

E-BOOK

The CRE Commuter Data Imperative

How sales, operations, and sustainability can use centralized
commuter data to achieve their goals and meet evolving
tenant expectations



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Introduction

Different Priorities,
Common Solution

Of the myriad complexities facing commercial real estate (CRE) firms, one of the newest and most significant is the matter of commuting.

While established systems, technologies, and protocols are in place to manage other crucial elements of the business, the three key departments for which commuting is now a priority (leasing, management, and sustainability) aren't yet equipped with the tools and approaches they need when it comes to commuting.

One obvious culprit for these current shortcomings (beyond the complex nature of commuting itself) is the fact that leasing, management, and sustainability departments all seem to have entirely different needs and goals related to tenant commutes.

Leasing needs to prove to potential tenants that your buildings can meet commuters' needs and promote the locations as commuting hubs; management needs to ensure commuter amenities run smoothly; sustainability must continue to position commuters to reduce their environmental impact.

These disparate departments share a common knowledge gap: commuter data.

While many teams have some compilation of systems in place to gather, track, and analyze the way people get to and from their buildings, the only way to reach the necessary level of insight is to adopt a centralized approach to commuter data.



This eBook will outline the ways in which each of these three functions—sales, operations, and sustainability—can use centralized commuter data to create a positive feedback loop that helps to close more deals, increase customer satisfaction, and hit sustainability goals.



Sales & Leasing

Transforming CRE sellers into
commuting experts.

Not long ago, it was the inside that counted: updated interiors, luxury perks and amenities, and great facilities were the “wow” factor that closed deals. These elements are all still essential, of course, but they’re only part of what today’s tenants expect. Now, what’s beyond the walls of your building matters, too. When it comes to standing out, it’s not enough to offer a great place to work: You must also offer a great way to get there.

Tenants are on the hunt for buildings that can offer the best possible commutes for their employees. To impress them, you’ll need to prove that...



You offer top-notch commuter amenities



It will be easy for commuters to get to and from your building



You’re serious about understanding and optimizing tenant commutes

Oftentimes, having great amenities isn’t the problem.

Many properties offer excellent commuter access and amenities ranging from parking to bikeshare. Where properties fall short is in educating potential tenants about what’s on offer and in being able to prove the impact said amenities will have on employees’ commutes.

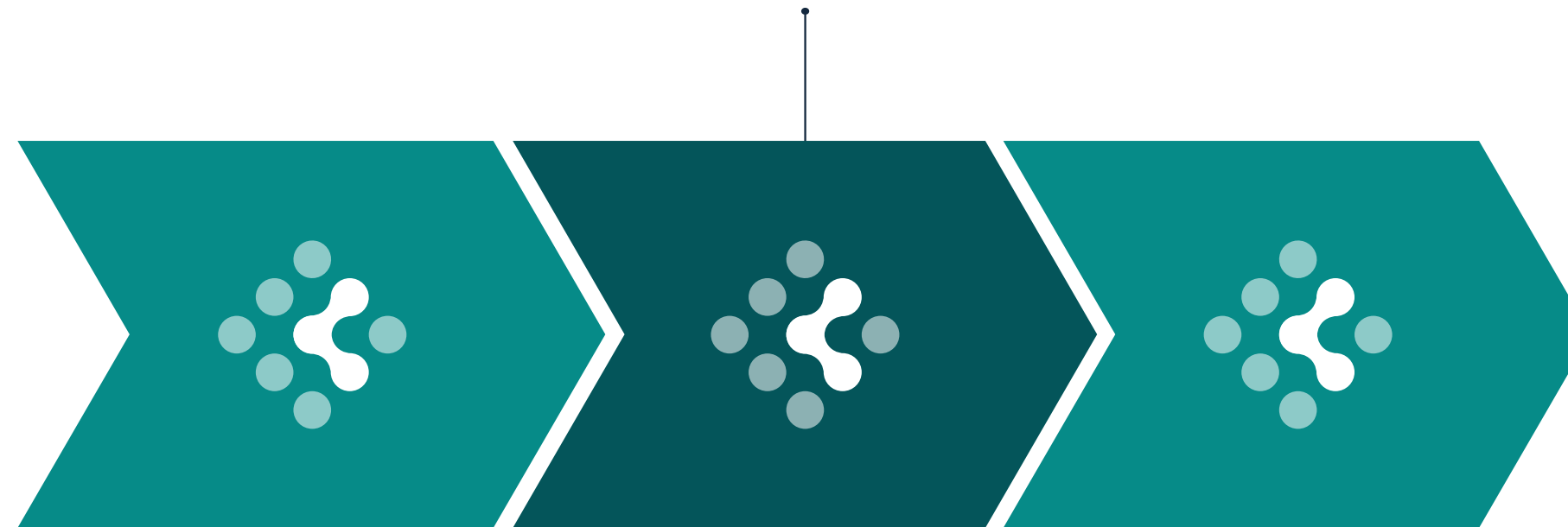
This need for education spans the entirety of the sales cycle.



