

Corner Office vs Open Floor: Same Building, Different Climate

The person who chose the AC setting has a window. You have a partition.

At a Glance

Senior staff get corner offices with window views and low thermal load. Junior staff sit in open-floor centres, far from windows, with high thermal load. The building physically embeds inequality. [1]

Summary

Window seats provide radiant heating in winter (solar gain is welcome) and radiant cooling in summer (direct sun can be shaded). Corner offices, typically assigned to senior staff, have windows on two walls, creating airflow and natural light. The thermal environment is superior: lower operative temperature, more control over blinds, better air movement. [1]

Open-floor plan centres, occupied by junior and operational staff, are thermally harsh. No direct sun. Limited natural ventilation. No view. Dense occupancy. Heat from 20 people in close proximity raises local temperature. No windows to open. Central air handling units control the entire zone through a single thermostat, which responds too slowly to local thermal stress. Research on workplace thermal comfort shows job satisfaction correlates with perceived thermal control. Corner offices offer thermal control (blinds, window opening). Open floors do not. [2]

In India's March-to-November heat, this becomes a health issue. Lower-ranked staff, already with less workplace autonomy, also have less thermal autonomy. They cannot adjust their immediate thermal environment. They cannot open a window. Their complaint about heat is often treated as a personal discomfort rather than a design failure. The building embeds both organisational inequality and thermal inequality simultaneously. [3]

Biothermal Microconditioning equalises thermal experience. Areca palm clusters deployed in open-floor centres provide person-level cooling through evapotranspiration, shade, and humidity buffering. Cost per cluster is low enough to deploy across entire open floors, not corner offices only. The system is Easy Retrofit: one day, no structural changes, immediate cooling measurable at breathing zone. Equity follows physics. [4]