

Industry Weekly Digest

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management

Biophilic Design

The emerging concept of biophilic design recognizes how much human, physical and mental well-being relies on the quality of our relationships to the natural world. The Hospitality Industry has an opportunity to engage with this philosophy, not just for their customers, but for their employees alike, to facilitate the human tendency to interact or be closely associated with other forms of life in nature.

In this digest, [Marco Ciraulo](#) explores this opportunity.

Have a great Weekend!



Biophilic design: the impact on consumer behaviour and employee wellbeing

Marco Ciraulo

The emerging concept of **Biophilic design** recognizes how much human, physical and mental well-being relies on the quality of our relationships to the natural world. The University is about to embark on a research project in partnership with a Hotel Investor and Management Company to understand how hotels can incorporate and facilitate biophilic design.

The aim is to research the impact Biophilic design has on the customer experience and the quality of work-life balance and wellbeing for employees alike. One approach to biophilic design (and often it is connected to the aim of a more sustainable living) are the principles of a bioregional economy. Despite those, even if the strategies are aligned, they are not the same and need to be strategized differently.



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Biophilic design tackles the issue we face in the developed society where we spend most of our lives indoors and how this not only impacts our mental health, but productivity alike. We know that ill patients recover much quicker when hospital beds face windows with a view, we know from research that students perform better when they have daylight and natural surroundings to their study environment and we also know that employees are more engaged if we bring nature into the workplace. So why is it that we still find concrete blocks and sterile designed hotels and public services buildings?

We see a trend that more and more investors, particularly so-called **impact investors**, focus on being good citizens and implementing **ESG indicators** as part of their performance measures. They understand that the impact the work environment has on employees wellbeing and how the design concept can enhance customer loyalty. Biophilic design options are not yet part of the ESG criteria, but looking at the benefits, they could be soon. With the support of an industry partnership, we will research this further to better understand biophilic design and which of the ESG factors make it the most popular sustainability criterion for a sound investment and best in class for all stakeholders.