Tenant Need

Consideration

Will these buildings meet the needs of my commuters?



Pre-Sale

Does this CRE firm prioritize commuting?

Retention

Is renewing our lease the best decision for our employees?

Scenario: Sales Without Commuter Data Tools

A large employer, Penns, Inc., is considering leasing a new Chicago office building.

The Workplace team has already taken the initiative to survey Penns employees and discovered that commuting is a top concern. Cindy, the Head of Workplace, isn't surprised. After years during which her employees have grown accustomed to the flexibility and convenience of work-from-home and hybrid models, she knows it's her responsibility to deliver great commuting options. If she doesn't, she risks sparking major turnover. Well-managed commuting is no longer a nice-to-have for Penns: It's a must.

Cindy begins the hunt for a new building (or buildings) that will fit the bill and comes across A.B.C. CRE, a major commercial real estate firm in the area. Before reaching out to leasing, she visits A.B.C.'s website and is impressed with what she sees. The firm's buildings are well-located and look up-to-date.

But when she searches for information about the commuter amenities A.B.C. offers, she finds only a few passing references. The list of nearby bus and subway stops is hardly enough to inspire confidence, and mentions of bike storage feel like an afterthought.

Concerned, she reaches out to a few fellow Workplace professionals in her network to ask whether they know anything about what kinds of commuter amenities A.B.C. offers. "I'm not sure, actually," reads one emailed reply. "When I checked them out last year, it didn't seem like they offered much, so I actually never even reached out to their leasing team."

Luckily for A.B.C., Cindy is intrigued enough to get in touch with leasing, but she reaches out to several other buildings, too, in order to keep her options open.

Next week, Cindy gets on the phone with an A.B.C. sales rep and asks him about commuting options. The rep eagerly pulls up a slide deck that offers an overview of the buildings' parking garages, bike storage, and proximity to subway lines.

Hoping for more information, Cindy presses him for more details about surrounding commuting amenities. He quickly pulls up Google Maps to find the nearby public parking lots, bikeshare docks, and transit stops and shares his screen so she can follow along.

Scenario: Sales Without Commuter Data Tools

Cindy appreciates the effort but feels privately that she could have done this on her own. She was hoping he'd have more insight to offer.

Moving on, she asks whether the broker can help her with something a bit more complicated: Penns, Inc. has a lot of employees, and they're spread out across Chicago and surrounding suburbs.

She's open to leasing office space in multiple buildings if it means she'll be able to make it easy for everyone to come in. Could he help her determine which set of buildings she should consider if she wants to benefit the maximum number of commuters?

There's a brief, awkward pause. Did Cindy imagine the look of panic on the broker's face? She certainly hopes not. To his credit, the rep recovers quickly and asks her to give him a rough idea of where her employees live. Encouraged by the request, Cindy happily informs him that she actually has detailed information on hand about all of her Chicago employees' locations.

She's disappointed, though, when it's clear that he can do little more with this information than conjure a big-picture idea of where people seem to be clustered.

Working from his estimate, the broker suggests two buildings that seem centrally located, but it's clear it's just a guess: He has no way to model routes people might take, and no way of knowing whether they need to make other stops (like school drop-off) along the way.

Fearing she doesn't have the information she needs to make the right choice for her commuters, Cindy begins to wonder whether the move is worth the disruption it will cause.

After going back and forth for a few weeks, she reluctantly puts the decision on ice and decides to revisit it next year.

