

Going Green: The New Status Symbol?

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New research into altruism appears to show that people are more driven by the need to be seen to be green than actually having an impact on the environment.

Attempts to create a more green approach, particularly within business, often centres around the environmental concerns and the need to create a healthier environment and eradicate or at least lessen the impact of global warming.

Research done in March of this year and cited [here](#), says "we argue that buying such [green] products can be construed as altruistic, since green products often cost more and are of lower quality than their conventional counterparts, but benefit the environment for everyone", yet goes on to show that people are more likely to buy a 'green' product (such as the test product, the Toyota Prius) as an outwardly visual sign of their perceived green attitude.

The same principles can be applied when considering interior landscaping and the way that is marketed to business people and facilities management. The benefits of plants are described, in detail, including health and wellbeing benefits, cleaner air through removal of harmful toxins, more productivity and decrease stress levels amongst employees working in an office environment which incorporates plants.

However, it is not the 'green' reasons alone that will cause people to make the important investment into interior landscaping. Other considerations must also come in, even if those considerations appear selfish. For example, the money saved by using plants is a key point - higher productivity levels and reduced absenteeism make a business more efficient and can be directly attributed to the use of plants.

It is also our need to be seen to be green that may be the driving force behind investments into interior landscaping. The use of plants is becoming somewhat of an expectation of customers visiting business premises - we have reached a time when a lack of plants can look 'odd'. That said, it is also important to consider how the use of plants represents the company as a whole - plants create the feeling of a management team



who cares, of a business which considers green issues and of a company which is forward thinking in its approach. Finding that the competition is far ahead in these areas is a simple business faux pas.

Solitaire Townsend, managing director of Futerra Sustainability Communications, says we should 'embrace' green consumerism whatever the motives, even if they are selfish ones.

'Men don't drive Porsches to get from A to B, but rather for the documented testosterone rush of being seen driving one. Like most high carbon consumption behaviour the object isn't to consume, but to achieve status, hedonic identity or to press another of our built-in buttons.

'You can't substitute a nature walk for a Porsche, not because of our values but because of our programming.' (2)

So next time you're thinking about interior landscaping, don't be afraid to embrace those 'selfish' notions of money saving and business image - it is those things which could cause more businesses to invest in the use of plants in offices and thus lead to a better environment for all

Resources:

1. [Going green to be seen: status, reputation, and conspicuous conservation.](#)

2. [The Ecologist](#)

