



“For the first time in my career as a facilities manager, nobody has complained about the coffee.”

Paul Fraine
UK Facilities Manager
Kobalt Music UK



When we first spoke with Paul at Kobalt, he was at the beginning of an enormous project- by his own admission one of the biggest in his career. Kobalt had outgrown their office space in Southwark and had secured a new office overlooking the River Thames, close to Cannon Street.

The task was huge – move the 360-strong team at Kobalt's UK Head Office to the new site. The project took several months to plan but the move itself had to be completed within just one week...during the Christmas period no less! Prior to the move, the Kobalt team were spread across three buildings, on multiple floors- some of which were in the basement. The vision was for a single storey, open plan site where the entire team could work together. The spacious, Scandi design was inspired by the company's CEO and founder Willard Ahdritz, a native of Sweden. It was a challenging time for Paul and the team at Kobalt, but the end result is one of London's most impressive, stylish workspaces.

The plans for the new site had not yet been finalised when we first met with Paul but he already had some idea of what he was looking for. The new space was to have a large atrium area, complete with café style tables; a meeting and work space for staff and visitors alike. Kobalt host some of the biggest names in the music industry at their London HQ and they'll often spend time in this area when they first arrive. The area itself and the facilities there must welcome and impress these guests.



Paul advised us that ‘coffee is really important to music industry and tech types. They tend to live on black coffee.’ So, we knew how important it was to get it right! We discussed bean to cup solutions straight away, assessing how many cups per day would be required of the machine, how much space was available and what preferences Paul and the team had. We discussed our extensive range of bean to cup solutions and in the end, following a recommendation from Paul’s boss in the New York office, he decided on Jura Giga X8 machines.

Paul then went on to explain that the new site was to have a staff café spanning the entire width of the building, overlooking the Thames and London Bridge. The staff area was to feature outside seating and a roof garden, which would play host to bands in the summer. The company work hard to recruit and retain some of the best people in the business and feel it important to reward staff with great spaces to take breaks and to kick back at the end of a hard-working week. Kobalt decided to take two more Jura Giga X8 machines for their staff area, maintaining consistency of quality across the site.

When Kobalt came on board, they were allocated a Client Manager, Emily, who stayed close to them through the entirety of the onboarding process. Emily worked with Paul to find the best coffee bean for the Kobalt team, considering the profile of their former coffee and the teams' favourite style of drink. She also arranged and oversaw the installation process, ensuring that everything went off without a hitch. The office move was particularly close to Christmas, which brought its own challenges with staff and contractor holidays. The installation date moved several times and was eventually brought forwards as building work was completed sooner than planned. Paul complimented Emily on how easy she was to work with, how nothing was too much trouble and how honest she was, saying 'I can't promise but I'll try.' As it turned out, the machines were installed on the date that Kobalt requested and Paul was complimentary of the engineer too.

The thing we always want to know after any installation is 'Do the team like the coffee- have you had any feedback?' Paul told us:

“Everyone loves it. For the first time in my career as a facilities manager, nobody has complained about the coffee! Coffee is important to people here and if they don't like it, they let me know about it! Our previous machines couldn't keep up with the demand and kept breaking down all the time. We haven't had a single problem since these have been installed.”*

*At the time of publishing the machines had been in place for 5 ½ months.

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