

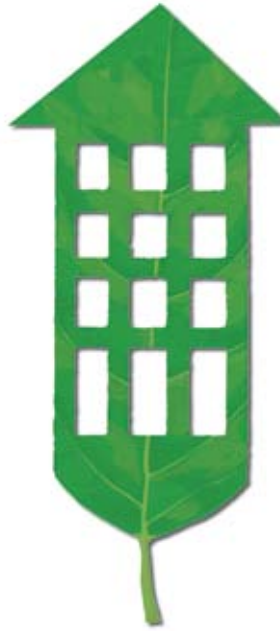
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# Greener Company Culture—From the Top Down

**By Wes Andrud and Joe Froelich,** *consultants, Proudfoot Consulting*  
From the pages of *Material Handling Management*

**E**scalating energy prices have served as a wake-up call to corporate leaders to devise ways to conserve energy. Energy efficiency is evolving from a corporate concept to a priority item on the CEO's agenda.

Over the past five years, the average company's energy costs have escalated from 10% to 30%. Some CEOs have already adapted to current conditions and implemented strategies to create energy-efficient facilities. Company leadership must now treat energy



as an operational challenge that must be managed diligently, deserving the same attention as the purchase and use of raw materials. In some cases, a company's survival will depend on how quickly its management team can adopt energy-conservation strategies.

While energy is a vital operating component, energy reduction does not need to be cumbersome. With volatile energy costs in the news, energy conservation should be seen as an opportunity, treated and managed as a company-wide initiative that will pro-

vide long-term benefits.

Effectively managing energy consumption requires a commitment to educating workers. This involves energy awareness, empathy, best practices, coaching and action. Company leadership needs to modify employee behaviors to effect cultural change throughout the company. It must start with the CEO and executive management regularly articulating commitment to energy efficiency and its importance to profitability and the environment.

Company leadership must also lead by example. Upper-level management should be first to incorporate cost-cutting measures in their own offices, facilities or departments. This demonstrates to the rest of the company that these initiatives are not simply window dressings.

According to one CEO, "The real secret to reducing energy costs is not in the technical aspects of the process; it is in the management attitude. A desire to reduce costs through good energy management and an effective implementation and monitoring program will always produce the results and the commercial benefits."

Some waste reduction is easy to achieve. For example, lighting, conveyors, compressor stations, chiller plants and electrical motors should only be running when they are needed for production. Certain non-essential systems can be placed on timers.

Less obvious sources of energy waste require technical expertise of a third-party firm to identify, evaluate and determine solutions. These issues may include inefficient processes, ill-defined practices around energy use and the lack of clear ownership of energy management. More technical forms of energy efficiency can be realized through analysis of compressed air usage, ventilation systems, cooler fans, water treatment, temperature controls, furnaces, door seals, machine calibrations and a myriad of other issues, depending on a facility's specific requirements.

At the end of the day, however, the CEO commitment to cutting energy costs is critical. With corporate-level support, goals, planning, data gathering and implementation combine to create a sustainable cultural shift that places energy conservation at the forefront without major capital investment.

For the full story, visit <http://www.mhmonline.com/viewStory.asp?nID=6429&S=1>.

## Tedious Tasks Go Virtual

From the pages of *Material Handling Management*



**M**aterial handling managers have a lot on their plate these days. As a result, it can be difficult to deal with basic human-resources tasks such as putting together employee work schedules and juggling requests for time off.

One potential solution is to put internal communications online. For instance, a new addition to RedPrairie Corp.'s Workforce Management software allows employees to go to a Web portal to confirm their work schedules, check hours worked, submit time-off requests and access other job-related information. In addition, once a manager approves a request for time off, the employee is notified, and the software does not schedule the employee for that time.

Employees can also check their work schedules through a WAP-enabled (wireless application protocol) device, such as a mobile phone or PDA. This capability can appeal to the mobile, tech-savvy interests of the new generation of workers known as the Millennials.

Most importantly, the secure, self-service application enhances employee and management communication while relieving supervisors of some administrative tasks. That way, managers can focus more on customer needs and operational efficiency.

For the full story, visit <http://www.mhmonline.com/viewStory.asp?nID=6386&S=1>.

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