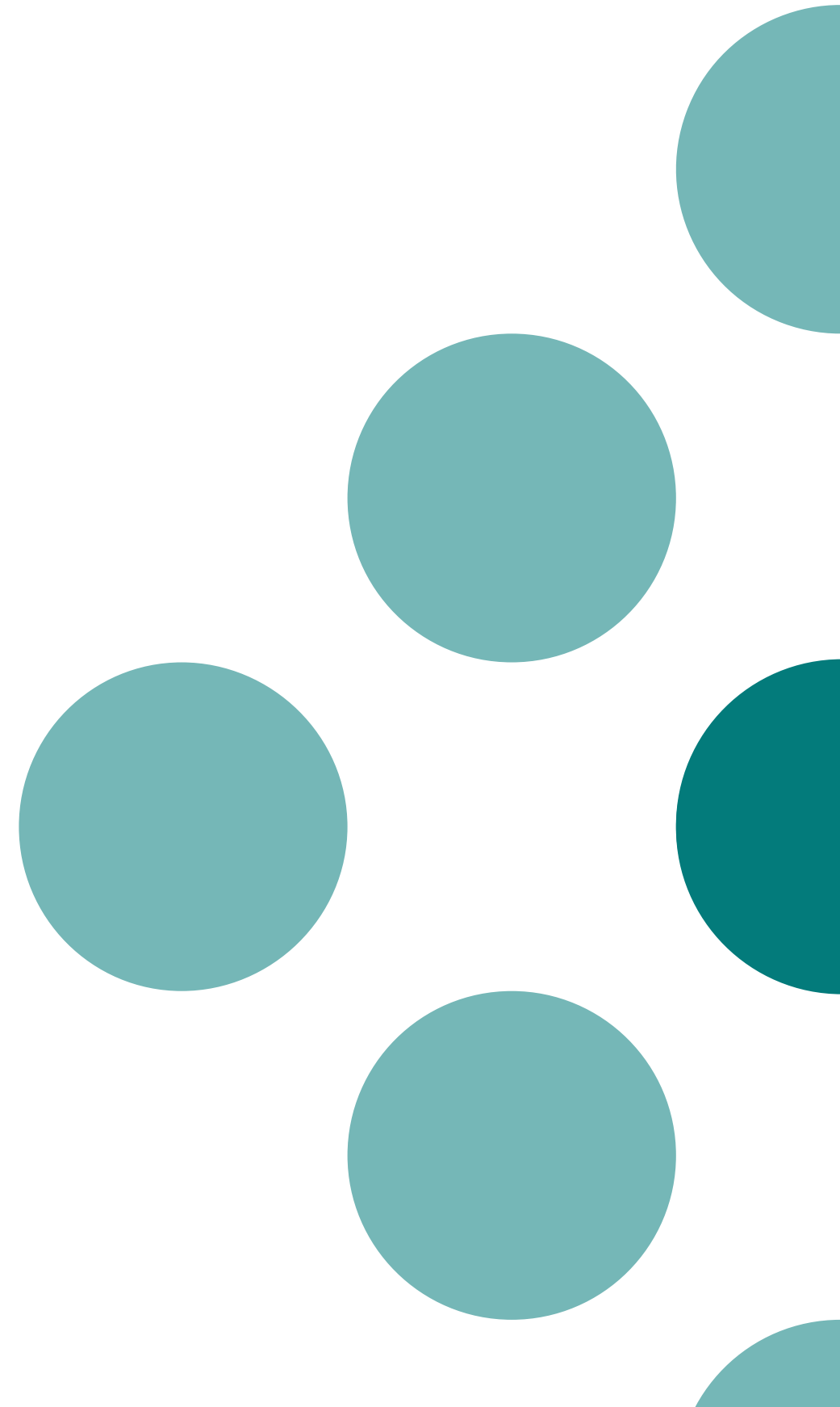
Potential Tenants Need (and Expect) to Speak with Experts

In our fictional scenario—and plenty of real ones playing out every day—the problem wasn't that the sales team couldn't offer a potential tenant the best amenities and great commuting options. The problem was an inability to prove the impact of their programs.

B2B buyers are increasingly self-reliant: Research suggests most buyers are anywhere between 50-70% through their buying research before they even contact sales. It's essential, therefore, that interested tenants are able to find preliminary information and even begin to walk through the potential benefits of some of your amenities before you make a pitch.

Buyers also increasingly expect salespeople to help them navigate complicated decisions. 64% of B2B buyers want vendors who offer insights into their problems, while 62% want salespeople they speak with to demonstrate experience and knowledge of their industry. Far from being intimidating, this is an outstanding position to be in as a rep.

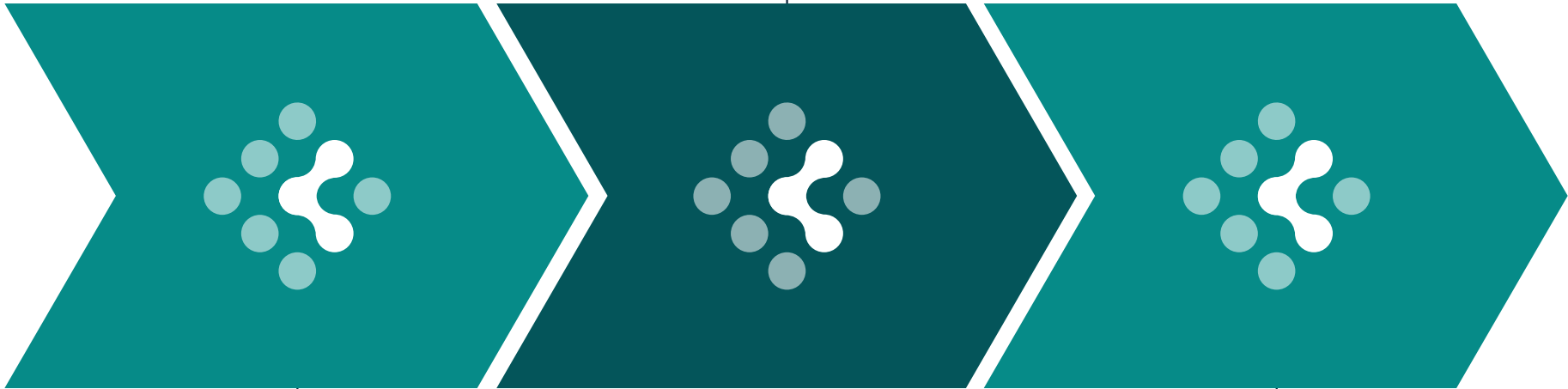
But it also means that failure to step up to this role is perilous. If potential customers can't find the information they need at the start of their buying journeys—and if sellers don't have the tools they need to provide expert guidance later on—you'll risk leaving money on the table.



