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Are you a Technology Company?

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Are you a housing company that uses technology or a Technology company that provides housing?

The question I often ask Disruptive Innovators Network and Proptech Innovation Network members is '**Are you a housing company that uses technology or a Technology company that provides housing?'** A thought provoking question? What would your answer be?

Many organisations are using a traditional operating model, seeing themselves as a housing company that uses technology. But is that right?

As a sector we are dealing with the biggest changes we've seen in many years, not least emerging from a pandemic straight into a cost-of-living crisis. Yet how many organisations are asking themselves if their operating model is still fit for purpose?

We all work and consume services and products differently than we did before March 2020. Our customers will also be doing the same. Does your operating model expect your customers to consume the services like they did before Covid?

If we keep our existing operating models and add technology solutions onto it, it can often become expensive, and I'd argue not

efficient or future proofed. I've seen too many organisations looking to bolt on 'token' technology solutions without really being able to answer why. I've seen some embrace them during the pandemic to then discard them when they returned to the office – and again not being able to answer the question why?

I describe it as 'token technology' as often it is small discreet interventions, without the understanding of what problem they are solving, what data they are collecting and why, where the data will be stored, how the current processes will change to accommodate it, who will access the data… let alone a plan to scale the technology up. This in my view gives 'technology' a bad name. "Its expensive and didn't help us" is something I've heard too many times.

However, through the lens of a technology company, data would very much be the foundation of all decisions. From recruitment and finance to delivery of the housing services – How can technology and data take the lead? There would be an understanding of what was to be achieved, what data and technology was therefore needed, where it could generate savings and what benefits it would deliver for customers, internal and external. I'm not naive enough to think could happen overnight; achieving this would take time and investment. But a clear vision of what a technology company would look like – one that uses technology and data as its foundation – to deliver and manage housing would allow 'no regrets' decisions with a forward trajectory to deliver better housing solutions in terms of both quality and cost for tenants and residents.