

Antony Slumbers: What Will We Still Want From Buildings?

● Future of Work & Life | OBOS Showroom · 1st floor | 10:15–10:30 | 



Antony Slumbers
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AI removes the needs behind buildings, so they must be wanted

Antony Slumbers argued that AI impact models count what is lost while the gains are almost impossible to imagine. Statistics Norway estimates generative AI could save 16.8% of working time, and DNB Næringsmegling found no sign yet of AI cutting tenant demand. He asked a different question: what will people actually do differently? Technology removes needs and leaves wants, and AI removes more of them, faster. At work, agents can draft and analyse anywhere, so people will come for commitment, deciding what we want, formation of juniors and variety. Homes should offer invisible reliability and visible care, and cities should be worth the trip. He set out three shifts for owners: from leasing to operating, from attendance to evidence, and from the average to the peak. He concluded that buildings used to be needed and now must be wanted.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Presence is proof: when voices and video are cheap to fake, being in the room cannot be.
- Design offices for moments that need a room: fewer desks, far more rooms, shared floors.
- Oslo office vacancy rose to 6.8% at the start of 2026, while vacancy in the best buildings fell.
- Owners should shift from leasing to operating, from attendance to evidence, and from the average to the peak.
- A compact flat only delivers more life if the building supplies what the apartment cannot.

16.8%

share of working time
generative AI could save in
Norway (Statistics Norway
estimate)