Solution

Consideration

Equip sellers with tools that automatically model employee commutes so that they can offer expert insight and prove the superiority of their offerings.



Pre-Sale

Demonstrate a thoughtful commuting approach through website information and interactive web tools that allow potential tenants to explore offerings and begin to validate their effectiveness.

Retention

Help renewals teams prove the success of amenity adoption.

Scenario: Sales With Commuter Data Tools

Cindy, Head of Workplace, is in the market for a new building (or buildings) for Penns, Inc.'s Chicago employees.

She and her deputies on the Workplace team go on the hunt, and when they find A.B.C. CRE's website, they're instantly impressed. In addition to a robust commuting amenities page that details what's available, A.B.C.'s website also features a free commute calculator that can run a preliminary analysis on the spot.

Cindy inputs some of the data she has on hand and plays around with different locations and commuting schemes she's been considering. Encouraged by what seems to be a real commitment to good commuting, she reaches out to the A.B.C. sales department and schedules a call.

On the call, she asks the rep whether he can offer any advice about which of A.B.C.'s many buildings would be optimal for her employees.

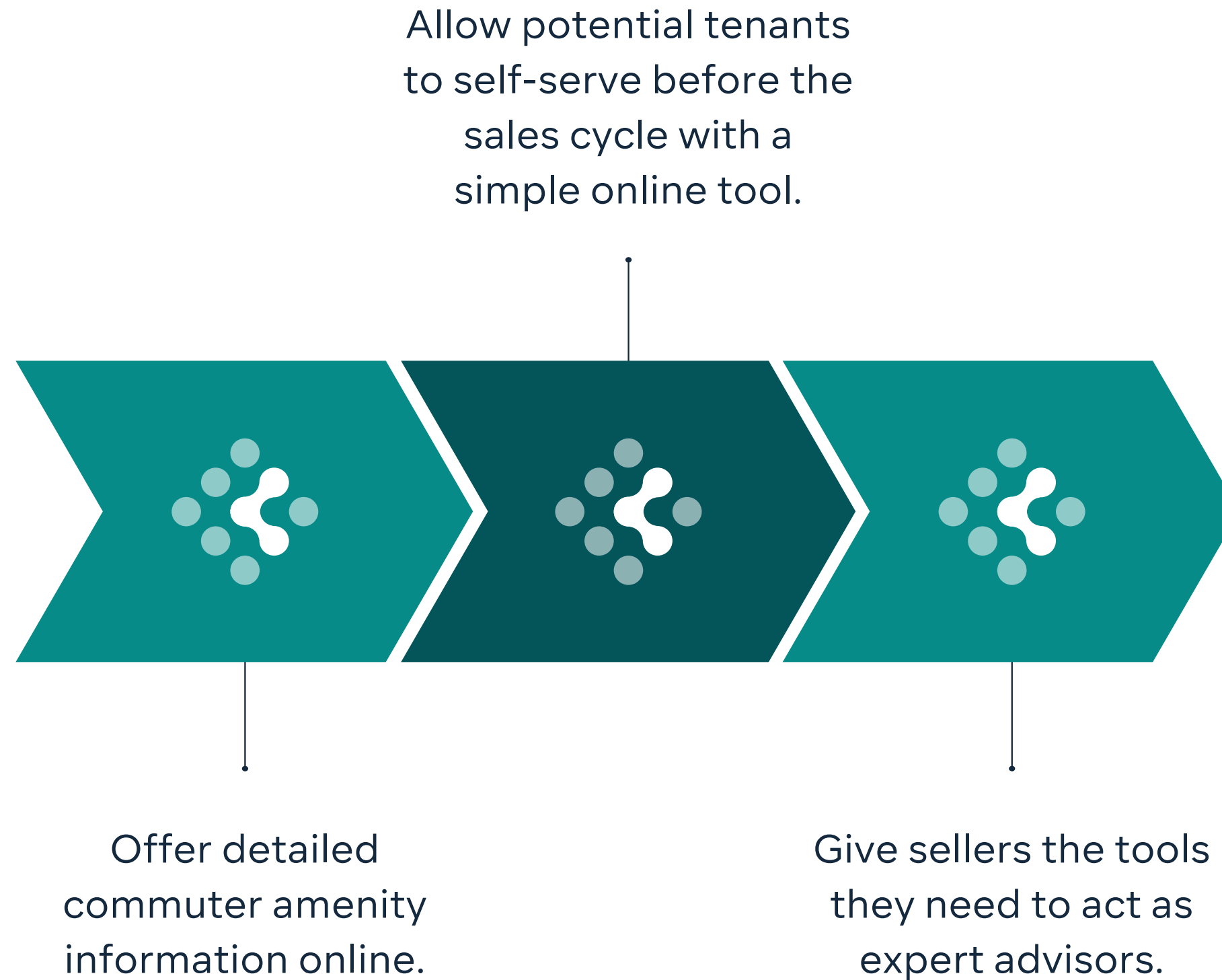
The broker offers to run a commute analysis to understand which buildings will work best for A.B.C.'s unique employee footprint, and quickly identifies two properties.

