

The Future of Urban Vertical Farms: Enhancing Workplace Engagement, Collaboration, and Mental Health through Green Spaces



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1. Introduction

This white paper explores the potential benefits of implementing urban farms, specifically the Square Mile Farming model, within the MAR facilities management offering. The focus is on how these urban farms can provide green edible food for employees, foster an inviting co-working workspace for engagement and colleague collaboration, embrace green living walls in office spaces, and create a green workplace environment that supports the mental health of employees and visitors to the building. To illustrate the viability of this approach, specific examples from the UK and London office environments will be discussed, highlighting how growing plants at work can benefit us all.

2. The Square Mile Farming Model

The Square Mile Farming model is a sustainable urban farming concept that aims to utilise neglected spaces, or circulation areas within a traditional urban office setting to grow food. By adopting this model, MAR facilities management can create productive green spaces within the office premises, fostering a connection between employees and the food they consume and well as creating a sense of connection with the natural world.

3. Green Edible Food for Employees

Urban vertical farms provide a unique opportunity to grow fresh and nutritious food near the workplace or on-site and

provide a sense of foliage enjoyment to often a beige soulless space. Furthermore, MAR's ground maintenance teams can allocate rooftop or balcony spaces for growing crops, such as kale, spinach, potatoes, and tomatoes allowing employees access to organic produce during their breaks or even as part of workplace meals. Such initiatives can improve the overall health and well-being of employees while reducing the carbon footprint associated with transporting food, indeed the high potency of urban guano from urban pigeon droppings from buildings can be an excellent fertiliser for such food production.

4. Fostering an Inviting Workspace for Engagement and Collaboration

The presence of urban farms within the office premises can transform the workplace into an engaging and collaborative environment. By integrating green spaces such as community gardens, employees have the opportunity to participate in a shared project, fostering teamwork, creativity, and enhancing the overall office atmosphere. Additionally, scheduled gardening activities can provide a break from traditional office tasks, rejuvenating employees and improving productivity.

5. Embracing Green Living Walls in Office Spaces

The incorporation of green living walls within the office spaces of MAR facilities



management offers numerous benefits. These vertical gardens not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the workplace but also contribute to improved air quality. Plants naturally filter the air, reducing pollutants and harmful particulates, providing a comfortable humidity level to reduce dry eyes, and increasing oxygen levels, which ultimately results in a healthier and more productive environment for employees. Moreover, green living walls have been shown to reduce stress and improve mood, further enhancing employee well-being.

6. Creating a Green Workplace Environment

Incorporating rooftop and balcony gardens in office settings further supports the mental health of employees. Research suggests that exposure to natural elements, such as plants and green spaces, contributes to stress reduction, increased focus, and an overall improvement in mental well-being. By dedicating spaces for greenery, MAR facilities management can provide employees with a sanctuary-like environment where they can relax, recharge, and enjoy nature.

7. Specific Examples from the UK and London Office Environments

There are various successful examples of urban farms and green spaces in the UK and London office environments. Companies like Google and Unilever have implemented urban farms and rooftop gardens, not only for aesthetic purposes but also to provide their employees with healthy and fresh produce. These initiatives have had a positive impact on the workplace, promoting employee health, job satisfaction, and environmental sustainability.

8. Conclusion

The implementation of urban farms, such as the Square Mile Farming model, within MAR facilities management is a progressive step towards enhancing workplace engagement, collaboration, and mental health. Incorporating green edible food, green living walls, and rooftop/ balcony gardens creates a positive and inviting workspace that inspires innovation, reduces stress, and supports the overall well-being of employees. By embracing this approach, MAR facilities management can set a precedent for healthier and more sustainable work environments.



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