

variant the visitor actually sits and waits for the call to finish. It is clear surely in each of these variants which of the participants has the higher status, if either.

The design of office workplace settings is extraordinarily rich in these issues. A study of an open-plan office, which I made some years ago, revealed a clear difference of view as to how status should be reflected in accommodation. It was decided that the vast majority of the office was to be open plan, but those senior managers who wished to could have their own private offices situated round the perimeter. In the end, most of them chose not to do this. When questioned about their decisions, they largely referred to a desire not to emphasize status as the main reason for their choice, and most admitted that deep down they would have preferred their own room. When we asked the lower ranking staff about this issue, they were almost unanimous in their wish to see the senior managers have separate offices. Once we probed further into this, three main reasons emerged: first, they felt constantly overlooked by managers who 'shared their space'; secondly, they felt embarrassed in front of their colleagues when talking to their boss, and this was especially true when they were being told off or when they were asking for promotion or some special treatment; and finally they were all striving for promotion and could see what they viewed as a perk of the higher status they hoped to attain being eroded.

My brother worked for a very well known British company who moved into a large open-office headquarters designed on very regular 'bureaulandschaft' principles. Each of the senior and middle managers were provided with potted plants as part of the office landscaping. Since my brother was an enthusiastic horticulturist, he managed to get his plant to grow larger than all the others. One morning when he came in, it had been replaced with a much smaller plant. Looking around the office, he eventually found his original plant by the desk of the most senior manager!

Some cultural observers and analysts have suggested that our whole attitude towards the environment is subject to significant cultural variation (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997). This seems particularly true between eastern and western cultures. For example, some cultures take the very general view that the major forces driving people to good or evil come from within the individual, whereas other cultures tend to see the world as more powerful than the individual and take a more fatalistic view. In these latter cultures the environment, and most particularly the natural environment, is something that individuals should become 'in-tune' with. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner illustrate this with a nice example in relation to the now prolific Walkman®. They claim that the chairman of Sony himself, Mr Morita, who first had the idea for the Walkman, had a particular motivation in creating it. This motivation was that he would be able