



Health, Wellbeing & Productivity in Offices

A BITESIZE GUIDE FOR... OCCUPIERS

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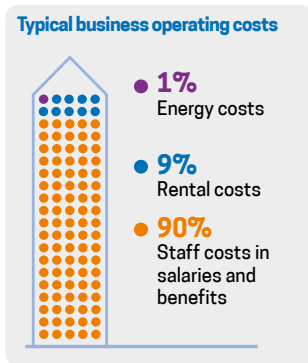


OCCUPIERS

Bournville Place, Birmingham, Cundall

Introduction

This briefing gives an occupier's digest of the WorldGBC Framework for understanding the link between office design and the health, wellbeing and productivity of staff. This will help you make the most of your most valuable asset - your people.



What we know

- The '90%' rule: staff costs are approximately 90% of business running costs; people spend 90% of their time in buildings; 90% of business leaders are changing their approach to wellbeing in response to changing expectations
- The physical office environment, including things like temperature, lighting, layout, and facilities, directly impacts staff health and wellbeing
- Better staff health and wellbeing has a significant impact on increasing productivity, reducing costs and therefore business performance

Staying ahead of the curve

- People are increasingly interested in their own health. The consumer health market is expected to grow 50% within 5 years
 - Technology is reinforcing this interest, through the growth of wearable fitness trackers and air quality monitoring
- Having the right office space is vital in helping you attract and retain the best staff.

Key points for a healthy office



Improve **indoor air quality** by using low VOC materials and optimising ventilation. Studies have shown this can result in 8-11% gains in productivity.



Amenities such as shops, restaurants, gyms, and good public realm add to staff attraction and satisfaction, as does a **location** with good public transport links, and the ability to walk and cycle.



Views out of windows allow eyes to rest from screens, and have been shown to improve productivity by 7-12%. **Views of nature** are particularly beneficial (e.g. green roofs, gardens, internal planting). Plants can also improve air quality.



Good use of **daylight** supports our circadian rhythms. One study showed this led to 46 minutes more sleep per night.



Office layout is important: social spaces improve staff wellbeing; visible stairs encourage exercise; and flexible working combined with a diversity of spaces for different tasks can boost productivity and maximise floorspace.

