

Study shows that plants really do improve productivity in the office

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For the last week, the Internet has been buzzing with the results of a new research study. We're sure you can't have missed as it seems to have appeared across social media and in traditional forms of media across the globe.

The study conducted in real offices in the UK and the Netherlands in real time shows what we've been sure of for some time, that a green office is much better for employees and employers than a 'lean' one.



The study

The study which took place over several months during which time plants were removed and added. Studying both the short and long-term effects of plants in the office found that they significantly increased workplace satisfaction, self-reported levels of focus, and perceived air quality.

"Simply enriching a previously Spartan space with plants served to increase productivity by 15%," commented lead researcher Marlon Nieuwenhuis.

"This conclusion is at odds with the present economic and political zeitgeist as well as with modern 'lean' management techniques, yet it nevertheless identifies a pathway to a more enjoyable, more comfortable and a more profitable form of office-based working.

"Our research suggests that investing in landscaping the office with plants will pay off through an increase in office workers' quality of life and productivity.



“It directly challenges the widely accepted business philosophy that a lean office with clean desks is more productive.”

Previous studies have shown that the presence of plants can lower physiological stress, increase attention span and improve well-being.

Co-authors

The research paper was co-authored by Dr Craig Knight of the University of Exeter and Professor Alex Haslam, from The University of Queensland’s School of Psychology and led by Marlon Nieuwenhuis of the University of Groningen in The Netherlands (now of the University of Cardiff). The research was published in [Journal of Experimental Psychology](#).

Dr Craig Knight explained, “Psychologically manipulating real workplaces and real jobs adds new depth to our understanding of what is right and what is wrong with existing workspace design and management.

“We are now developing a template for a genuinely smart office.”

Ambius’ involvement

Kenneth Freeman, Head of Innovation at interior landscaping company Ambius, who were involved in the study, said: “We know from previous studies that plants can lower physiological stress, increase attention span and improve well-being. But this is the first long term experiment carried out in a real-life situation which shows that bringing plants into offices can improve well-being and make people feel happier at work.

“Businesses should rethink their lean processes, not only for the health of the employees, but for the financial health of the organisation.”

You can see links to some of the media who reported this story on [Dr Craig Knight’s blog](#).

