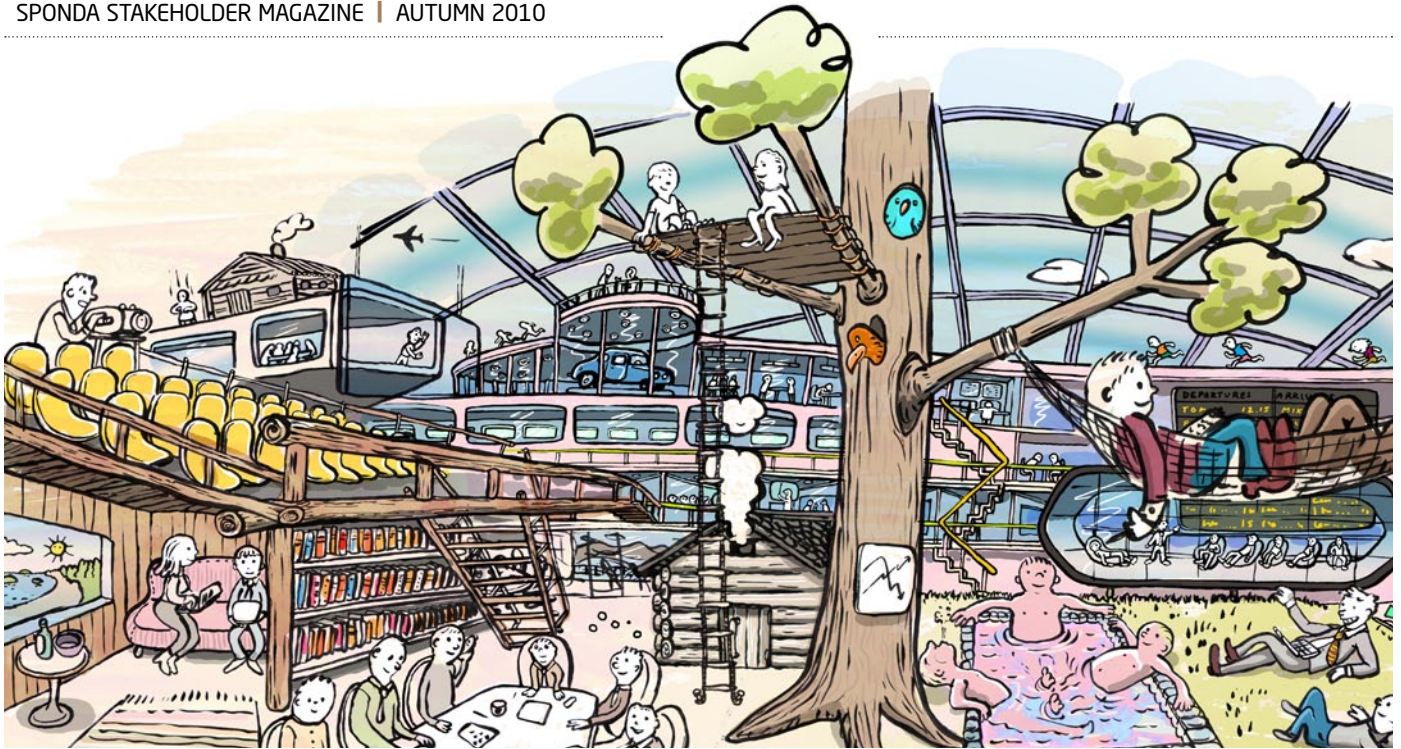


# Real

A Skylight  
Brightens  
City-Center

PAGE 2

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## Future economic growth sprouts in creative premises

A fireplace, kitchen, cosy sofa tempting for a break, and perhaps a hammock or two?

Joanna Sinclair  
Kalle Talonen, illustration

Interior design and architectural solutions not often seen at work places will become increasingly common also in the future, helping to improve business competitiveness.

Channel director and interior designer **Maaretta Tukiainen** has recently published a book *Creative space – the workplace of the future*. Professor **Matti Vartiainen** works at the Aalto University and Senior lecturer **Sirkka Heinonen** at the University of Turku, Finland Futures Research Centre – both dis-

tinguished researchers in the field of creative work.

Whether it is Vartiainen, Heinonen, or Tukiainen, the message is the same: The fast-paced work culture is loosening its grip. Work is slowing down and the focus on organisational effectiveness is fading away, giving more room for creativity. In the future, Finland will be competing on the global arena with ideas coming from the right-brain. Management based on control will become history.

At the same time, when the next generation of leaders – coaches –

begin to pilot more creative and happier employees from their ranks, work premises will also change rather radically. They will become centres of creative work, encountering, development of ideas and sometimes even hubs of creative “laziness”.

