



Five Tips for Building an Effective Energy Behavior Change Campaign

When we talk about energy, the focus is usually on technology and technical solutions. However, energy behavior is gaining more attention as a “hot topic” in energy innovation. Until recently, in my experience as an ISO 50001 auditor of energy management systems, I found that in many organizations consideration of the role of energy behavior in energy savings efforts has been confined to “Turn off the lights when you leave” stickers on light switches or “Close the door” signage, and the like.

What has been lacking is a focused and structured approach to achieving and sustaining energy behavior change. But it appears this is beginning to change as organizations look for new low-cost energy opportunities in the face of increasingly constrained capital budgets; as more case studies are published on the application of social marketing and psychology to achieving sustainable behavior; and as organizations adopt and benefit from implementation of the ISO 50001 standard for energy management systems.

There are a number of resources that can help organizations build and implement behavior change programs. Some of the organizations that have published useful case studies on this topic include the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE), the Consortium for Energy Efficiency (CEE) and The Carbon Trust, among others.

Published by The Carbon Trust and modified based on my own experiences, the “Five Top Tips for Building an Effective Behavior Change Campaign” that can help organization get started on developing a behavior change program are:

Understand where energy is being consumed

Evaluate energy consumption across your organization and identify where behavior is a factor. Where the highest potential exists for energy savings may surprise you.

Prioritize the behaviors you want to change

Determine where you can realistically have the greatest impact. Potential energy savings should be balanced against the probability of achieving change.

For more information on how GaMEP can help you with your energy management, contact:

Holly Grell-Lawe, Project Manager

Expertise includes: helping Georgia manufacturers with implementing, auditing, and training in: Energy & Environmental Management; Management Systems (ISO 14001, ISO 50001, OHSAS 18001), Integrated Management Systems, and Sustainability Planning

Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GaMEP) at Georgia Tech

holly.lawe@innovate.gatech.edu



Define the outcomes that you want to achieve

Decide specifically what goals or targets you are trying to achieve, so you can plan for how to monitor performance and feedback on the results.

Research what motivates or hampers good energy behavior in your organization

Use your understanding of your own organizational culture to help build your program. Find out what is important to your employees and how they think, behave and interact with the facilities, technology and others around them.

Secure top management support

Top management commitment and support is critical. They hold the resources. They can facilitate or block what it is you are trying to do. And, there is no substitute for leadership by example!

There appears to be enormous potential for energy savings from behavioral change. ACEEE recently estimated that the U.S. could cut energy consumption by 25% without hurting its economy. We know that technological advances will always provide important new solutions to reduce consumption within our highly energy-dependent society. But human behavior also matters in managing energy and achieving continual improvement in energy performance.

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