

# Creating a Green Working Environment

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“Going green” in the workplace does not just involve recycling paper or putting computers on sleep mode to conserve electricity; the movement also concerns the overall working environment. In fact, creating a green working atmosphere increases the overall health condition of the office and has shown to reduce costs and heighten productivity amongst employees.

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, an organization that promotes renewable energy and environmental construction, there are well over 100 green offices and almost 400 green buildings in the United States. Beyond that, there are over 3,000 building construction plans in the works utilizing green principles.

By working in a green building, you are not only benefiting the environment, you are benefiting your employees as well. According to a recent Connecticut College study, with increased sunlight in an office setting as opposed to unnatural lighting, workers were less depressed and were able to refocus quicker and easier. The windows offered varying stimulation which forced workers to revert their energy back to the tasks at hand.

The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, the state development agency for renewable energy, also found that controlling indoor temperature, improving indoor air quality and increasing sunlight in office settings was correlated with increased productivity by 7.1 percent annually.

Want to increase the productivity of your workforce? Try these earth-friendly tips:

- ✓ Avoid using noxious plastics, paints and adhesives while doing design and construction
- ✓ Place indoor gardens and/or lots of foliage around the office
- ✓ Use window blinds that capture and reflect light into office spaces
- ✓ Place mirrors or heliostats on the roof that follow the path of the sun and reflect it into the building
- ✓ Situate work stations near windows so most, if not all, employees have exposure to natural light
- ✓ Increase air flow throughout the office and make sure you are providing good ventilation for your employees
- ✓ Use nontoxic cleaning products in the bathrooms and on work surfaces