



Health, Wellbeing & Productivity in Offices

A BITESIZE GUIDE FOR... DESIGN AND BUILD TEAMS

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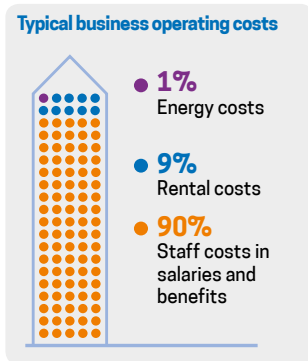


White Collar Factory, London, Derwent London

D&B TEAMS

Introduction

This briefing summarises the WorldGBC Framework for understanding the link between an office's design and the health, wellbeing and productivity of its occupants. This knowledge will help you respond to the growing interest of clients on this fast-moving topic.



What we know

- The '90%' rule: staff costs are approximately 90% of business running costs; people spend 90% of their time in buildings; 90% of business leaders are changing their approach to wellbeing in response to changing expectations
- The physical office environment, including things like temperature, lighting, layout, and facilities, directly impacts staff health and wellbeing
- Clients are increasingly looking for healthy office environments to help improve their business performance

Staying ahead of the curve

- People are increasingly interested in their own health. The consumer health market is expected to grow 50% within 5 years
 - Technology is reinforcing this interest, through the growth of wearable fitness trackers and air quality monitoring
- Occupiers are realising the importance of the right office space in order to attract staff, meaning they are looking for healthy buildings.

Key points for a healthy office



Improve **indoor air quality** by using low VOC materials and optimising ventilation. Studies have shown this can result in 8-11% gains in productivity.



Amenities such as shops, restaurants, gyms, and good public realm add to staff attraction and satisfaction, as does a **location** with good public transport links, and the ability to walk and cycle.



Window design, acoustic materials, and office layout can reduce unwanted background **noise** significantly: a major source of staff complaints.



Good use of **daylight** supports our circadian rhythms. One study showed this led to 46 minutes more sleep per night.



Office layout is important: social spaces improve staff wellbeing; visible stairs encourage exercise; and flexible working combined with a diversity of spaces for different tasks can boost productivity and maximise floorspace.



Views out of windows allow eyes to rest from screens, and have been shown to improve productivity by 7-12%. **Views of nature** are particularly beneficial (e.g. green roofs, gardens, internal planting). Plants can also improve air quality.

