

## A Sustainable Workplace Can Improve Productivity

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It's my opinion that the general public associates the term "sustainability" with energy saving strategies and environmentally friendly practices. Buzzwords such as "recycled content" and "clean energy" flood the media daily and for good reason. Recycling efforts, cleaner fuel sources, water saving fixtures, and glazing systems that reflect sunlight are all tangible examples of the benefits in being green. However, there are intangible and less obvious benefits to being sustainable.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, people in the United States spend an average of 90% or more of their time indoors. When you consider that salaries and benefits of staff are generally 300% more than mortgages, technology and utilities combined, it's obvious we need to promote strategies that increase productivity in the workplace.

According to the US Green Building Council, green work environments reduce absenteeism and turnover by creating employee satisfaction in the workplace. Bringing in natural light and outside air, arranging workspaces to take advantages of outside views, and allowing for individual control of lighting and temperature are surefire ways to promote comfort.

The LEED Rating system (Leadership in Energy and Environmental

Design) presents a shopping list of design strategies that can create the desired level of sustainable commitment. Each project is unique, and a LEED Accredited Professional is crucial to guide you through your options.

Here are a few ways to increase health and comfort in your existing space:

- Most modular office system walls can be lowered or have openings that allow daylight and views
- Provide task lighting and remove bulbs from fluorescent lighting
- Provide small fans or space heaters for personal space comfort
- Provide "Ideating" spaces for employees, and encourage their use for short breaks to relax the mind.
- Most important – ask your employees what they want to see that's available

A comfortable "Sustainable" workplace can be achieved with minimal cost by simply looking around to see what you already have available and utilizing it effectively. By involving the employees you give them a greater sense of ownership within your business. Ultimately, it's a win-win.

## What Inspires You?



We're inspired by **Shane Fernandez, AIA, LEED® AP**, corporate director of architecture, who is committed to enhancing the value of our clients' projects through sustainable design practices.



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