

Better results for businesses which are greener on the inside

While businesses are reigning in spending and looking to greater productivity from their workforces in these tight economic times, it has been shown that the humble office plant can help a business through harder times.

“There’s a collection of research from around the world that shows clearly that indoor plants have a positive effect on the people who occupy the same spaces and therefore can impact the bottom line of a business,” reports **Ambius** Regional Director for the Asia Pacific Region, Mr Ray Borg.

Ambius is the new name for Rentokil Tropical Plants, Australia and the world’s largest provider of indoor plants, silk floral arrangements and interior artwork for commercial environments.

Research from the US, the Netherlands and the UK has shown positive effects in reducing stress and sickness absence, increasing productivity and improving well-being, particularly in office environments where people are using computers.

“There would be few offices where employees would not be using computers, so the research confirms that living plants are vital in getting the best from employees,” says Mr. Borg.

A study at Washington State University utilising a windowless computer laboratory showed that when plants were present, the participants showed a 12% quicker reaction

time on a computer task, their blood pressure readings were lower and they reported feeling more attentive immediately after the task than people in a room with no plants.¹

From the Netherlands ² there is a study which showed that indoor plants improved both air quality and productivity where the strongest link was with those working at computers. Concentration also improved with the group with plants in their working environment.

A study at Surrey University in the UK ³ showed that not only were stress levels lower in a planted office, people recovered from stress more quickly than those in the unplanted office. The study authors also reported that where the task was less complex, even boring, the soothing effects of plants may be even more noticeable.

“In past tough economic times, indoor plants were often the first to go in cost cutting, but now the research shows us that they can have a direct impact on business performance. We see that their benefits are being more widely recognised,” says Mr. Borg.

Recognition of the role of indoor plants is growing, with the Green Building Council now awarding two points towards green star ratings for indoor plant installations⁴.

Other international research and that from our own University of Technology in Sydney confirms the role of plants improving indoor air quality, their cooling and noise reduction effects and in turn, their contribution to increasing employee productivity.

The UTS work under the direction of Professor Margaret Burchett has shown using a variety of plants that the plant-and-potting-mix microcosm can remove repeated high doses of air-borne Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) emitted by petroleum based

¹ INTERIOR PLANTS MAY IMPROVE WORKER PRODUCTIVITY AND REDUCE STRESS IN A WINDOWLESS ENVIRONMENT, Virginia I. Lohr, Caroline H. Pearson-Mims, and Georgia K. Goodwin Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, Washington State University

² The Effect of Healthy Workplaces on the Well-being and Productivity of Office Workers, John Bergs, B en R Adviseurs voor Duurzaamheid Amersfoort, The Netherlands

³ “The effect of interior planting on stress”, Ms Helen Russell, University of Surrey, UK

⁴ For more information on the Green Building Council Australia, go to the Office Interiors / Interior Environment Quality section, (IEQ – 15 ‘Indoor Plants’): <http://www.gbca.org.au/green-star/rating-tools/green-star-office-interiors-v1-1/1530.htm>

products such as plastics in an indoor environment. The indoor plants directly contribute to improved indoor air quality.

“There is now a direct link to the bottom line for employers from indoor plants, apart from improving the aesthetics of interior spaces. Creating greener spaces indoors means healthier and more productive workplaces and improved customer environments, improving well being for all,” says Ray.

As part of the brand and product enhancements, **Ambius** has launched a new website www.ambiusindoorplants.com.au, and now begins the roll out of its new look, products and services.

The head office of **Ambius** is in Sydney, with other offices in Melbourne, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Adelaide, Perth, Canberra and other regions in Australia. Over 160 people are employed, working in various plant technician, sales, support and managerial roles.

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Media:

For more information see Media Backgrounder about the new Ambius, visit the website at www.ambiusindoorplants.com.au or contact:

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*For more information on the Green Building Council Australia, go to the Office Interiors / Interior Environment Quality section, (IEQ – 15 ‘Indoor Plants’):

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