### Creative spaces

Sirkka Heinonen takes part in a project that develops the concept of Creative foresight space.

– We have noticed that creativity flourishes especially when the work environment serves “togetherness”. Creativity is best enhanced by providing workers with a set of two different spaces. The first environment, slow, would help a person to stop, while the stimulus-space

would provide stimuli for the rested mind.

Maaretta Tukiainen emphasises a multi-sense approach: it matters what the surfaces of furnitures and interior decorating materials feel like.

Work spaces could also pay more attention to their scent and noise environments.

Matti Vartiainen anticipates that different creative playgrounds will soon be an everyday sight at nearly all workplaces.

– In an information society, such as Finland, the need to be more creative work has increased for a long time now. Innovations require creativity – in a global economy they are Finland’s only means of maintaining competitiveness and jobs.

## Space for creativity

With the market situation improving and economic recession loosening its grip, companies are increasingly willing to develop and expand their current businesses. Furthermore, with a stable and favourably developing market situation, it is also an excellent time for new business start-ups. In both situations the question of office space becomes a relevant one.

The choice of office space is not indifferent for companies. Office space is a strategic production resource for a company that can help increase labour productivity and boost efficiency. A firm's business culture, line of business, as well as working methods and tools, set their own prerequisites for the premises.

Demands for the premises also vary depending on work roles. Work environment is especially important for those working in occupations that require creativity. In what type of space does creativity flourish the most? There is no simple answer to the question. For some, a work environment that is as calm and quiet as possible is the best source of inspiration, while others might

get their best ideas when interacting with team members or other staff.

A well-planned office offers an ideal solution for various needs. The nature of work has changed over the years increasing, in particular, the need for work premises suitable for meeting and team work purposes.

Company conference rooms have traditionally contributed to interaction. With successful planning of conference rooms they could be made into transformable spaces that support creativity and help contribute to ideas even better. At the same time, they communicate effectively a company's level of innovation and creativity.

Premises should, above all, support the company's operations and provide personnel with safe and comfortable work spaces that promote wellbeing. The wellbeing of employees has a significant effect also on work efficiency and helps give creativity the wings it needs to flourish.

Sponda takes advantage of the latest information available on the development needs of workspaces when planning new solutions in collaboration with its customers.



## Office space market is recovering

Minna Takkunen  
Sarri Kukkonen, photo

According to speakers at a Capital Markets Day hosted by Sponda, the office space market is showing signs of recovery in Finland. Factors behind the industry's positive outlook include low interest rates, economic stability in the Nordic region, and a record strong consumer confidence level.

Sponda's CEO **Kari Inkinen** said the company has increased its cash flow, in particularly due to improved occupancy rates and

active portfolio management. Sponda is focusing on property development and searching for new investment targets both in the domestic and Russian markets.

**Penna Urrila** from the Confederation of Finnish Industries EK said that growth rates of the current year have been higher than previously projected and the market prospects are very good.

**Peter Rostrup-Nielsen** from Danske Bank, in turn, said there



Regional Manager Perttu Hokkanen presenting the recovering office space markets.

are signs of macroeconomic recovery, but in order to boost economic growth further, greater capitalisation is required.

According to **Chris Peters** from CB Richard Ellis rental

prices in Moscow are expected to grow steadily despite low occupancy rates. International investors have once again become active in the region.

Read more at [www.sponda.fi](http://www.sponda.fi).

# Sponda Head Office Goes Green

Marita Kokko

Sponda head office has been awarded the right to use the WWF Green Office logo. Minimising and recycling waste, two-sided printing, drinking coffee from china cups, using public transport and company bicycles are all common practices at the office.

Green Office is an environmental service for offices developed by the Finnish WWF to help work places reduce their environmental load whilst simultaneously cutting material and energy costs.

– It was easy to get people to participate, says head of Human Resources **Heli Mäkelä**, who is also in charge of Green Office at Sponda.

Green Office rooted itself quickly as part of the daily routine and it also agrees well with Sponda's environmental goals such as the on-going energy efficiency programme.

Mäkelä says the first step in the project was committing management to the issue. Con-



sequently it was decided that obtaining the Green Office logo should be one of the most important objectives of this year.

Electricity, energy and water consumption is now closely monitored at the head office. All office devices have settings for adjusting power. As ICT devices are renewed, overall energy consumption is taken into account, which means changing into flat screens and laptop docking stations.

Commuting and business

travel in city centre is made easier with company travel cards. Everyone driving a company car has taken a course in economical driving. Many who drive their own cars wanted to take the course too.

– We've started a lifestyle change to improve personal wellbeing. The thought behind offering company bicycles to our staff was to reduce CO2 emissions. However, many were motivated by the idea of getting back into shape. It's great when

one project supports the other, Heli Mäkelä thinks.

