

Lighting & workplace productivity

By Kevin Cawley

Improving worker productivity is a major aim of all businesses from one-man-bands to corporations. But most are unaware that improving their lighting design can do wonders in this area.

Lighting is one of the most important parts of any workspace from the open plan office to the factory production line. It's well known that incorrect lighting can cause migraine headaches and eye strain, but few people recognise its impact on productivity.

Open plan offices are a classic example. Once office blocks are built, developers usually get engineers to introduce a blanket cover of lights. This doesn't even take into account where the furniture will be. This causes problems because everyone has different lighting needs. This depends on their tasks and the state of their eyes.

Have you ever had a workstation that just didn't seem comfortable, but you couldn't put your finger on exactly what the problem was? It may have been the lighting.

Generally speaking, people are more motivated when they work under lights that are close to the colour of the sun. Colder colours that are bluer in nature make people feel cold, and when we feel cold, we are less motivated and less productive.

Once the correct colour has been determined, the next consideration is the intensity, or quantity of light. For example, when writing onto white paper, more light is needed than when typing on a computer screen. This is important for people who do both of these tasks. A good idea is to have a task light that can be switched on and off when necessary.

So many people run into problems when they need to multi-task like this. I met a receptionist



recently who had bloodshot eyes after working in an incorrectly lit room for many years. She had to look up from her computer to greet visitors. The problem was that the ceiling lighting was creating a glare and after so long, her eyes had had enough. This problem was easily fixed, but it could have been dealt with years before.

Very few business owners are aware that productivity suffers when their lighting is below par. And many are not even aware it is below par. It usually requires a complaint from someone before anything is done. It's like people who install a burglar alarm after their house has been broken into. It's not until ACC or OSH is brought in that any changes are made.

Many business owners are also unaware that flexible lighting options are available. This means they can be simply moved around without taking up too much time. There are now LED light fittings available that can be remotely controlled. These give each person control of their workstation, allowing them to control their own light intensity and colour temperature.

Savvy business owners know that the best way to get the best out of their workers is to

make them as comfortable as possible in their workspace. If people are feeling cold, getting eye strain or migraine headaches, they will always be looking for ways to move away from that space. And while they are working, they will lack motivation.

It may not be mentioned much when it comes to raising productivity, but lighting is vital to the success of any business.

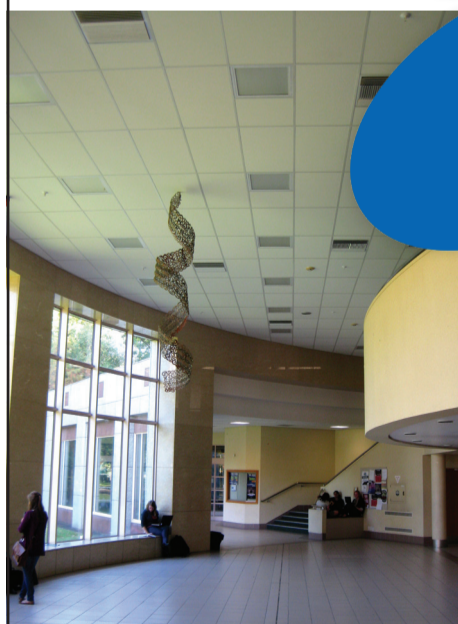


Kevin Cawley is an award-winning independent lighting designer with clients across the world. He can be contacted through his website at www.lightingdesign.co.nz

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Finding familiar faces

Sourcing relocated companies hasn't been easy, but a collection of websites have popped up where businesses can let customers know where to find them, how to buy from them, and whether they are open or not.

Here are a few sites to help you find what you need:

- www.lovechristchurchmade.org.nz
- www.chchcreative.co.nz
- www.openforbusiness.org.nz
- www.bethere.co.nz
- www.whatsopen.co.nz
- www.supportchristchurchbusiness.com
- www.mychristchurchbusinessisopen.co.nz
- www.gapfiller.co.nz

There are also sites where you can list your business if you need or can offer free assistance to others:

- www.recovercanterbury.co.nz
- www.nzbizhelp.co.nz