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The quest for the ideal office control system

Images of flickering fluorescent tubes humming loudly overhead have long been used by advertisers and Hollywood producers as symbols of inhospitable workplaces and uncaring management.

The entertainment industry knows that these images imply that business owners are willing to subject workers to bad lighting in order to save money. Receptive audiences respond to these tales because they believe that bad lighting can cause migraines, eye strain, and fatigue.

Today's bottom-line oriented managers, however, are slowly beginning to realize that providing good lighting for workers is good for business. Electricity for lighting typically accounts for less than 5 percent of business overhead, and employee salaries and benefits are far more expensive, so when energy savings plans ignore the worker, the effort may be counterproductive.

[Four Views on Ideal Controls](#)

The Lighting Research Center co-sponsored a round table on lighting controls in December 1997 with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratories. Participants included end-users, manufacturers, industry groups, government organizations, and researchers. Recently, Lighting Futures asked several of the participants a few questions about the ideal office system.

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