

WHY SMART BUILDINGS ARE STILL MAKING PEOPLE DULL

It is 3 PM on a Wednesday. The boardroom is beautiful — floor-to-ceiling glass, a ₹1 crore fit-out, sensors that adjust the AC the moment someone walks in. The presentation is sharp. The coffee is excellent.

And yet, half the room has mentally left the building.

Nobody questions the light. They question the agenda, the speaker, or whether this meeting could have been an email. But the real culprit is the ceiling — and it has a name. It is called circadian lighting.

THE BODY KNOWS WHAT TIME IT IS. DOES YOUR BUILDING?

Inside every person in that boardroom is a biological clock controlling alertness, focus, hormone levels, and energy — all synchronized to one ancient signal: the quality of light outside.

Morning light is cool and bright. It pushes cortisol up, suppresses melatonin, tells the brain to be sharp. By late afternoon, the body begins its handover toward rest. This is not a preference. This is millions of years of human biology doing exactly what it was designed to do.

Your smart building? It has no idea.

The office ceiling is running the same 4000K since 8 AM — flat, static, indifferent. Between 300 and 500 lux. Unchanging. No cue to peak. No cue to recover. Just a relentless sameness that slowly drains the people sitting underneath it.

The building is intelligent. The lighting is stuck in 1994.

TIRED ROOMS DON'T NEED BETTER COFFEE. THEY NEED BETTER LIGHT

Circadian lighting is the practice of designing light that moves with the

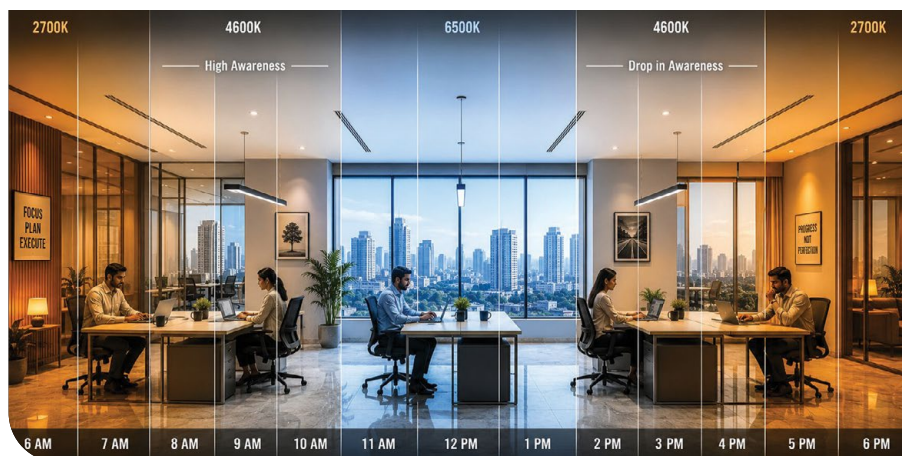


Image credit: Qubix Technologies

day. Cooler in the morning to sharpen focus. Gradually warmer by late afternoon, easing the transition without anyone noticing. Research cited by Signify, the world's largest lighting company, points to productivity gains of up to 12% in circadian-lit workplaces.

IT IS NOT JUST AN OFFICE PROBLEM

The same biology affects every space where people spend time indoors. In hospitals, circadian lighting has been linked to sharper staff alertness and fewer clinical errors — peer-reviewed research in *MDPI Healthcare* (2025) found it significantly reduced patient falls. In schools, it improves concentration and reduces restlessness. In senior care facilities, clinical trials show it reduces agitation and improves sleep in dementia patients.

WHEREVER YOU GO, YOUR BIOLOGY COMES WITH YOU

In hotels, circadian lighting helps guests reset their body clocks after long-haul

flights — IHG and Wyndham have already implemented it for this reason. In retail, it influences how long customers stay and how they feel. The principle is the same everywhere: light shapes how people feel, perform, and recover.

THE MOST EXPENSIVE THING IN YOUR BUILDING IS THE PEOPLE

Lighting is handed to a vendor as an electrical specification and forgotten. But light is not infrastructure. It is the environment — the invisible hand that decides whether a person walks out energised or exhausted, whether a nurse catches an error at 2 AM, whether a student retains what they just read.

In India, the market for human-centric lighting is growing at over 16% year on year. The buildings going up in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Mumbai have an opportunity to get this right from day one. Most still won't.

It just requires someone to ask nobody is asking: If this building is so smart — why doesn't it know what time it is?