



## KATRINA KOSTIC SAMEN & LEYRE OCTAVIO DE TOLEDO

### PUTTING PURPOSE IN DESIGN: KKS SAVILLS ON THE EVER-CHANGING SECTOR

As part of the IE NextGen program, we've launched an online series where we interview game-changers who are leading disruption in real estate and the built environment. In the most recent event, "Uniqueness, user experience and purpose, the recipe for a successful project," we spoke with Katrina Kostic Samen and Leyre Octavio de Toledo on the future of architecture and design.

KKS Savills is an award-winning international studio that specializes in full-service interior architecture and design, development advisory and workplace transformation. Striving to improve the future of cities through innovative real estate solutions, KKS Savills comprises 130 professionals from various backgrounds and perspectives who lead in sustainability, knowledge and impact.

#### WOMEN IN POWER

Katrina Kostic Samen, head of office at KKS Savills, recently celebrated forty years in the industry and shows no sign of stopping. She served on the British Council for Offices Executive Board, becoming its third female president in over 30 years. During her tenure, she hosted the Council's annual conference, where she managed to drive up female participation and representation. Her passion for architecture is fueled by her desire to build buildings with a heart and soul—design from the inside out.

Leyre Octavio de Toledo, executive director for architecture and occupier solutions at Savills Spain, studied architecture and earned a master's in leadership management. Her deep knowledge of ESG and sustainability is rooted in her previous role as the Cabinet Director of the Secretary of State for the Environment in the Spanish government. At Savills, she harnesses her accumulated experience to ensure that the company continues to make an impact through sustainable development.

#### INNOVATIVE DESIGN SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

Workplace design has started to shift from designing your typical office to creating spaces where people want to be. Taking higher education, life sciences and the global economy into account, workplaces are transforming into community hubs that allow users to enjoy a seamless experience from the moment they arrive.

According to Leyre, "You no longer go to the office to work; you go to mingle, discuss ideas and create a real sense of community and belonging." The sector is moving toward mixed-use solutions and teams are designing spaces that manage the unique challenges of each individual customer. Savills, in particular, focuses on building spaces that "breathe" the respective brand for which they are creating. In the end, you get spaces fit for the type of work done there. The biggest challenge is understanding the customer's needs and vision.

When seeking out the talent to create these personalized spaces, Katrina looks for people who show her why the job is right for them. She encourages job seekers to try to meet in person and to guarantee that their resumes are relevant to the particular role they're applying for. Leyre further expands by explaining that interviews are your time to talk about who you are and what you have to offer—education is important, of course, but it's also about curiosity, imagination and adaptability.

KKS Savills stays ahead of the game by constantly reevaluating who they are, where they want to go and what makes them unique. With an industry that is evolving at a rapid pace, it's imperative to implement the right tools, ask clients for feedback, reinvent constantly and design for the future. As Katrina notes, "You have to maintain your passion and stick with it. Balance your knowledge with what the client wants."

Katrina and Leyre agree that it's always a great time to jump into the profession. Accept any industry experience you can and stay up-to-date on your software skills. Put people at the center of design and your future company will put you at the center of their work, too.