

Case Study Colliers International – creating sustainable workplaces



Colliers International's Project Services division (formerly Roberts Weaver Group), provides workplace consulting, technology infrastructure and interior design, and project and change management services to corporate clients.

The division has been working with clients for a number of years to deliver workplaces that enhance productivity, optimise return on investment, and respect the environment through achieving high NABERS Energy ratings.

In their Sydney office, which accommodates around forty staff, Colliers International Project Services has created a sustainable workplace and overcome the challenges that older buildings can sometimes present in terms of energy efficiency.

Key improvements

In order to increase energy efficiency within their own tenancy, sustainability initiatives were identified focusing on four key areas of the business:

- office environment and overall business
- education and qualifications of the professional team (in terms of climate change/ environment)
- client awareness of climate change and opportunities to improve the sustainability of their own businesses
- staff awareness of reducing their personal and household footprint.

Goals

- Achieve an above average NABERS Energy rating
- Create a sustainable workplace through behavioural change and minimal technological change
- Encourage and assist clients to achieve sustainable workplaces

Leading by example

The team's four star baseline NABERS Energy rating was achieved largely through behavioural change.

From the outset, management led by example with simple actions such as switching lights and PCs off and encouraging staff to do the same.



Signatory status	
Date joined CitySwitch	26 October 2007
Tenancy size	565 sqm
NABERS Commitment rating	★★★★★
Website	www.colliers.com.au
Key outcomes	
Annual saving	Approximately 30%
Cost of investment	Minimal
Technology	Behavioural change

Communicating change to deliver significant benefits

A range of simple initiatives have assisted in communicating behavioural change actions. For example:

- signs next to office light switches identify their function and provide reminders for everybody, including external contractors such as cleaners, to 'switch off'
- sustainability messages are reinforced through regular email broadcasts in addition to including 'sustainability tips' on the agenda of monthly staff meetings.

Staff are also encouraged to suggest methods of improving energy efficiency. As a result of this, additional measures have been undertaken including:

- setting the timer on the water boiler, enabling a low energy standby mode overnight and during weekends
- configuring printers to revert to standby mode during periods of inactivity
- discouraging the use of PC screen savers (using 'blank screen' as a preference)
- disabling various feature lighting (which was using highly inefficient Par 30 fittings).

Behavioural change – the keys to success

- Start from the top - senior management, including the CEO, must credibly support the initiative and lead by example
- Get staff on board by communicating the rationale and explaining how it will benefit everybody
- Encourage feedback and ideas through surveys or by setting up a working group with representatives from all parts of the business
- Ensure staff feel they're being heard – make sure suggestions are acknowledged and feedback is provided as to the reasons for adopting/rejecting ideas
- Report progress and encourage success - reporting improvements in ratings or reductions in electricity usage help staff realise their efforts are making a difference and are appreciated
- If there are multiple electricity meters for different floors/ office locations, friendly competitions can be run to see which group can achieve the biggest savings.

"Colliers International is proud to support CitySwitch Green Office and take positive steps to reduce our environmental footprint, while at the same time helping our clients move towards more sustainable accommodation for their staff."

Achieving energy efficiency through behavioural change costs nothing more than the time to communicate, but can deliver significant benefits. "

Frank McGowan
Managing Director - Project Services
Colliers International

Get involved

Join CitySwitch and discover how small changes can make a big difference to Australia's future environmental health – and that of the planet.

Visit www.cityswitch.net.au for more information or call the CitySwitch Program Manager in your state. Contact details are listed on the website.

CitySwitch is a national tenant energy management program. Previously known as the 3CBDs Greenhouse Initiative, the program works with tenants to improve office energy efficiency, reducing the CO₂ emissions attributed to climate change.

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