WWF requires a Green Office company to make annual reports.

– The Sponda Green Office programme shows consideration for office-level environmental issues while tying the whole programme to the company's core operations. Energy efficiency is an important part of Green Office, concludes WWF Green Office specialist **Mikko Kuiri**.

## A Skylight Brightens City-Center

Marita Kokko  
Adactive Oy, photo

Sponda is building a 21st century office and shopping centre, a bright and covered living room for shopping and meeting friends in the City-Center business quarter. This phase – being the heart of the business quarter, along with its skylight – is set to complete in autumn 2011.

– Known as Makkaratalo (Finnish for 'Sausage building', named after a distinct sausage-like shape circling the building), City-

Center represents 60's concrete building. We are modernising the quarter, says **Olli Lehtoaro**, the commercial executive from Sponda.

The modernisation of City-Center, an important part of Finnish building history, has proceeded on schedule. The construction environment is full of challenges as between 10,000–15,000 pedestrians pass through the area each day and the building houses offices, shops and restaurants.

– Construction requires con-



A skylight brings natural light into all five of the new shopping centre's floors. The skylight is already in place, but construction site barriers are yet covering it and keeping it hidden from view.

tinuous planning of work sites, pedestrians' passageways and protection, explains **Jouko Pelkonen**, a construction manager from Sponda.

– Many of the jobs must be done at night to avoid disturbing the

offices, shops and restaurants. The noisy demolition of old structures, for example, takes place at night.

After the modernisation scheme is completed, the city of Helsinki will convert Keskuskatu into a pedestrian zone.

# The Helsinki Court of Appeal Moves to Salmisaari

Antti J. Lagus  
Kreetta Järvenpää, photo

The Helsinki court of appeal moved during the summer to the nationally significant head office building, which was built in 1930's to Finnish state-owned alcohol company Alko Inc., in Salmisaari, Helsinki. Now the court of appeal can function even better in the new facilities, which have been carefully modernised.

Around 170 people work in the Helsinki court of appeal. The Helsinki district court, state prosecutor's office and public legal aid office are all situated in this Sponda-owned property and together with the court of appeal they form Finland's largest concentration of legal matters with around 600 jobs in legal administration.

The main corridors of the two office storeys of the appeal court are heavy with the spirit of functionalist design, which goes well with the building's original style. The corridors, along with some of the offices, are protected as part of Finnish Cultural Heritage. More modern office spaces have been built along the side corridors.

In the new facilities, all courtrooms are located on the same floor. Therefore security checks can be conducted centrally at the entrance. Having the district court and appeal court in the same building brings also synergy benefits to Salmisaari: document traffic, prosecutors' jobs and the transporting of prisoners have all been facilitated.



Mikko Könkkölä, President of the Helsinki Court of Appeal, is satisfied with the functioning of the new premises of the court of appeal and its dignified atmosphere.



When designing the Jazz Club, special attention has been put in its acoustics and performance technology, Janne Grönqvist (left) and Mark Middleton say.

# The Magic of Jazz on Mannerheimintie

Leena Filpus  
Katri Tamminen, photo

Birdland Jazz Club, after having opened its doors in late May, is keeping the tradition of live music going. Wednesday and Thursday nights play host to jazz under the magnificent arched ceilings, whilst Friday and Saturday nights are dedicated to groove, soul and funk.

- In addition to international and home-grown stars, also young talent is able to the stage. We collaborate with New York's Birdland, The Jazz Cor-

ner of the World and Sibelius Academy, says restaurant manager **Janne Grönqvist**.

Sponda owns the property located at Mannerheimintie 6. The sturdy staircase and stairwell leading up to the club's door are protected by the Finnish Board of Antiquities.

Particular attention has been paid to interior design to allow for a pleasant and technically smooth experience of playing and listening to live music in a space that accommodates 390 people.

[www.birdlandclub.fi](http://www.birdlandclub.fi)

## Energy efficiency project proceeding on schedule

Sponda's energy efficiency project is progressing as planned, in stages. During the first stage of the project, ten companies took part, but already by the turn of the year 2010, cooperation involved 76 properties.

Sponda's Sustainability Manager **Tiina Huovinen**, emphasizes that energy savings can only be made in collaboration with users of the premises.

- It is not enough that we improve the energy efficiency of buildings. Equally important is co-operation with the people from the premises. Their daily actions are of fundamental importance, she notes.

For each of the participating buildings, an energy efficiency survey is performed, which is then analysed.

Based on the results, the real-estate manager makes a proposal for future investments and necessary energy saving operations, which are quick, such as equipment adjustments.