He walks Cindy through a preliminary vision that breaks down the way employees can commute: 50% can easily drive and park, while the other 50% are well connected via public transit lines and bikeshare.

Cindy is relieved. After spending so much time and energy searching for the right place, she now has the data to back up her decision. She's confident knowing she can validate her recommendation with concrete data when it comes time to defend her choice to company leadership.

Once all decision-makers are on the same page (which, given the data, doesn't take long), Cindy signs the deal.

3 Steps to Data-Backed CRE Sales



Operations & Management

Connecting commuters with
the amenities they need.

A well-run CRE building today offers a host of commuter amenities to tenants. But just as complex as determining what to offer is staying on top of how to manage it all.

A successful commuter amenity is one that commuters want and need, know about, and can easily access.

After all, if commuters either aren't aware of your amenities or how to take advantage of them, you may as well offer nothing at all.

But maximizing the impact of your commuting amenities is no easy task, particularly because there are three key players involved: commuters, management, and tenant HR teams. When commuter amenities aren't managed effectively, each group suffers in distinct ways:



Commuters either miss out on amenities they don't know about or get tripped up by the headache that comes with navigating multiple systems and teams.



Management must slog through a swamp of manual processes that leave far too much room for error and sap time that could otherwise be spent on bigger-picture initiatives.



Tenant HR teams cannot easily share information about and registration for their own processes alongside those of the building.

Ad hoc or multi-faceted solutions—like working with multiple decentralized systems or erecting informational lobby signage and screens—were enough not long ago. But in a reality defined by flexible work and high expectations, they can't cut it on their own.



Scenario: Managing Commuter Amenities Without a Centralized System

A new company, Penns, Inc., has moved into a building owned by CRE firm A.B.C. CRE. Now, Penns' commuters need to get their new commutes in order. In addition to the amenities A.B.C. offers, Penns has its own subsidies and commuter programs in place, which are operated internally. Penns' commuters will have access to their company's commuting programs in addition to those available through A.B.C. What could go wrong?

Let's watch as three commuters go about accessing their amenities:

Paul, a busy sales rep, logs on to the Penns' internal commuter system, where he discovers that he's eligible for pre-tax parking benefits, no matter where he parks. Assuming he has all the information he needs, he asks a friend who works nearby for parking recommendations. Paul's friend tells him about a "cheap" lot around the corner, and Paul wastes no time purchasing a monthly pass. Little does Paul know, A.B.C. offers comparable onsite parking. Plus, he doesn't realize that taking the subway would have saved him time and money.

Lan, a software developer, only needs to come to the office once or twice a week for in-person engineering team meetings and always does so via car. She looks into A.B.C.'s amenities and is happy to find that there are parking spaces available onsite. She's far less happy, however, when she finds that these spaces are only available to rent on a monthly basis. She needs the flexibility of daily parking, so she decides to simply find an open space in a nearby public garage and pay the daily rate whenever she has to come in. She's disappointed but knows there's nothing else she can do.

A few months later, Sam joins Penns as a marketing executive. On days she drops her kid off at school, Sam needs a parking space. On days when other parents manage carpool, however, she prefers to bike or take public transit.