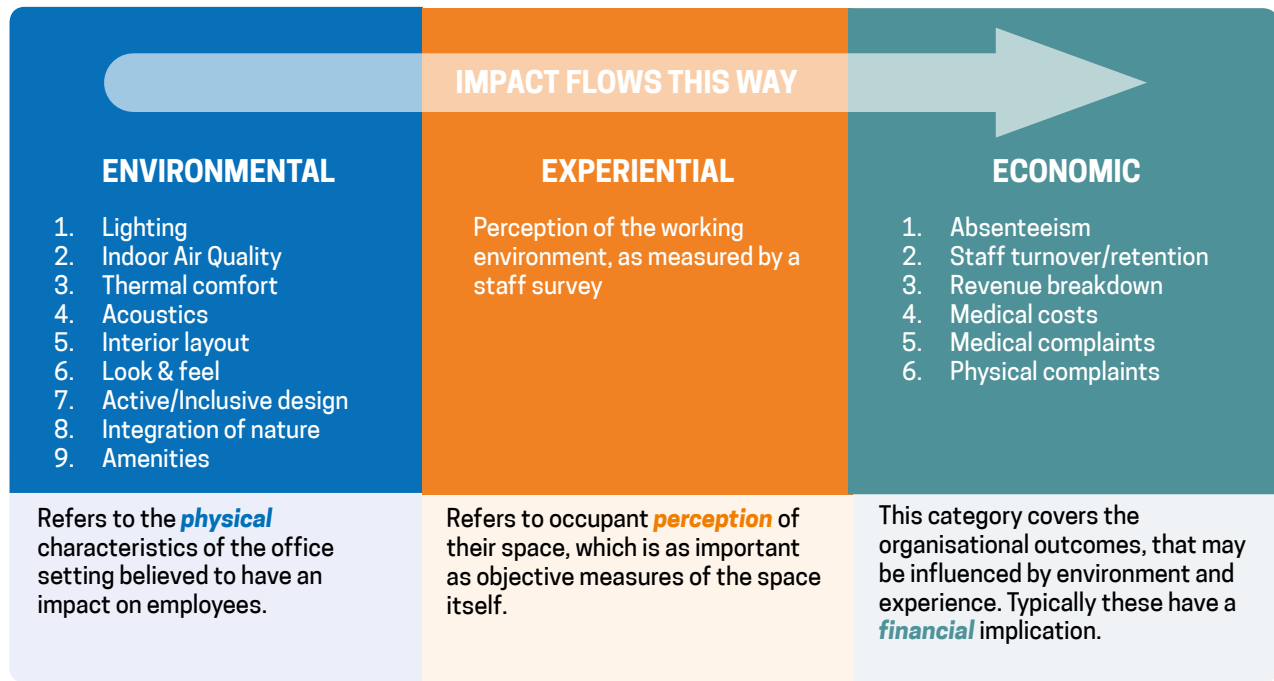


Optimise **thermal comfort** in your design. If people have some **personal control** of temperature - for instance, within a range of 4 degrees - studies have shown a 3% or more improvement in productivity.

The Framework



This Framework provides a simple guide to the different types of measurements that can help organisations understand the impact of an office on its users.



Top Tips for D&B Teams using the Framework

1. **Do not compromise** on the **environmental design characteristics** of the Framework. Features such as natural ventilation and healthy material selection have been shown to increase health and wellbeing, which is becoming a dominant expectation of clients.
2. Understand that **buildings good for the environment aren't necessarily good for their occupants**, and vice versa. Design and build teams should seek to produce green and healthy buildings by finding the synergies between the two (e.g., daylighting and lower energy use).
3. Use an **evidence-based approach** for designing healthy buildings, employing practices that have been shown to maximise the environmental characteristics of the Framework (daylighting, air quality, etc.) Remember that clients are increasingly able to measure the performance of these environmental features in the Framework, and social media will enable clients and occupants to reach a wider audience. Understand that technology subjects your work to new risks and opportunities.
4. Pay attention to the **experience aspect of the Framework**: health and wellbeing is about perception as well as objective building performance. Review post occupancy evaluations (if they are available to you), what clients and occupants have said about your prior projects, or use social media to see what is being said about your buildings. **Understanding the client experience** in health and wellbeing is critical, and is a fantastic source of information for design & build teams.
5. Standards such as WELL provide very useful **design guidance** which could help shape your design decisions. Much of this information is guiding sought-after aspects in the next generation of buildings.



Case study:

White Collar Factory, Derwent London

Location: London, UK

The White Collar Factory was constructed by Brookfield Multiplex under a design and build contract from Derwent London. The following points were key contributors to the success of the project:

- The design team began by establishing what key characteristics are most important to the customer, with the goal of a design focused on customer needs rather than market expectations.
- Customer feedback suggested that people want light, airy, and easily fitted out spaces, with access to a range of amenities. The WCF provides a canvas for a healthy and productive work environment.
- The same teams who carried out the design R&D for the project worked on its construction, and Brookfield Multiplex built the prototype space before being selected to build out the project. This consistency meant the whole team was aware of and fully committed to the project's aspirations.
- The continuity of personnel meant that there were no design or construction handovers, therefore no design changes or cost reduction engineering.

More information on the project is available [here](#).



