

Selling green buildings with people power.

By [Martin LaMonica](#), CNET News.com .

WASHINGTON--The choice of building design can lead to boosted worker productivity and even higher test scores in children, according to building technology experts.

In studies, so-called green or high-performance buildings have shown to have positive effects on people, compared to traditional buildings, all while saving money on energy, according to experts who spoke on a panel at the Clean Tech Venture Forum conference .

Green buildings incorporate technologies, materials and designs to improve such things as air quality and lighting for inhabitants. They also use so-called clean technologies, such as computer operated [climate control](#) systems, to cut down on the energy and natural resources required to operate the physical structure.

Better health of building occupants, among other benefits, is prompting more designers from all industries and government agencies to construct green buildings, panel members said. Sixty percent of U.S. property owners involved in construction used energy-efficient designs in the past year.

Green or energy-efficient buildings dovetail with the notion of sustainable business, where corporations seek to minimize the environmental impact of doing business. But some designers and architects are using a purely economic argument to justify the higher building costs of green buildings, namely office worker productivity.

Up-front building costs are typically slightly higher for green buildings, on the order of two percent, said Greg Kats, a principal at clean energy consulting firm [Capital E](#). But the payback can be demonstrated over time.

For example, the energy-efficient measures of LEED-certified buildings result in lower heating, cooling and electricity costs. Energy efficiency can improve by 30 percent, while emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases are 45 to 50 percent lower. Other benefits of high-performance buildings include higher resale value and lower operating costs.

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Posted by ZDNet Research

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