When Sam arrives, the management team at A.B.C. walks her through the process, showing her how to work with the parking management company in order to get a monthly parking pass, then helps her complete the paperwork necessary for a bike locker. When all that's done, the team hands Sam a document explaining how to purchase a transit pass from the agency down the street. The management team then sits down and adds Sam's information to each of the team's many spreadsheets to keep track of which programs they're using.

Overwhelmed, Sam comes back multiple times for help and starts an email chain with both A.B.C.'s management team and the HR manager at Penns. In an attempt to ensure Sam gets what they need, A.B.C.'s management team ends up doing the heavy lifting, ultimately having to coordinate Penns' programs in addition to their own to make sure everything is in order.

Too Much for Manual Management

With so many commuting options—and more complex needs as a result of hybrid work—CRE management teams can no longer rely on disparate systems and manual processes.

In order to coordinate with tenant programs, track commuter amenity usage, and ensure all commuters know about, can access, and maximize the benefits of their commuting amenities, it's essential to operate through a centralized platform.

A centralized commuter platform is effective only if it offers three distinct user experiences that draw from the same, shared data (see page 17).

CRE companies that fail to centralize their commuter amenities through a single system will waste time and money, plus risk tenants not taking full advantage of their amenities. Both commuters and tenants will be more confused, while your team remains stretched thin.

When everything is automated and runs through a single system, however, management teams can better optimize their teams' time. Rather than updating spreadsheets and assisting individual commuters to sign up for the programs they need, management teams can focus their energy on the bigger-picture strategic initiatives centered on ways to optimize the commuter experience and deliver the best possible experience for commuters.



One Platform, Three Distinct Use Cases

Commuters

A personalized portal for each commuter through which they can explore all available amenities and programs, plan their route(s), book and pay for programs, and more.

Tenants

A management view that allows HR teams to surface their own programs to their employees alongside those offered by the building, ensure their commuters are onboarded, and streamline amenity payments.

CRE Management

A dashboard that tracks bookings and payments from commuters and allows the team to interface with enforcement (e.g. for parking) and third-party providers.

Help Tenants Help Themselves

By allowing tenants to augment your platform with their own information, programs, subsidies, incentives, and more, you can improve the likelihood that employees use the platform and take advantage of CRE amenities. Plus, when everything runs through a central platform, you'll have additional data with which to paint a more complete commuting picture for your buildings.

Scenario: Managing Commuter Amenities With a Centralized System

A.B.C.'s management team has invested in a centralized platform to manage all commuter amenities. Through the software, they're able to offer daily parking and bike locker access (possible now because all registration is handled automatically) in addition to monthly passes. All availability information is immediately up-to-date, meaning commuters always know exactly what is open to them. What's more, the system isn't just informational: Commuters can use it to take direct action and book the amenities they need, tenant HR teams can layer on their own programs, and the management team at A.B.C. can oversee the lot of it.

Paul, our sales rep, logs on and discovers that, in addition to information about his pre-tax parking benefits, he can also find and book the best parking. Turns out that the lot his friend recommended wasn't so great, after all. He books his parking through A.B.C. and heads to his next sales call.

Lan, the software developer, logs on to see that she can book parking daily, meaning she doesn't need to look beyond the A.B.C. building to find a lot that allows her to park on her schedule. She purchases daily passes on the days she needs to come in for meetings, and can always see what's available via her dynamic portal.

When Sam, the marketing executive, joins the company and logs on to the commuter portal, they're greeted by the myriad commute options available to browse and purchase. Through the portal, they're able to select the amenities that work for them—a bike locker, a transit pass, and more—without needing to involve anyone at A.B.C. or Penns. The management team at A.B.C. is notified about the new registrations via their dashboard. A team member reaches out to see whether Sam needs any help, but they're already done!

With commuters smoothly learning about and booking their commuting amenities through the platform, the A.B.C. management team no longer finds themselves pulled in a million directions each day to help commuters complete simple tasks. Instead, the team can run reports on the improved data coming through the single system and use their findings to optimize their commuting amenities.

Benefits of a Single Commuter Platform

Commuters

One-stop shop for information and bookings.

Tenants

Simplified way to offer company programs and subsidies on top of CRE-provided amenities.

CRE Management

Higher amenity usage rates, reduced staff time, and better data insights.



Commutifi for CRE

Commutifi's centralized platform allows commercial real estate businesses to distribute and manage commuting solutions through a single platform in order to:

- Optimize parking demand
- Reduce wasted amenity expenditure
- Reduce administrative overhead
- Provide tenants easy access to the amenities they want and need

[Learn more](#)

Commutifi Mobility Card

Give your tenants a flexible spending card built for a multi-modal future.

- Tailor benefits to your amenities and partners
- Track commuting with real-time data
- Incentivize ideal commuting behavior

[Learn more](#)

Data & Sustainability

Measuring and reducing
environmental impact.