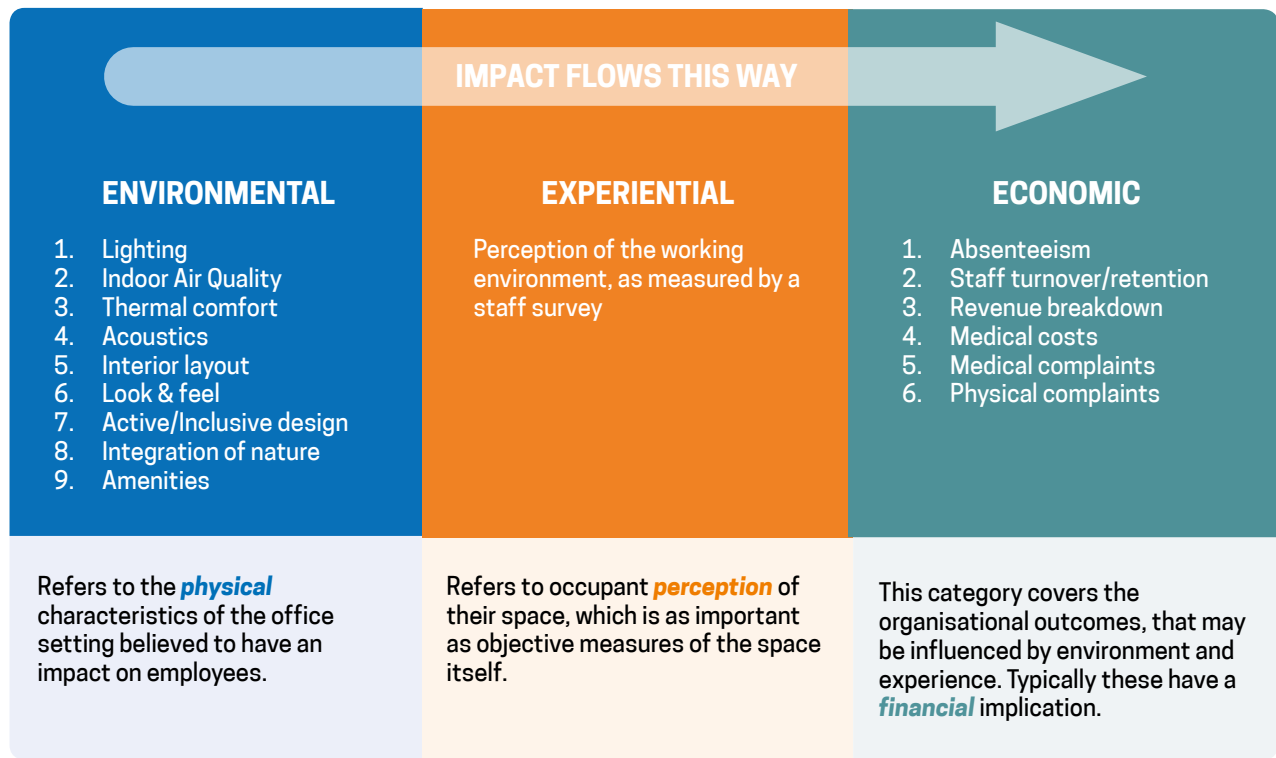


Window design, acoustic materials, and office layout can reduce unwanted background **noise** significantly: a major source of staff complaints.



Improve **thermal comfort** by being more responsive to complaints: office temperatures can differ significantly without being recorded by building management systems. One option is to allow employees freedom in where they sit. Furthermore if people have some **personal control** of temperature - for instance, within a range of 4 degrees - studies have shown a 3% or more improvement in productivity.

The Offices Framework



Top Tips for occupiers using the Framework

1. **Survey your staff** with questions that ask specifically about aspects of the building, such as light and noise levels, air quality and other metrics in the WorldGBC Framework. Answers to these questions will provide **actionable intelligence** and unleash **immediate improvement opportunities**. See the Better Places for People guidance note on conducting an office perception survey.
2. Have your FM, HR, sustainability and finance teams discuss how the data each team collects may be **pooled and assessed for greater insights**. For example, are there higher absences, lower staff retention rates and higher medical costs in buildings requiring the most FM attention (as evidenced by call out rates)? Are offices requiring less FM attention more profitable, and is office satisfaction higher in these offices (as demonstrated in HR survey data)?
3. Use the **evidence** you have compiled, including that from surveys, to identify specific, often low cost, **management changes** (e.g. green cleaning, additional healthy food options) and **refurbishment opportunities** (e.g. using natural materials, maximising daylight).
4. When looking for new property, ask the owner for **environmental quality information** (recorded CO₂ levels, building complaint logs, etc). If you have a rent review coming up, talk to your landlord about collaborating to **monitor the environment** using IEQ monitors so you know how well the space is performing and whether this is accurately reflected in the rent.
5. Certifications, such as WELL, can be used to unite project teams around the health and wellbeing agenda and **showcase your leadership** in this emerging market.



Case study:

York House, British Land

Location: London, UK

In their recent refurbishment, British Land used the WorldGBC Offices Framework to review their existing office space, and inform the design process.

What the review included:

- A survey of staff to explore perceptions
- Desktop sensors measuring environmental factors
- Analysis of economic metrics

The design featured health and wellbeing principles including:

- Opening up space to maximise daylight penetration, and use of light reflecting materials to enhance internal brightness;
- More than three plants per head of staff;
- A new central staircase, which encourages active movement between floors and increases social interaction between staff;
- Enhanced ventilation systems to improve indoor air quality;
- Sensory stimulation, using a variety of textures and finishes on floors and walls throughout the building.

