

*The authors hypothesized that people in windowless offices would use more photos and posters of nature objects or scenes as a way to compensate for the loss of contact with the outdoors.*

surveys provide an overall snapshot of organizational life from the employee perspective.

The key drawback in conducting interviews is the length of time they take, both in doing the interview and in distilling the key insights and issues relevant to design decisions. This is especially difficult when there are opposing points of view that could lead to very different design outcomes.

Some suggestions for conducting interviews are

- *Do not ask questions that can be answered with a yes or a no, unless you intend to follow up with a probe (e.g., could you please explain why you feel that way?).*
- *Pilot-test the interview questions to test the length of the interview session and to make sure people understand what you are asking.*
- *When you set up times for interviews, tell the person how long the interview will last, what kinds of questions you will be asking, and what you intend to do with the information.*
- *Unless there is a specific reason not to do so, keep all interviews confidential so people will feel free to express their opinions and fears.*

Interviews are frequently used at the beginning of a project to gather information on work patterns. Questions typically focus on what people do, where they work most frequently, what kinds of technologies they use regularly, the importance of privacy and concentration to their work, and how frequently they work alone or with others. This information is generally used to develop individual and group workspaces.

### **FOCUS GROUPS**

Focus groups consist of people who have some aspect of their life in common (researchers refer to focus-group members as “familiar strangers”). In an organization, focus groups frequently consist of those in similar job categories (same-level managers, clerical staff, administrators, scientists, and technical staff), those from the same administrative unit, or those who share similar environments.

Focus groups are especially useful in understanding different perspectives and for identifying the reasons behind people’s opinions and perceptions.