

Energy saving at Tumalet Software

A leading software company is developing strategies to reduce energy bills and operating costs

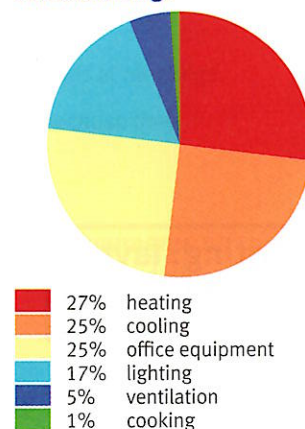
Background

Tumalet is a large software company based in California's Silicon Valley. The company's headquarters spans four buildings and comprises over 90,000 square metres of office space.

Tumalet is committed to improving energy efficiency and reducing its CO₂ emissions as part of its sustainable business strategy. Over the past five years, the company has invested half a million dollars in energy projects, which have resulted in US \$600,000 in savings, a total return on investment of 120 per cent.

A recent downturn in business and rapidly escalating electricity and gas prices are forcing the company to find new ways to reduce energy costs and minimise the impact of price increases on its operations.

Typical energy consumption in office buildings



Read this article. What initiatives have enabled Tumalet to reduce energy costs so far?

Green business makes sense

Commercial and residential buildings are a major source of energy consumption. According to the non-profit group, the US Green Business Council, they gobble up over one-third of the energy produced in the US, and account for 38 per cent of all carbon-dioxide emissions. Not just that, it's estimated that as much as 30 per cent of the energy consumed in office buildings is wasted. Companies once concerned about the affordability of sustainable business have found that green initiatives are good for the bottom line as well as the environment.

For the past five years, Tumalet has been improving energy efficiency at its Californian headquarters. Some of the retro-fits are surprisingly quick and simple. By switching to low-energy bulbs and dimming hallway lighting during the day, to make the most of natural light, the company made immediate savings on electricity bills. The company's low-cost policies of turning things off, turning things down, and keeping up with cleaning and maintenance has generated significant savings.

CD1.23 Listen to part of a meeting between Tumalet's Sustainable Business Manager, Joanne Hopper, and the Energy Project Team. Make a list of action points for them to work on.

Look at this article. How does this news affect Tumalet?

California utility expands rebates

Pacific Gas & Electric is expanding a program that provides financial incentives for companies to cut their energy use. PG&E, which serves much of Northern and Central California including Silicon Valley, has set aside US\$50 million to spend on a set of rebates and incentives over the next three years. Those rebates will go to customers who employ energy-saving technologies, such as high-efficiency power supplies. That's up from the \$7 million PG&E doled out last year, and the utility can increase the money available if enough

customers are interested, said Mark Bramfitt, the Head of PG&E's customer energy-efficiency program.

Bramfitt sees rebate programs as beneficial for both utilities and their customers. Utilities can save money by avoiding construction costs for new power plants or buying electricity at higher rates during peak times from other utilities, while businesses get to offset the cost of installing energy-saving technologies that can reduce their electricity bills.

Task

Work in groups of three. You are members of the Energy Project Team at Tumalet. You have been asked to investigate and propose some energy-saving ideas.

- 1 Read your information and prepare to present it to your colleagues at the meeting.

Student A: Look at your information below.

Student B: Turn to page 150.

Student C: Turn to page 159.

Student A

- Enabling staff to work virtually from home reduces office occupancy and energy costs.
 - Planting grass and other plants on the roof will act as natural insulation and reduce heating bills.
 - By contributing money to carbon-offset projects – such as forest planting – the company can compensate for its CO₂ emissions.
- 2 Hold a meeting to devise an energy strategy for your company. Use the agenda below. Decide who will chair the meeting.

ENERGY PROJECT TEAM MEETING

Agenda

- 1 Ways to encourage staff involvement in energy efficiency
- 2 Options for reducing and offsetting CO₂ emissions
- 3 Feasible sources of renewable energy and benefits
- 4 Schedule for short-term and long-term measures to save energy
- 5 Other measures as part of its sustainable business strategy (e.g. waste management, product packaging, transportation, water conservation)
- 6 AOB

Watch the Case study commentary on the DVD-ROM.



Writing

As a member of the Energy Project Team, write a report for Joanne Hopper outlining the options you considered and your recommendations for improving your company's energy efficiency.

➔ Writing file pages 146–147