99%

After the refurbishment, 99% of staff found it an **'enjoyable environment to work in'** compared to 69% before

99%

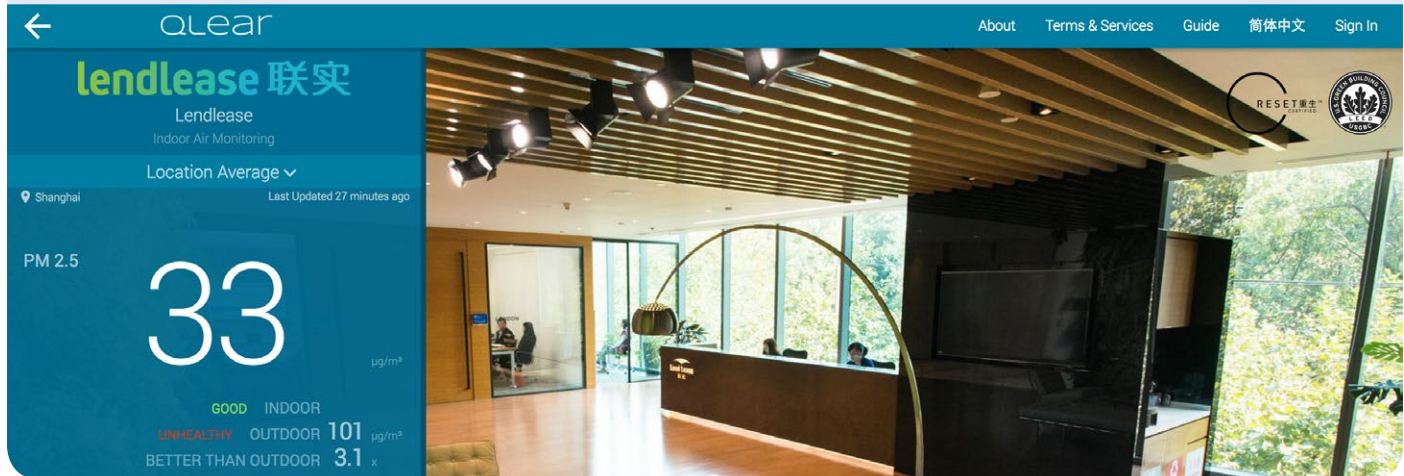
The refurbishment was rated **'positive for corporate image'** by 99% of staff

95%

95% of staff felt the refurbishment had a **'positive impact on workplace culture'**

Trends in technology

- An increasing number of businesses are choosing to share their environmental data online using platforms such as QLEAR (www.qclear.build). This kind of transparency shows a commitment to healthy offices.
- In other sectors, for instance leisure and retail, we are seeing social media increasingly used as a way of providing user feedback on buildings and places. For instance, whether shopping centres are bright or dim, whether the air is fresh or stuffy. Many expect this trend to bridge into the office sector too, through employment sites that allow anonymised feedback.
- Small, portable indoor air quality monitors are becoming cheaper and more user-friendly. Their use is growing in both the home and the workplace, and can provide real-time information - putting far more power than ever before in the hands of building users. Examples include Foobot and Netatmo.



“When you make products it’s natural to think first about the manufacturing impacts and the environmental credentials of the finished product. But how do our floors integrate into the built environment and how do they positively affect the people who live, work and play in those environments? Our ‘Committed to the Health of One’ programme represents a mind-set shift to focus on providing stimulating yet safe, hygienic and comfortable environments for the people who use them.

We are trying to use the basic principles as explained in the rest of this booklet and we are also using the ‘WELL Building Standard’ to understand how our portfolio of products can play a positive role. Floors are merely a small part of a healthy and productive environment but they provide an important role in design: creating atmosphere, reflecting light, providing texture and delineating spaces. Sometimes they can have very specific practical advantages too such as entrance systems and of course allergy approved products. At one sixth of all surface area we hope our products can help to play a role to creating better environments that are also healthier and more productive.”

Angus Fotheringhame, General Manager Benelux, UK & Ireland



More information

www.ukgbc.org

www.betterplacesforpeople.org

Health, Wellbeing and Productivity in Offices full report:
www.betterplacesforpeople.org

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