

Business Tip: Think Green – Act Green

9 WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR ENERGY COSTS

With utility costs increasing monthly in some places the following are some great ways you can help reduce your utility and energy costs.

1. Change out your lighting to modern high efficiency lighting. LED lighting is your best choice. LED lighting prices have come down a lot in the past few years. Try replacing one just to see how you like them. I personally think their color is much better than any CFL's and they use less electricity and last much longer too. Well worth the investment in modern lighting.
2. Turn it off. Be sure to turn off everything that does not need to be on when you leave the office for the day. All computers, printers and other peripherals should be turned off. Leave Fax machines or the like on so you can still receive communications.
3. Reduce heating and cooling costs. Pull shades in the summer to keep the sun out, open them in the winter to let it in. Set the thermostat slightly warmer in the summer to reduce Air Conditioning costs and slightly cooler in the winter to reduce your heating costs. Also be sure all windows are shut tight and latched and all weather stripping is in good repair and properly in place.
4. Solar Hot Water - For businesses that use a lot of hot water a solar hot water system will many times pay for itself in less than 3 or 4 years. Solar hot water can also be used to heat a building.
5. Energy Star Building Ratings - If you are building a new building get an Energy Star Rating on your building. This is actually a good insurance policy to make sure the contractor is doing the job right. An Energy Star rating is a minimal cost and can see a payback of less than one year if a contractor was taking short cuts.
6. Solar Electricity - Solar electric costs have dropped dramatically in the past few years. With the current government incentives now is a great time to get a new price quote.
7. Recycling program - If you don't have a recycling program now is the best time to start one. Recycling one aluminum can saves over 1/2 gallon of gasoline energy equivalent. The saved energy would normally be used to mine the aluminum, refine it, and ship it around the world.
8. Look for ways to reduce your upstream and downstream business partners' energy costs. Try to think of ways that you can help them cut their utility costs by building efficiencies into your processes to help them reduce their energy usage too. Who knows by helping them to reduce their energy costs both of your companies could see higher profits, and higher profits mean better growth and more job creation.
9. Shop for lower electricity generation rates. It is good to shop for lower electric rates and you should do so. Saving just 5 cents per kWh on your electric bill could add up to thousands of dollars depending on how much you use. However before you sign you want to make sure that the supplier you sign up with will honor the Net Metering laws so that you can get compensated for wind, solar or bio-mass generation systems you may have installed in the future. Even if you are not considering renewables now you may be considering them in the future and you want to make sure that your contract stipulates that you will get paid for the electricity you generate later.

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