

Training for a successful energy management strategy

Training in energy saving matters must be specific to the employee's position and responsibilities. Training must consider different levels of understanding and knowledge

The purpose of organisational training is to teach your workforce new skills. However, in the case of energy management, training is not so much to educate staff in technical matters, but is more to do with building an awareness of energy issues and creating motivation.

The aim of training is to raise the profile of energy management and convince your organisation's different groups that energy efficiency is a worthwhile ambition.

Training must be tailored to suit the needs of your organisation. Some groups of employees will have a greater influence upon energy consumption than others. Senior managers, departmental managers and plant operators will require a different training approach than process workers, secretaries and administration staff.

Analysing training needs

| Course | Awareness | Policy | Information | Buildings | Plant | Boiler-room | Purchasing | Investment |
|------------------|-----------|--------|-------------|-----------|-------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Senior Manager | | | | | | | | |
| Middle Manager | | | | | | | | |
| Production Staff | | | | | | | | |
| Sales | | | | | | | | |
| Admin | | | | | | | | |
| H & S | | | | | | | | |
| Cleaner | | | | | | | | |
| Caterers | | | | | | | | |





CASE STUDY 8

The Parkroyal on St Kilda Road, a five-star hotel with 220 rooms, is part of the Southern Pacific Hotel Corporation, the largest hotel group in Australasia. In 1993 a comprehensive environmental audit was undertaken at the hotel. The resulting strategy for achieving environmental awareness required all levels of personnel to partake in environmental planning and implementation. Senior management had a vital role in encouraging this activity.

The Parkroyal strategy included formal training sessions for new and existing staff. It encouraged active involvement and a feeling of personal responsibility and ownership among all personnel. Everyone had the opportunity to have a say in how the strategy was run and could make and discuss suggestions for action. Emphasis was placed on cooperation and teamwork to achieve common goals.

The training program

Based on the UK Energy Efficiency Office model, there are six steps in an energy management-training program:

1. analysing training needs
2. developing learning objectives
3. outlining training content
4. selecting appropriate training methods
5. conducting training
6. evaluating training

Analysing training needs

This step identifies who needs to be trained and what their training requirements are. As a result of the analysis, the organisation will have an understanding of what form the training program should take. The analysis can be conducted either in-house, or by a training consultant.

It is important to tailor courses that meet the specific needs of energy decision-makers in your organisation. Staff who control or manage energy use will need a training course that is geared to their responsibilities. A matrix of job functions against possible course content will act as an initial guide on who requires what. The matrix also provides an insight to the roles within the organisation with the highest degree of influence on energy use.

Developing learning objectives

Goals should be set for training to be effective. Trainees must have a clear understanding of what will be required from them as a result of training.

Outlining training content

The content of the training program needs to reflect everything the trainees must learn in order to achieve the objectives.

Selecting appropriate training methods

Some typical options for energy training are shown in the Training Options table on the following page.

Conducting training

How training is conducted will depend on the trainees' background, the aims of the course, and the materials and the methods. The trainer's preferred style will also have an impact.

Evaluating learning

There are various means to evaluate the effectiveness of a training program. Some methods available are:

- energy use monitoring—a reduction in energy use is one way to identify the effectiveness of energy efficiency training.
- action plans—trainees complete an action plan towards the end of a course. For example, *'list five practical measures that you will take to save energy in your department'*.
- tests—these can provide quantitative feedback on what the trainees have derived from the course. However, skills and attitudes do not lend themselves to this type of testing.
- other methods—course evaluation sheets, completed by the trainees at the end of the course, and observation by managers of trainees' behaviour and attitudes once back at work.



Training Options

| | Option | Example | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| 1 | Tailor-made training run on-site using internal trainers | Series of lunch time classes for middle managers | Cost-effective. Tailored to site, job functions and training needs | Lack of exposure to ideas from outsiders |
| 2 | Short open course at a training centre | Four-day course on electrical energy efficiency | Can be targeted to individuals with identified training needs | Some of the course may be irrelevant. Trainees must sell ideas when they return to work |
| 3 | On-the-job training | Course for engineers on installation of new equipment | Practical, cost-efficient, tailored to individuals receiving one-to-one training | Informality and lack of structure can lead to omissions |
| 4 | Academic course leading to qualifications | Masters degree in energy management | In-depth training, formal recognition of success | Limited practical experience, costs can be high |



Tips

Some organisations with sufficient resources conduct in-house training sessions. However, the trend is to out-source energy training to external consultants. Good energy managers are not necessarily good trainers and good technical trainers may not have the necessary knowledge of energy management.

When choosing an external consultant, the two vital skills required to deliver energy management training are:

1. The trainer needs to know about energy management from personal experience. If not, then the trainer will lack credibility for the trainees.
2. The trainer must be a good communicator, who can relate to people. Technical ability is not enough. Trainers have to be people-oriented. Many of the barriers to change in energy management are 'people' issues rather than technical ones.

The cost of any proposed training should be carefully considered. The payback time varies between organisations, depending on the initial level of awareness and the energy saving potential of a particular site.