How do commuters reach your buildings and what is the impact of their commutes?

It's a surprisingly tricky question. Current approaches to answering it—think surveys and smart systems—are a start, but fail to paint a complete picture. Without meaningful insight into commuting data (both current and potential), it's impossible to know where you stand or how best to reach your sustainability goals.



Scenario: Improved Sustainability Without Centralized Data

Commercial real estate firm A.B.C. CRE is working toward a new set of ESG and LEED Certification goals based on investor feedback and corporate goals. A.B.C. is already successfully measuring emissions data from the building itself—they understand their building's energy use, water usage, and indoor air quality—but there's a gap in their ecological impact analysis: commuting.

To fill this gap, A.B.C.'s sustainability team hires a consultant. It's expensive, but worth it for the insights he'll hopefully be able to provide. Next, the team invests in smart parking systems and mobility providers that will improve A.B.C.'s ability to automate measurement. Now, every time someone uses one of the A.B.C.-provided bikeshare bikes or enters the parking garage, the information will be recorded.

Six months on, the A.B.C. team regroups to check in on their progress. The consultant presents his findings: He's sent out a survey to all the building's occupants inquiring about the length of their commutes from home to office. The responses, though solid indicators, aren't highly nuanced, however.

The distances are estimates, and they don't take into account the wide range of emissions produced by different transit modes and vehicles. They also don't consider stops along the way or the number of days people actually commute. What's more, the response rate is low, meaning it's an incomplete data set.

Limited by the data accessible to him, the consultant's findings are little more than the result of a set of basic equations run through a spreadsheet. They're a clue into the emissions numbers A.B.C. needs to measure, but they're not enough.

On the sustainability team's side, the various new smart systems have all proven to be great on their own, but each one collects and reports their data separately, meaning synthesizing their collective output is complex and time-consuming. It's difficult to draw actionable conclusions from the numbers.

By the time the team hits the year mark, they discover that, despite their best intentions, they've hardly made any progress toward their ESG and LEED Certification goals. No one is looking forward to reporting those numbers to the investor-relations team...

Goals Need Data

The problem plaguing A.B.C. isn't a lack of will or instincts—it's simply a lack of access to the data the company needs. Without a centralized dataset, it's impossible to reliably report on commuting emissions for LEED certification or ESG goals or report accurate metrics to the people who want or need to see them. Consultants, despite their expertise, can only do so much when they're working from overly simple, incomplete data.



Scenario: Improved Sustainability With Centralized Data

In order to understand how people get to and from their buildings, A.B.C. registers all of their commuters in a commute platform. Through the platform, they can connect and manage their commuting amenities (including parking and transit passes and more) and easily update their commuting information if and when it changes. The data collected through the system is detailed—down to car models and exact mileage—and allows the system to automatically and accurately calculate emissions.

Now, commuters can log and manage their commuting details in real-time rather than reporting them once or twice per year via a static survey. The simplicity of the system increases the engagement from individual commuters.

In addition to up-to-date information coming in from individual commuters, A.B.C.'s sustainability team connects its various smart systems into the platform. Now, instead of attempting to synthesize the different data streams, the team can see all the data at once.

