Green Workplace Survey Overview

**2010**

Small businesses are the backbone of many national economies. In the United States, small businesses, when defined as those with fewer than 500 employees, post this record:

• Represent 99.7% of all employer firms

• Employ just over half of all private sector employees

• Pay 44% of total U.S. private payroll

• Have generated 64% of net new jobs over the past 15 years

• Create more than half of the nonfarm private gross domes­tic product (GDP)

• Hire 40% of high-tech workers

(Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy,

http://www.sba.gov/advo/stats/sbfaq.pdf)

Government regulations and public policy changes present a special burden to small businesses, whose survival rate falls to 50% after five years. Very small firms (those with fewer than 20 employees) are hit particularly hard. According to the Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, these very small firms pay 45% more per employees to comply with federal regulations than larger firms. Compliance with environmental regulations and tax regulations specifically cost very small firms 4-1/2 times more and 67% more, respectively, than larger firms.

Additionally, small firms (fewer than 50 employees) suffer disproportionately under the weight of high energy costs compared to larger firms. An April 2008 study for the Small Business Administration found that small businesses pay 35% more for electricity than the sector average for all businesses, while large companies pay 17% less than the average.

When energy and related costs, like water and other utility bills, rise—as economic forecasts project they likely will under both evolving natural conditions and a host of policy proposals under consideration by lawmakers—small businesses struggle harder to survive. And not just small businesses, but mid-size businesses and small and mid-size nonprofit organizations as well. All of these entities must do financial battle each day against the weight of utility costs that seem to rise without interruption. Anything that can help hold the line on—or even reverse—these increasing costs can have a tremendously positive effect on these entities, their financial managers, and their employees. Fortunately, there are some very simple and straightforward ways to help keep these costs in check.

**I’m here to help**

My title is Certified Green Consultant. My mission is to work with you to identify cost-effective energy- and water-efficiency improvements that can be made in your workplace. My emphasis is on steps that can be taken with the least upfront investment and/or the quickest payback in terms of reduced energy and water costs. As you know, utility costs can be pretty volatile and no one can guarantee, even with the most effective energy- and water-efficiency enhancements, how much you might be able to save on your energy and water bills, but we can work together to stay ahead of changes that are likely to bring higher energy and water costs in the future. As you may know, the effects of outside influences on energy costs can be especially pronounced, and some of the forces that are expected to push up energy prices are quite remote geographically from your business. For instance, Harvard University energy expert has determined world population growth alone will require a 50% to 60% increase in global energy production in the next 20 years. Certainly, competition for energy supplies historically has caused prices to rise—and likely will again. Similar, although perhaps more localized, impacts are likely to be felt on water supplies and water rates as well.

In helping you to deal with these prospective cost increases, my role as a Certified Green Consultant differs appreciably from that of the traditional energy auditors whom you may have heard about or worked with in the past. In the 1980s, energy auditors were largely utility-company employees who came to your business or organization in order to perform a comprehensive assessment of energy use, and you probably never saw these individuals again. By contrast, I am a Certified Green Consultant. I will perform what is known as a “Green Workplace Survey”—a detailed, whole-building inspection designed to assess the performance of building systems and subsystems (not just those affecting energy consumption, but water consumption as well). This survey provides the foundation for me to listen to you and to learn your business priorities and which strategic goals you hope to achieve through enhanced energy and water efficiency. The solutions that follow will come in a wide range of possibilities, costs, and paybacks. Through my training, understanding, and research of the industry, we will work together to find the plan that is crafted to precisely serve your needs.

**Certified Green Consultant Services**

To keep things simple, I offer two basic types of services. You let me know what works best for you:

* A 90-Minute One-on-One Green Workplace Survey
* A Year-Long Green Workplace Improvement Plan

I can provide a 90-minute Green Workplace Survey and point out to you ideas and recommendations that can improve your workplace energy and water efficiency. Lots of these ideas can yield major improvements (and lower utility bills)—often with little or no expenditure. In fact, in many cases, behavioral changes by your employees are all that’s required.

Additionally, you and I can collaborate on a year-long plan—tackling big things and small things alike. This plan begins with the same 90-minute Green Workplace Survey just described, but goes much more deeply into matters that affect your workplace environment. I offer this extended service because I truly care about you helping you to obtain the best performance you can from your business or organization in these economically challenging times.

**Quick Paybacks**

The goal at every step of the process will be to identify all possible enhancements to your workplace’s efficiency and to establish a priority order for these items, based on:

* What’s important to you
* The cost involved, if any
* The payback period (or how quickly you can recover your investment through energy and water savings—and, hence, lower utility bills)

Above all, I want to make sure that the vital systems of your workplace function optimally.

