

NEWS

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"WHERE PLANTS THRIVE, MAN (AND BUSINESS) ALSO THRIVES," REPORT NUMEROUS INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS

Los Angeles, CA, July 17, 2002 - Plants at Work, an American-based information campaign which educates professionals and the public about plants' effectiveness in workplace environments, has collected a number of fascinating international studies and case studies on plants in the workplace. This considerable body of academic and case study research verifies that interior office plants can reduce absenteeism by as much as 10%, improve health in the workplace, reduce worker complaints of minor ailments, generally improve employees' feelings of well-being, reduce stress levels and have positive effects on productivity.

During a two-year study in Bavaria, Engelber Kotter, working on behalf of the Bavarian State Ministry of Nourishment, Agriculture and Forestry, found that offices with plants made workers feel less stressed, made the working environment feel more human and brought about higher output. Advisors from the fields of industrial medicine, psychology and room biology were involved in the study in order to evaluate the importance of indoor plants as comprehensively as possible. Plants were placed in 94 offices in which 139 participants worked. During the study, 14 polls were carried out. The polls included questions about the perception of the room, participants' relaxation and stress profiles, and their personal attitudes. Further components of the study were physical tests such as lux-metric light measurements, temperature recordings and air humidity readings by means of a data-logger. In summary, the study showed that offices with indoor plants are perceived as more conducive to health, more stress-reducing, and effective for better concentration. In addition, it was shown that the air was more humid than in offices without plants.

In Norway, Professor Tove Fjeld of the Agricultural University in Oslo has carried out several studies regarding the discomfort of workers. Her findings have been consistent: plants reduce minor ailments often linked to Sick Building Syndrome. Her first study was at the Statoil Offices in Oslo, where in a two-year study using questionnaires with two groups of workers, she found that complaints of minor ailments decreased once plants were introduced into the offices.

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RECORDED IMPROVEMENTS AT THE STATOIL OFFICES (AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF INTERIOR PLANTS):

AILMENT	% IMPROVEMENT
Fatigue	20
Headache	30
Sore/dry throats	30
Coughs	40
Dry facial skin	25
Well-being	84

Professor Fjeld has had similar results in three further projects, two in schools and the third in the x-ray department of the Radiological Hospital in Oslo. In the x-ray project, not only were complaints of ailments reduced, but mid-afternoon tiredness, common in many workplaces, ceased. On average, absence from work dropped from 15.85% to 5.55%. Last, but not least, the smell of the chemicals used in the process of x-raying was reduced once the plants were introduced. In summary, the plants made the x-ray department a healthier environment for those working there.

The group Plants-For-People cites several German commercial institutions that have introduced plants to affect the health and productivity of the workplace positively, including the following five examples:

In a major German building society, they incorporated interior plants in one branch where a significant reduction in sickness and absenteeism followed. They now have completed plant installations in all of their new branches.

At Grafikon Advertising Group, they report that interior plantscapings have reduced staff absenteeism by 5-6 days annually. In addition, they report that in the new, pleasant and comfortable surroundings, staff members now work late voluntarily.

A German co-operative bank has reported that the addition of interior plants has raised the humidity in their office and solved their electrostatic problems.

The Medical Technology company of Dr. Lange in Berlin reported an improvement in staff contentment and health since plants have been added to his office.

Finally, the German Institute for the Blind had no funds available to buy air conditioning units to counteract dry central heating (necessary to prevent expensive wooden instruments from drying out). A plant installation proved to completely solve their problem, and cost them significantly less than an air conditioning system.

In effect, numerous European sources are taking advantage of the transforming, cost-effective benefits plants bring to the office environment.

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