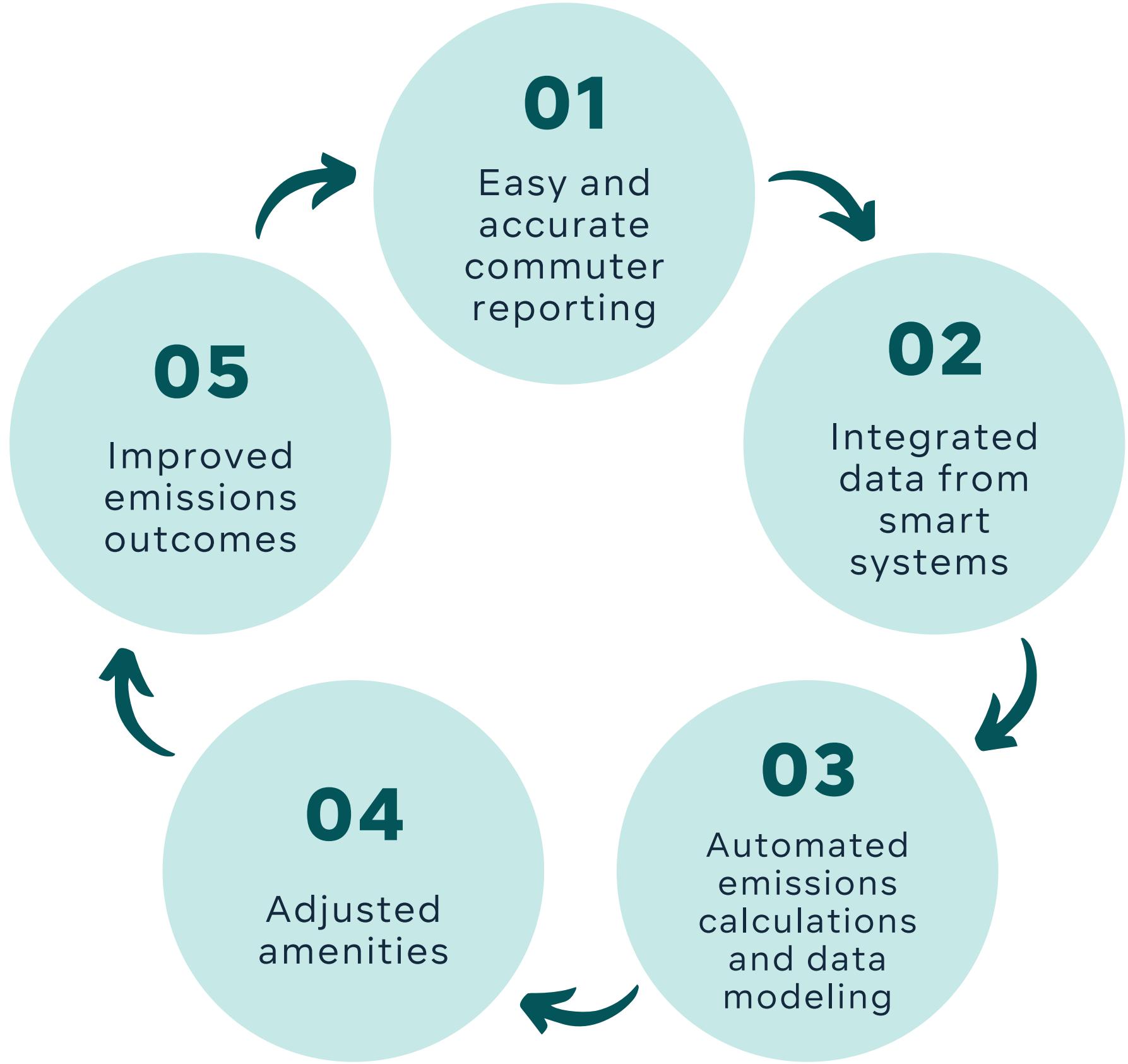
Through the system, the team can analyze the full commuting picture or choose to drill down into the ways specific amenities or buildings are impacting A.B.C.'s emissions as a whole.

With a more cohesive and up-to-date view of their data, the team sees early into their push that they aren't on track to hit their ESG and LEED Certification goals.

Instead of trying at random to fix the problem, they run models that allow them to see not only how new or altered amenities are projected to affect emissions, but also the likelihood that tenants will adopt the proposed changes. With data-backed hypotheses, the team adjusts their amenity offerings and helps guide commuters toward more sustainable commuting choices.

From the moment the changes are in place, the team can chart their impact.

Improved Sustainability With Centralized Data



Conclusion:

Better Commuter Amenities
ROI in 8 Steps

Ideal outcomes for the CRE leasing, management, and sustainability teams may look different, but they share a common secret ingredient: commuter data

Tracking, analyzing, and optimizing commuter data creates a positive feedback loop.

How do you create this loop? There are eight key steps.



Better Commuter Amenities ROI in 8 Steps

01

Create dynamic, detailed, public-facing web pages that showcase the commuting amenities you already have in place and allow potential tenants to explore options.

02

Equip your sales team with tools that help them act as experts, guide potential tenants toward the right buildings, and model potential amenity usage.

03

Manage and deliver commuter amenities through a centralized system that streamlines registration, facilitates signups, increases amenity usage rates, and frees up operations teams' bandwidth.

04

Allow tenant HR teams to augment your centralized platform for their employees and deliver their own commuting programs alongside your own.

05

Report on key sustainability goals with passively-collected data and make progress toward certification requirements.

08

Build on your success: Close more deals with an improved offering, retain more tenants, and meet loftier sustainability goals.

07

Revamp commuter amenities to better-leverage high-performers, better-market underperformers, and discard costly, unused programs.

06

Improve the impact of your amenities by tracking and modeling current and potential programs.



A Commuting Solution Built for Every Aspect of CRE

With Commutifi's data-driven commute optimization platform, CRE firms can distribute and manage a wide range of effective parking and commuting solutions through a single platform.

Commercial Real Estate organizations use Commutifi to:

- Attract and retain tenants
- Reduce wasted amenity expenditure
- Optimize parking demand
- Reduce administrative overhead
- Reduce buildings' carbon footprints

Ready to create a sustainable commuting future that benefits you and your tenants?

[Learn more](#)

**Schedule a
call with
our team**