timeliness of the solution in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it could play a key role in enabling organizations to plan a safe return to office-based operations.

Product Announcement Highlights

A leading provider of enterprise grade software-as-a-service, digital infrastructure, and flexible space management technology, essensys is a key business partner for flexible office space providers. In a nutshell, the company provides a platform for flexible space providers to consistently deliver to their customers the whole range of digital services they need to create and develop flexible office spaces. Elements such as digital infrastructure, connectivity, enterprise grade security, room booking, billing, and access control can all be managed by operators through the platform.

The company has launched the secure Digital Infrastructure component of the Flex Services Platform and will roll out additional modules related to Space Management, Flexible Operations, and Occupier Experience over the coming months. It pledges to continue to deliver its core services with a new focus on streamlined space management, high level of integration with best of breed business applications and safe, mobile-first occupier experiences. The platform provides a complete tool for operators to manage customer relations from first quote to invoice, with integration to best-of-breed business applications such as CRM and accounting. Using their smartphones, flexible space users will now be able to interact with office facilities, for example opening doors or booking and paying for meeting rooms, all in a touchless fashion.

The latter is indeed a topical addition. Touchless integration, together with automated sanitization of the physical workplace, is a key aspect many organizations are trying to implement as they plan their next normal. Solutions already available before the pandemic such as print release apps on mobile devices are now receiving new attention as companies take steps to minimize the risk of virus outbreaks and strive to build confidence among staff to return to use physical premises.

The Flex Services Platform will deliver the four core elements needed to effectively manage a flexible office space:

1. **Digital infrastructure.** essensys leverages its private network and cloud infrastructure to deliver secure and resilient on-demand services across their customers' multisite portfolios. It is the digital infrastructure that underpins everything from connectivity to great in-building

experiences and space analysis. The company is also increasingly adding an IoT layer to empower landlords, flexible office space providers, and users with occupancy monitoring.

2. **Space Management.** The Flex Services Platform allows workspace providers to create a digital twin of their sites, specifying floors, meeting rooms, desks, offices, and event spaces, and easily attaching doors, sensors, screens, and printers. This allows workspace providers to adapt their offering to meet market demands and quickly create spaces ready for occupiers to move in.
3. **Flexible Operations.** essensys enables seamless management of the customer lifecycle from onboarding and contract management to service booking, billing, and invoicing. The platform also allows for integration with existing best of breed applications that operators might already be utilizing.
4. **Occupier Experience.** An increasing focus for the company, essensys strives to empower the user and lift the burden of management from flexible workspace providers. To this end, the Flex Services Platform streamlines how occupiers adopt, use, and interact with workspaces, while also providing easy access to on-demand services through a marketplace of value-added services.

IDC's Point of View

The essensys announcement couldn't be timelier. As the business world plans a safe return to office facilities, flexible workspace operators will play a key role. On one hand, they will be able to address major uncertainties that many companies will still have about using physical spaces, providing a flexible option. On the other, consistently managing multiple sites across major cities, they can enable an immediate switch to decentralized operations.

As IDC goes to press, the business world is still globally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with no clear end in sight for government-imposed movement restrictions and the great majority of white-collar staff in key economies working remotely from home. However, as massive programs continue to be rolled out, IDC anticipates a gradual and patchy transition to hybrid working setups combining remote working with office operations in 2021. IDC studies highlight that a physical environment is still perceived as the best setting for collaboration and training, which are key aspects of all thriving companies.

As organizations plan this transition, offices will need to evolve to address three key aspects of the next normal:

- **Flexibility.** In the past few months, countless corporate enterprises around the world have striven to renegotiate obsolete office leases that no longer respond to today's fast-changing business environment, let alone conditions dictated by a pandemic. The transition to flexible workspaces will therefore be a strong trend in the coming months. Also, as landlords feel the pinch of the pandemic, they are also increasingly showing interest in new flexible office workplace models that better suit their existing customers and are more effective in attracting new ones.
- **Decentralization.** As companies strive to avoid large staff gatherings, the hub and spoke model (a small central hub located in central downtown locations combined with many peripheral offices) is increasingly considered a viable option. Either through direct lease or a flexible workplace operator, setting up multiple office locations means navigating a universe of local services such as connectivity, security, and access control.

- **Employee experience.** As the workforce starts to make use of office premises again, their expectations around work experience will have changed. In the short term they will require solutions to maintain social distancing and minimize the risk of new contagion while maintaining productivity.

The implementation of the essensys Flex Service Platform has the potential to make the resumption of flexible office operations swifter. With native applications, essensys is setting physical access control as a key aspect of its proposition. This, together with touchless user functions, will contribute to making the Flex Services Platform more appealing in the post-pandemic new normal. Going forward, this platform will not only suit flexible space operators but also meet the needs of commercial property landlords and real estate management companies. With commercial property vacancy rates at unprecedented levels, these players are currently under great pressure to change their business models and provide more flexibility to their clients. The essensys Flex Service Platform is potentially a key enabler of this shift.

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