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## **GLOBAL STUDY CONNECTS LEVELS OF EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AND WELL BEING TO OFFICE DESIGN**

*Data shows those who work in environments with natural elements  
report a 6% increase in productivity*

(LAGRANGE, GEORGIA – MARCH 2015) [The Human Spaces report into The Global Impact of Biophilic Design in the Workplace](#), commissioned by the global modular flooring experts of Interface and led by renowned organizational psychologist Professor Sir Cary Cooper, has revealed that employees who work in environments with natural elements report a 15% higher level of well-being, are 6% more productive and 15% more creative overall.

The Human Spaces global study of 7,600 office workers from 16 countries, examined the impact of the physical office environment on employee well being. It concluded that office design was so important to workers that a third (33%) of global respondents stated it would unequivocally affect their decision whether or not to work somewhere. Incredibly, design was even more vital in India (67%), Indonesia (62%) and the Philippines (60%) where two thirds of office workers were significantly influenced by workplace design.

## **LACK OF NATURAL LIGHT LINKED TO INCREASED LEVELS OF EMPLOYEE STRESS**

Globally, nearly half (47%) of office employees have no natural light in their working environment, and almost two thirds (58%) have no live plants in their workspace. In Canada 32% of workers reported having no windows. This was closely followed by Australia and the U.S., with 28% and 27% of workers, respectively, reporting having no

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windows. Interestingly, these three countries all reported above average levels of stress. Conversely, workers in Indonesia and India reported some of the highest levels of light and space at 93% and 92%, respectively, and reported some of the lowest levels of unhappiness.

Commenting on the research findings, Professor Sir Cary Cooper, said: "The benefit of design inspired by nature, known as biophilic design, is accumulating evidence at a rapid pace. Looking at a snapshot of global working environments, up to one in five people have no natural elements within their workspace, and alarmingly nearly 50% of workers have no natural light. Yet a third of us say that workplace design would affect our decision to join a company. There's a big disparity here and one that hints at workplace design only recently rising to prominence as a crucial factor."

## **Most wanted elements in office space:**

1. Natural light
2. Live indoor plants
3. Quiet working space
4. View of the sea
5. Bright colours

## **SOLO WORK SPACE LINKED TO PRODUCTIVITY**

In terms of working space, nearly two fifths (39%) of workers said they would feel most productive at their own desk in a solitary office. In terms of having a preference for solo space, Germany, China and Canada reported figures way above the global average, with 59%, 52% and 50%, respectively, suggesting they prefer a solitary environment.

On the other hand, 36% of respondents would feel most productive at their own desk in an open plan office. Interestingly, individual data from certain countries was much higher: Spain (48%); Australia (48%); India (46%); and Brazil (46%) - indicating that collaborative working is much more important to them than the global average.

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## GLOBAL URBANIZATION

The data demonstrates that 85% of global office workers surveyed are based in an urban environment\* and the largest proportion of respondents spent between 40 – 49 hours per week in the office. Despite city-dominated lives, the research found workers have an inherent affinity for elements that reflect nature.

Cooper adds: “As well as enabling organizations to make links between their physical spaces and the performance of their people, this study throws light on one of the defining challenges of modern life – our ability to cope with urbanization and loss of connection with green spaces.”

Commenting on what the research findings could mean for design in the office space, Chip DeGrace, Executive Creative Director at Interface, said: “What we can clearly identify is that there needs to be an ongoing evolution of the traditional office space, and it seems that as a global population, we are becoming ever more cognizant of our surroundings and how they impact our well-being, productivity and creativity at work.

“Biophilic design is the art of understanding how nature can influence us and how we can bring those sorts of influences into the spaces within which we work. We can see that working in environments with natural elements, such as greenery and sunlight, leads to a higher level of well being and productivity, which is an important consideration for any business in terms of responsibility to its employees. What’s more, the research indicates that by incorporating simple design elements which help to create a connection to nature, known as biophilic design, a business could potentially boost the productivity of its employees by 6% - a significant benefit to the bottom line of any company.”

\* ‘Urban environment’ includes city centre, city suburb, town and downtown.

For more information about Interface, visit [www.Interface.com](http://www.Interface.com).

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## About Interface

Interface, Inc. is the world's largest manufacturer of commercial carpet tile. For 41 years, the company has consistently led the industry through innovation, and now leads the industry in environmental sustainability. It is setting the pace for development of modular carpet using materials and processes that take less from the environment, and is well along the path to "Mission Zero®," a 20-year-old company-wide promise to eliminate any negative impact it has on the environment by the year 2020. Interface's worldwide carpet manufacturing facilities maintain third party registration to the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System standard, and the company obtained the first-ever Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for the commercial floor covering industry in North America. The company is recognized globally for its commitment to build environmental considerations into its business decisions. For additional information: [interface.com](http://interface.com) and [blog.interface.com](http://blog.interface.com).



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## **Professor Sir Cary Cooper, CBE Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health, Lancaster University, Founding Director, Robertson Cooper**

Cooper is recognized as one of the world's leading experts on well being and stress at work and is the media's first choice for comment on workplace issues. He is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society, The Royal Society of Arts, The Royal Society of Medicine, The Royal Society of Health and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Editor-in-Chief of the Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Management and the author/editor of over 120 books.

Cooper was awarded the Lifetime Practitioner Award from the British Psychology Society in recognition of his services to the profession. He acted as Lead Scientist in the 'Foresight Review of Mental Capital and Well-Being' which influenced government policy regarding well being in all aspects of society. He is an active member of the Robertson Cooper team, focusing on strategy, external relations and PR activity. In June 2014 he was awarded a Knighthood in the

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Queen's Birthday Honours list and was also voted the 1st Most Influential HR Thinker of 2014 by HR Magazine.

## **About the Human Spaces Global Report**

Collecting responses from 7,600 office workers across the Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Philippines, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the UAE, UK, and U.S. the research quantifies the benefits of biophilic design, specifically for well-being and productivity, and also provides a practical introduction to how to achieve those benefits. In doing so, the study adds to the existing evidence base and provides a blueprint for natural, high performing organizations.