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Herman Miller office chair sensors save Hewlett Packard a bundle; The pair win industry award Space Utilization Project cuts cost-per-employee, netting CoreNet Global Innovator's Award

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Big savings from a small device and a big win. Industry giants Hewlett Packard (HP) and Herman Miller, Inc, combined talents to slash the cost of housing individual employees of the computer giant and today walked away with corporate real estate's biggest prize. The space utilization model, first rolled out in Melbourne, Australia, earned Herman Miller and HP the H. Bruce Russell Innovator's Award.

The model, which features sensors on desk chairs to detect human presence, was honored today at the CoreNet Global Summit in Orlando where the award winner was announced. Each year these awards recognize excellence in sustainable leadership, economic development leadership and corporate real estate workplace innovation.

The Herman Miller / HP team won top honors from a group of ten finalists that presented their cases to a panel of judges at Harvard University on August 7 and 8th.

HP wanted an accurate picture beyond singular "bed checks," to determine how effectively space at their Melbourne facility was being utilized and if savings could be achieved by using less. Working with Herman Miller, the computer maker attached tiny sensors, called motes, to the backs of each desk chair in the office giving an accurate read of how frequently an office was being occupied.

The study concluded that dedicated space was being utilized by HP workers only 38% of the time, and less for meeting rooms. Working with Herman Miller, HP re-configured the facility, used offices and common rooms differently and now utilization averages around 50%, but at times averages 90%. The company has been able to reduce its cost per employee by 55%.

Some of the 2008 Global Innovator's Awards finalists include:

- * Discovery Communications / Cushman & Wakefield
- * Motorola / JLL
- * Shell Oil Co.
- * University of Arizona
- * VFA, Inc.
- * Workstage, LLC

UGL Equis, Gensler and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce sponsored the Awards.

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