Courtyard offering new public space and **multiple cafe/ restaurants** on site

Access to a wide range of **outdoor spaces**

Flexible workspace including **cafe**, communal areas fully **wifi enabled**

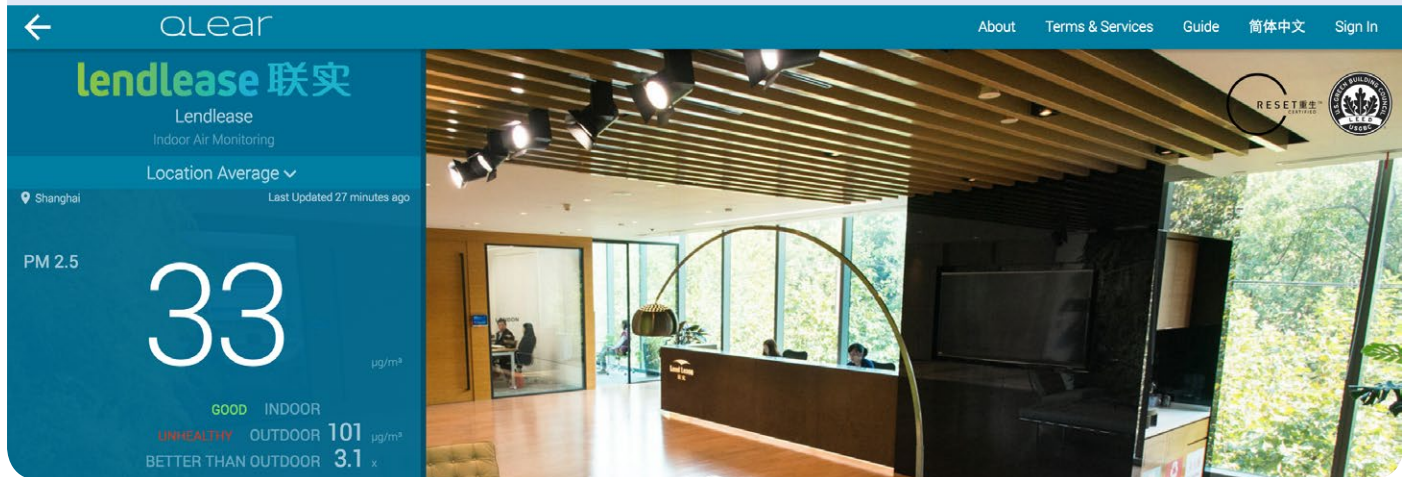
Large **roof terrace** with 150m running track

High quality **cycle facilities**

High ceilings to maximise both natural ventilation and natural lighting

Trends in technology

- An increasing number of businesses are choosing to share their environmental data online using platforms such as QLEAR (www.qclear.build). This kind of transparency shows a commitment to healthy offices.
- In other sectors, for instance leisure and retail, building users are increasingly using social media to provide feedback on their environment: for example, whether a shopping centre is too bright or too stuffy. Many expect this trend to bridge into offices, which, in combination with increased availability of small, portable monitors, will empower occupants to check their environmental quality.
- The combination of business commitment and occupant empowerment will mean organisations will increasingly seek out design and build teams with a proven track record: therefore, ensuring delivery of healthy buildings will improve your future/repeat business.



“When you make products it’s natural to think first about the manufacturing impacts and the environmental credentials of the finished product. But how do our floors integrate into the built environment and how do they positively affect the people who live, work and play in those environments? Our ‘Committed to the Health of One’ programme represents a mind-set shift to focus on providing stimulating yet safe, hygienic and comfortable environments for the people who use them.

We are trying to use the basic principles as explained in the rest of this booklet and we are also using the ‘WELL Building Standard’ to understand how our portfolio of products can play a positive role. Floors are merely a small part of a healthy and productive environment but they provide an important role in design: creating atmosphere, reflecting light, providing texture and delineating spaces. Sometimes they can have very specific practical advantages too such as entrance systems and of course allergy approved products. At one sixth of all surface area we hope our products can help to play a role to creating better environments that are also healthier and more productive.”

Angus Fotheringhame, General Manager Benelux, UK & Ireland



Forbo
FLOORING SYSTEMS



More information

www.ukgbc.org

www.betterplacesforpeople.org

Health, Wellbeing and Productivity in Offices full report:
www.betterplacesforpeople.org

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