



GSE

Global contractor in
commercial real estate

PRESS RELEASE

3 June 2020

AT GSE, “TELECOMMUTING AND VIRTUAL 3D TECHNOLOGIES WORK, EVEN WHEN WE’RE POURING CONCRETE”

While the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures have strongly affected the economy and particularly the construction trade, the GSE Group successfully kept most of its sites running, thanks to safety measures and many remote work tools.

In the emergency to adapt to new constraints, it is the face of tomorrow’s construction projects that has taken shape at GSE. Thanks to cutting-edge 3D technologies, virtual visits to construction sites have become a reality for the company.

Business activities maintained during lockdown and quick recovery thanks to remote work

At GSE, the support and administrative teams were able to switch fully to telecommuting very early on in the crisis. For many years, GSE has been equipping the company and all its employees to enable them to work from home.

But the risks were highest on the construction sites – and this is where GSE was able to make the difference. As of mid-March, when the French government made its lockdown announcement, most construction sites were either halted or had their activities significantly reduced. On 18 March, only 33% of the projects were still active, with an even lower percentage in France (21%) – while Germany and the UK succeeded in maintaining normal levels of activity.

At a time when most building sites were shut down across France, GSE initiated the gradual resumption of work at its own sites very early on. Currently, 90% of them are operational – with 50% back to their normal pace of work, 40% at reduced speed and only 10% still stopped or postponed.

Resumption of work took place in compliance with precautionary health measures, in particular the COVID guidelines issued by construction industry union OPPBTP. GSE’s professionals used many remote work tools that made it possible for operations to be maintained by reducing the number of people present on site.

Among the markets where GSE is established, only Germany and Hungary experienced little or no slowdown even during the lockdown period.

Innovation at the heart of GSE's DNA

GSE has its own operational think tank, the GSE Lab, which brings together experts who address the challenges of 21st century architecture and help invent new ways of working. They imagine smart buildings open to digital technologies.

For years, the company has been using Building Information Modelling (BIM), a work process based on a digital model that improves the management of buildings' design, construction and operation.

This is now the case for over half of GSE's projects, which use 3D modelling and virtual reality throughout the construction process. For example, 3D-based planning enables stakeholders to keep track of the building's construction on a day-to-day basis thanks to its "digital twin", monitoring progress in real-time. This tool has considerably simplified technical review meetings, especially when they are carried out remotely. In addition, VR technology enables users to visualise themselves inside their future building with startling realism – and to choose their preferred fixtures.



"With this technology, we can continue supervising our worksites' design remotely and keep working with our clients, who – thanks to the 3D model – can monitor our work's progress from the safety and convenience of their own premises," said Roland PAUL, Chairman of GSE. *"BIM enables us to gather all the information in a single database for use by all the stakeholders (clients, users, architects, design offices, installation and maintenance companies). It enables us to coordinate the various trades and continue our construction work,"* he added.

Furthermore, after testing the solution during the lockdown period, four sites are now equipped with 360° cameras linked to our BIM models. Construction site monitoring thereby remains possible even at a distance. Fixed onto a helmet, cameras enable the progress of the construction site to be monitored daily. Every professional can visit all the areas of the site with a 360° perspective and offer his or her expertise to the site team collaboratively.

"In addition to the practical aspects, at a time when remote working was necessary, the experience was enriching for future GSE projects and working methods. The technology enables us to supervise building sites' progress, control the quality of execution and monitor personal safety. It cuts back on travel, with many associated benefits: reduced effort, optimised travel costs and a considerably lower carbon footprint," said Roland PAUL.

"Of course, we can't physically pour concrete over the Internet yet, but part of the engineering work can be done remotely," he added.

A long-term change in user habits?

The construction of logistics buildings accounting for 70% of GSE's business, the current crisis may also have a lasting impact on the company. It is redefining the expectations of logistics platform users and therefore shaping the warehouse of the future. Robotisation, which is already playing an increasing role, should become more widespread.

"There are, however, great differences between industries. Robotisation is not always simple to apply, because it requires significant investment and depends on the availability of skilled labour within commuting distance of the platform," said John Baltay, GSE's Chief Marketing Officer.

ABOUT GSE

Founded in 1976, GSE has become a global contractor specialising in the comprehensive management of commercial real estate projects in Europe and China (from real estate development and financing to the search for land, project qualification, technical studies, design & build, commissioning, and after-sales services), with commitments on prices, deadlines, and quality.

GSE has over 450 employees producing logistics, industrial, retail, and special purpose buildings, with a turnover of around 554 million euros in 2019. GSE operates in seven European countries as well as China. The company has twelve branch offices in France; its head office is in Avignon.

In 2019, GSE became a company of the GOLDBECK group, the European leader of turnkey construction with revenues of €3.5 billion and over 7,800 people employed at more than 70 sites.

For further details: <https://www.gsegroup.com/en/>

PRESS CONTACTS

Galivel & Associés - Carol Galivel / Valentin Eynac

21-23, rue Klock – 92110 Clichy – France

Phone: +33 (0)1 41 05 02 02 // Mobile: +33 (0)6 09 05 48 63

galivel@galivel.com // www.galivel.com

GSE – Pathy Ravoavy

Communications Director

presse@gsegroup.com // www.gsegroup.com