

# NEWS

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## **FACILITY MANAGERS CITE PLANTS AS COST-EFFECTIVE DESIGN ELEMENT**

**JUNE 12, 2002, LOS ANGELES, CA** - Corporate and facility managers recognize that interior plants affect employee attitude and retention, according to a recently released study by the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA). The top three reasons cited by corporate and facility managers for using plants were color, employee attitude and retention, and "making an environmental statement." Almost 50% of the facility managers questioned said that they use interior plants in 75% to 100% of their buildings.

The survey of 670 facility and corporate managers identified plants, artwork and sculpture as the key interior building enhancements which could influence higher occupancy and retention. According to the survey, facility managers used plants to add color and enhance a building's appearance, contribute to improved employee attitude and employee retention, and make a positive environmental statement.

Other reasons cited were that plants are an accepted part of contemporary building interiors, improve indoor air quality and promote the marketability of building space and retention of clients. The benefits of plants in improving indoor air quality (IAQ) was also documented by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) scientist Bill Wolverton, and generally accepted by facility managers, according to the survey.

Richard Greninger, managing director of CarrAmerica Realty Corporation (Washington, D.C.), which has 326 buildings in 15 markets, is a strong advocate of interior plant investments. "Live plantscapes have become a value-added distinguisher, defining our first-class brand identity," said Greninger.

The study surveyed three major groups who influence the use of plants in the corporate environment: corporate management, facility managers and architects. The study concluded that while facility managers could expand the use of plants in a facility,

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corporate management was the major decision maker in whether or not to use plants. Architects and designers influenced the decision 77% of the time, but only made the decision to use plants 23% of the time.

“This survey supports the research that living plants improve employee morale, adding to a sense of well-being and productivity,” said Dick Ott, ALCA Interior Initiative Chair. “Corporate and facility managers use plants to demonstrate a positive company image, which makes a statement about the operation as a whole. These managers have told us that the trend of livable office environments begins with plants.”

### **Analysis**

Strong use of plants in the office environment can be attributed to a number of factors, including: decision makers accepting employee attitude and retention as a key factor in the use of plants, plants being viewed as delivering a better package at a lower cost than art or sculpture, and continued recognition of the practical benefits of having a professionally designed, installed and maintained interior landscape.

### **Methodology/Sponsorship**

Results of the Interior Growth Initiative Market Study conducted by Krome Communications, Inc. are based on a questionnaire of a representative sample of 670 corporate and facility managers nationwide. The study looked at their use of plants in a commercial, public-use building interior. Based on the responses, the findings provide a 99% +/- confidence level. The study was sponsored by the ALCA, the Horticultural Research Institute (HRI) and the Fund for Interior Horticultural Research and Education (FIHRE).

Plants at Work is a national information campaign designed to educate facility management and the public about the economic and health benefits of plants in the workplace.

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