**Green Workplace Survey**

Here are the basic considerations covered, in order, by the Green Workplace Survey, the 90-minute workplace walkthrough:

* **Lighting.** We will assess how the existing lighting system is used, employee behaviors that may unnecessarily elevate costs, work-management techniques to reduce lighting demand, low-cost high-efficiency lighting options, purpose-driven lighting, and strategic incorporation of motion sensors and timers in the workplace.
* **Heating and cooling systems.** The efficiency of the heating and cooling system has a major impact on your workplace energy costs. Through the survey, we will assess the age, performance, and condition of your existing systems and can review the upsides and downsides of new technology or replacement options. But I recognize that many workplace budgets are very constrained in the current economy. In many instances, these financial constraints necessitate focusing instead on maintenance, usage patterns, and quick-payback improvements, such as programmable thermostats and day-lighting techniques. Reviewing proper system maintenance and condition of ductwork and vents can help to add years of life to your heating and cooling systems.
* **Phantom electricity load.** Phantom electricity load is an energy concern that is emerging strongly n both iworkplaces and homes as the use of electronics and business equipment expands. Computers, printers, copiers, and even coffeemakers are only some of the devices that sap costly electricity even while not in active use. No-cost behavioral changes can correct these examples of energy waste, once identified.
* **Indoor water usage and water heating.** Again, the good news for the business owner is that, once waste is identified, many instances of indoor water waste can be eliminated with very nominal expenditures by correcting leaks, installing low-flow fixtures, and installing automatic shut-off faucets. If you own your water-heating system, for instance, it may be in your strategic interest to investigate new technology options or simply to install a water heater insulation blanket. I can present options to you at every point along the cost and payback spectrum.
* **Outdoor water usage.** Whether you are responsible for your own greenscape around your business or receive the services of a professional landscaper, the care of these outdoor spaces is a cost that falls to you, either directly or indirectly. The front line of efficiency improvements is the right combination for you of behavioral modification and proper maintenance and function of mechanical systems, such as sprinkler systems. But there are also some exciting new landscaping concepts that fit extremely well with small business and organizational considerations. One of these concepts that we can discuss is called xeriscaping, the creation of a more environmentally sustaining landscape—one that will require less water, less attention, and less maintenance and, through its own biological processes, largely sustain itself. In addition, selection of certain fauna can aid in reducing workplace cooling costs.
* **Recycling.** Paper, ink, and toner cartridges, glass, and aluminum cans are just some of the items found in the workplace that can be recycled, thus, reducing costs, cutting waste streams to landfills, and, through reduction of energy and water use in the production life cycles of these products, help to reduce the carbon footprint that is tied to climate change concerns and the impact on life-sustaining forested environments. Through the Green Workplace Survey, we can assess the possibilities of reducing usage of these recyclable goods, purchase of recycled materials, and employee involvement aimed at ensuring a steadfast strategic focus on these cost-saving measures.

**Energy Ratings and Energy Star Standards**

The modern workplace is full of technology and the results of sophisticated science and research designed to improve the workplace’s performance and efficiency. Decades of testing in the laboratory; experimentation with polymers, resins, and metal alloys; materials science trials of durability, strength, heat resistance, and conduction, and more, all have led to the creation of energy-efficiency ratings and standards that set the bar for optimal workplace performance. In the United States, these standards are most prominently embodied in the U.S. government’s Energy Star and WaterSense rating systems.

As a Certified Green Consultant, I can explain the meaning and use of the Energy Star and WaterSense rating systems— a critical guide to improved workplace energy and water efficiency. Products in more than 60 categories are eligible for the Energy Star rating—a designation that stands for energy savings, cost savings, and protecting the environment. You may be surprised at the wide range of products identified with Energy Star. These include:

**Appliances**

* Battery chargers
* Refrigerators and freezers
* Room air cleaners… and more

**Heating and Cooling**

* Boilers
* Central air conditioners
* Furnaces
* Insulation
* Programmable thermostats… and more

**Other Products**

* Light bulbs
* Light fixtures
* Outdoor lights
* Roof coverings
* Water heaters
* Windows and doors… and more

**Electronics**

* Cordless telephones
* DVDs
* Computers
* Printers…and more

**And more high-performance, energy-efficient products are being identified all the time!**

In addition, in working with a Certified Green Consultant, you will learn about other important standards and ratings as they pertain to insulation (R-values), to doors, and windows (U-factor, solar heat gain coefficient, visible transmission, and of course the Energy Star ratings).

**Making Your Move to a Green Economy**

The “Green Economy” is being embraced by business and governmental leaders worldwide. Renewable energy options encompass many exciting technologies, which I will be happy to discuss with you, if a faster move to a Green Economy is high on your business or organization’s plans.

With this pamphlet, you will find my card with information on how to contact me. I look forward to our collaboration in making your business or organization the “green workplace” that leads to your vision for the future.