

Gen Y drives office evolution

FLEXIBLE layouts that attract Generation Y employees can also cut cost office costs, an Adelaide-based developer says.

Simon Chappel, a director of Prime Space Projects, said with commodity prices on the slide, his company is "simpatico" with businesses looking to make significant cuts to their office accommodation costs.

"A significant cost for any business is housing staff. With utility bills out of control and revenues going south, something's got to give and accommodation is a good place to explore for savings," he said.

Prime Space developed the landmark Santos building in Adelaide and recently acquired an island site in Fortitude Valley.

The company has also taken its commercial tower, Wickham 358, to the market. Located at 358-374 Wickham St, the development is a five-star Green Star-rated next generation 23,000sq m office tower in Fortitude Valley.

Prime Space bought the site last year for about \$10.5 million. About the same time it also bought Crestwood Shopping Plaza at Southport on the

Gold Coast for \$12.8 million. Mr Chappel (pictured) said the traditional office layout - with worker bees in designated workspaces in the centre of the floor and managers in formal offices with views around the outside - is not one that necessarily suits a business trying to cut costs and attract Gen Y employees.

"Any firm competing for available talent cannot ignore the needs, desires and attitudes of this generation," he said.

"And one of the most cost-effective ways of attracting forward-thinking Gen Ys to



an organisation is through alternative workplace strategies, also known as activity-based workplaces."

Gen Ys are in their 20s and are the fastest-growing seg-

ment of today's workforce. "Gen Ys are tech-savvy. With their blackberries, laptops, iPads and mobiles (they) can work anywhere, anytime over the 24 hours as long as they have wireless," Mr Chappel said.

"They might like to leave the office early for a dinner then get back to work on a project half the night.

"They prefer email and text messaging to face-to-face contact and 'webinars' to traditional lecture-based presentations. So they need a different style of office."

Prime Space is working with national office designer, IA Group on Wickham 358.

IA Group business development manager Craig Hansen said the key to implementing a successful alternative workplace strategy was research.

"Work is no longer a place we go to; it is an activity we do," he said. "With mobile and remote access to information and people, the space we require to perform our activity is no longer just within the four walls of our place of work. The office has become a place of resource and collaboration.