

With the increasing impact of climate change and the growing awareness of working environments' effect on [health and productivity](#), the role of the building is now in the spotlight like never before. As Harvard academics Joseph G. Allen and John D. Macomber observe in their excellent new book (1), *Healthy Buildings: How Indoor Spaces Drive Performance and Productivity*, "the world is changing around us, and buildings are at the epicentre of that change. So much so that the decisions we make today regarding our buildings will determine our collective health for generations to come."

"Improved building design and greater automation can lead to healthier workforces and more sustainable communities", says Priva Building Automation's General Manager, Jerry Vermaas.

No one would claim that this is a new idea; as Allen observes, Winston Churchill remarked as far back as the 1940s that "we shape our buildings: thereafter they shape us." But what has emerged more recently is a holistic approach that routinely encompasses every aspect of our working and residential lives. This is entirely apt given that, as *Healthy Buildings* points out, most people now spend up to 90 percent of their time indoors.



Recently, Macomber highlighted 10 global ‘megachanges’ that are shaping the development of healthy buildings, including:

1. **Changing populations** due to migration to cities;
2. **Changing cities** due to increased ‘densification’;
3. **Changing resources**, with urbanisation making crucial supplies more scarce;
4. **Changing climate** that requires adaptation to rising sea levels and more extreme weather events;
5. **Changing definitions of health** in terms of an increased need to protect human health;
6. **Changing role of the private sector** in terms of funding strategies; and
7. **Changing work** patterns, with more people working remotely from home.

The three remaining ‘megachanges’ are especially pertinent to Priva and underpin its entire approach to new technology. They are:

8. **Changing values**, with a focus on sustainably and socially responsible investment;
9. **Changing buildings**, with projects that are both green and healthy to be favoured; and
10. **Changing technology**, including the use of advanced systems to improve the health of buildings.

As well as informing our solutions development, these issues are embedded in the personal vision of [Priva CEO, Meiny Prins](#). Prins acknowledges the opportunities created by the overwhelming global shift towards living in cities. Endorsing an “integrated perspective” – such as the one voiced in Healthy Buildings – opens up the potential of “new connections on a social, ecological and economic level” (3). What’s more, it is clear that new technologies will be a crucial enabler of change, says Prins. [Read here what Prins means by the “Sustainable Urban Delta”](#).

At Priva, we continue to translate this philosophy into action by developing advanced control and automation systems that allow all kinds of businesses to use energy more efficiently, reduce their bills and ensure their employees’ wellbeing. In particular, we believe in the [installation of sensors](#) in conjunction with control platforms as they make it far easier to monitor energy consumption, stamp out unnecessary usage and create a [healthy indoor climate](#).

As the climate changes and many employees are required to work for longer, the kind of vision outlined in the Allen & Macomber book will become even more potent. Through our work with solutions and customers, we look forward to delivering the better working environments we will all be seeking in the future.

Sources:

(1) *Healthy Buildings: How Indoor Spaces Drive Performance and Productivity* by Joseph G. Allen and John D.

Macomber, published by Harvard University Press, April 2020: [www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?](http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674237971)

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(2) For more on the work of the Foundation please visit www.sustainableurbandelta.com.

(3) For more on Meiny Prins, please visit www.priva.com/discover-priva/about-priva/meiny-prins

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