

Why views matter

- Access to views has been linked to the relief of boredom, anxiety and stress, as well as to greater productivity
- Dimensions, materials and options affect viewers' opinions of their workspace
- Ideal office layouts are exciting, pleasant, relaxed and collaborative
- Individuals prefer lighter spaces and a less-linear furniture setup that is visually interesting

Haworth solutions

- Moxie's 120-degree planning creates open and organic spaces
- Toppers and Banners break up otherwise monotonous linear views
- Moxie elements allow designers to scale visual interest as needed
- Different materials on Banners and Toppers add visual interest and let in natural light



Views

Office views

As the movie title "A Room With a View" suggests, people seem inherently drawn to an interesting view, natural or otherwise. In fact, they'll even pay significantly more for it.

In an office setting, the word "view" not only refers to what users see outside the office windows, but also to a user's perception of an interior space. Everything from the dimensions and materials to options the user sees impacts this interior view, therefore affecting opinions of the space.

Evolution and the importance of views

To understand why humans are so drawn to views today, we should consider the natural setting negotiated by the earliest humans. In *Biophilia*, an important book published in 1984, sociobiologist E.O. Wilson suggests that natural views play such a powerful role in the well-being of humans because the human brain evolved in a natural setting, where many significant factors played into survival. In fact, as the “Savanna Hypothesis” suggests, people today are drawn to the look of a certain natural setting—specifically one similar to the savannas of tropical Africa where humans evolved—even though most of those questioned in the study had never been in such an environment.

While a view might seem like a luxury more than a necessity, research suggests otherwise. Early humans relied on having a view of their surroundings for survival, both for prospecting food sources and detecting approaching danger. Although surviving in today’s workplace is hardly the same proposition, people still react with the same primal instincts, experiencing less stress when their environment provides them with the right kind of view.

Environments that mimic nature can affect productivity

Recent studies have linked having access to views of nature in the workplace to the relief of boredom, anxiety and stress, as well as to greater productivity. It is important in office settings, as much as possible, to have windows framing natural views. But because most offices are located in cities, not in idyllic mountainside settings, it is also critical to mimic the shapes, patterns and variety of a natural setting within the workplace.

Certain furniture systems and space layouts accomplish this much better than others. In a Haworth study on visual perception, for instance, participants were asked to rate four office layouts categorized as enclosed, heavy spine, light spine, and freestanding based on their levels of visual interest. Overall, the light spine environment was seen as more exciting, pleasant, relaxed and collaborative than the other options displayed. Not only do individuals prefer lighter, more airy spaces like those defined by light spine systems, they also find a less-linear furniture setup more natural and visually interesting—in other words,

closer to what’s found in nature. Specifically, a light spine environment, which is raised up on legs and has light-conductive elements, alludes to the landscape of the savannas, even to the extent that it balances a sense of privacy and enclosure with a view to the broader environment.

Moxie planning is organic, collaborative and scalable

It makes sense, then, that the way offices are specified, the amount of visual interest created, and the materials used all affect a space’s appeal and its ability to relieve boredom and impact productivity. The Moxie design team intentionally created a clean aesthetic that provides interest and variety. Moxie’s Toppers and Canopies break up the typically horizontal lines of systems furniture, mimicking the variety of heights found in nature and even a savanna tree canopy.

As the Moxie system was being developed, another primary area of focus was how workstations and ultimately the impact of interior views affect human interaction and collaboration. Moxie offers options like 120-degree planning, which allows standard offices to open up into spaces that are more organic and collaborative. This kind of layout also creates naturally wandering pathways and multiple options for moving through a space, similar to what is found in nature.

Moxie also offers numerous materials that may be used on Toppers, Banners, Stack Pads and Canopies in various combinations to create a more stimulating or relaxed environment. Scrim and translucent materials introduce organic and changing patterns of light throughout the day by allowing natural light to filter into a space.



Resources:

- Ulrich, 1983
- Leather, Pyrgas, Beale, Lawrence, 1998
- Clay, 2001
- Kaplan, Talbot and Kaplan, 1988
- Kaplan, R., 1993