

GREEN VS. LEAN: THREE FIELD STUDIES

OCCASIONAL STANDING MAKES EMPLOYEES MORE PRODUCTIVE

Plants in the office? Most employees think this is a good idea, and they react with higher productivity to the presence of plants in their work environment.

The research design:

The field research was conducted in two consulting companies in central London and at the call centre of a large insurance company in Zwolle (Netherlands). In all three cases, the participants of the experiment had previously worked in relatively plain and spacious offices (lean offices). After a certain period of time, broad-leaved plants with a height of about 90 cm were placed in the workrooms occupied by half of the employees (green offices).



The lean office—concentration on the essential functions



The green office—a combination of functionality and well-being

The results:

Most of the employees who now had plants around them believed that the air quality had improved and that they could concentrate better since the change.

The introduction of the plants also increased the participants' sense of satisfaction with their work environment.

During the experiment at the call centre, the employees' productivity was also measured. After the plants had been brought in, productivity increased by 15%.

In addition, the researchers observed that the employees became more committed.

The researchers responsible for the study had registered similar results in an experiment conducted under laboratory conditions in 2010. At that time, the work performance of the employees in an austere office was compared with that of employees working in an environment with pictures and plants. In this case, the productivity of the employees in the office designed to be full of variety was 17% higher than that of their colleagues in the austere environment. The productivity grew even more markedly if the employees were able to decide for themselves what pictures and/or plants they wanted to have in their surroundings. In this environment that they had designed for themselves, they were 32% more productive than in the austere office.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY

You can download the research findings [at Research Gate](#).

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Publication: September 2014

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