



Did you know...?

Companies green up and connect better with employees

As the balance of power in the job market shifts back towards employees, companies that reward and invest in their staff are reaping the benefits. iiNet is one such organisation.

Subsidised internet, fortnightly neck and shoulder massages for call centre staff, regular staff events, a lunchroom complete with pool table and Pay TV and an impressive new office are just some of the benefits employees at the iiNet headquarters in Perth, Australia are enjoying.

Growing from a small, local business in 1993 to be listed on the ASX in 1999, iiNet now supports more than 900,000 broadband, telephone and dialup services. The company proudly employs more than 1,600 people in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland and Cape Town.

Moving headquarters from a much older building to new premises allowed iiNet to support its workforce with a contemporary new office fitout. The result is in keeping with the company's strong brand and culture: youthful, relaxed and high energy.

"The time was right for us to move locations and create a work environment



that complemented our brand and culture. We wanted our team to have a say in what their new office would be like from the outset; they spend a large chunk of time there after all," said Michael Malone, CEO iiNet.

"Indoor plants were high on the list and we're all enjoying the benefits. While obviously a decorative feature, they certainly add to the vibe of the office and help with the noise levels and acoustics of our predominantly open plan space."

The trend to green up for improved productivity is supported by a recent study from the University of Technology Sydney Australia, which showed reductions in negative mood states and feelings of stress by up to 60% among people with plants in their offices.¹

According to the head of the study, Adjunct Professor Margaret Burchett, the research confirms the benefits of

indoor plants extend well beyond their contribution to air quality.

"Across a series of tests conducted before and after plants were placed in offices, people showed a 58% reduction in depression, 44% reduction in anger or hostility, a 37% reduction in tension or anxiety and 38% reduction in fatigue. These sizeable declines in negative mood states can only have a positive impact on productivity and job satisfaction," said Professor Burchett.

iiNet's plant focus forms just part of their green commitment. Since moving to the new office, an environmental committee has been formed and the company has

¹ 'Greening the Great Indoors for Human Health and Wellbeing' Professor Margaret Burchett (UTS), Dr Fraser Torpy (UTS), Mr Jason Brennan (UTS), Professor Ashley Craig (Univ. Syd.), Plants and Indoor Environmental Quality Group, Centre for Environmental Sustainability (CEs), UTS, February 2010

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Interested in this topic? For a copy of the complete report please download from: http://www.nipa.asn.au/uts_project.htm

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Indoor planters are even designer these days...

Who would have thought that the humble indoor plant would become a fashion item, but that's the latest trend with a new planter designed by the reigning IDEA Designer of the Year, Helen Kontouris.

In a sign of our environment conscious times, this 'designer planter', called 'Zoie', is also fully recyclable, and moulded with sub-irrigation ability for indoor and outdoor use. Made from polyethylene, the planter is free of VOCs – Volatile Organic Compounds – which means the product does not emit gases often associated with new products such as carpets, furniture and cars and makes it much more consumer and green friendly.

The demand for creative 'green' planter options in the industry can be linked to the growing awareness of the health benefits of indoor plants as we all look to



incorporate these plants in a way that also improves the look and feel of an indoor space.

Ray Borg, Regional Director **Ambius** Pacific, said that with trusted bodies such as the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) recognising the importance of indoor plants through their Green Star program, demand is expected to increase.

"The psychological benefits of indoor plants, such as reduced stress levels and increased productivity, are many and varied. We like to think of it as 'greening on the inside'.

It is fantastic to see designer planters like this being introduced to the Australian market, further enticing people to incorporate indoor plants into the design of their offices and reaping the aesthetic and health benefits," said Ray.

The designer 'Zoie' planter was unveiled at Australia's premier design and architecture event, DesignEX earlier this year, the first showing for Melbourne designer Kontouris since her award win. Named after the Greek word for 'living thing', Zoie is available exclusively through **Ambius**.

For more information on the GBCA, 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>

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become the internet sponsor for Days of Change, an organisation encouraging people to reduce their carbon footprint one step at a time.

"As a company we pride ourselves on providing high standards of customer

service. Having happy, healthy and engaged staff are essential to delivering this. Our staff are our number one asset and investing in them is an investment in our business," said Malone.



Christmas is just around the corner. Don't miss out – order a fresh, fragrant tree now

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