

## Green on the Inside

**"G**reen" is the new byword for the construction industry. Green building and sustainability are terms we hear frequently in today's marketplace. While many people believe green only applies to new buildings, it's important to remember it also applies to commercial interiors. A high performance, green facility is more efficient, boasts improved working conditions and uses durable products within the facility.

A LEED® Certified Commercial Interior space (or any renovated to similar standards) provides for a better environment. Benefits include improved HVAC systems, better lighting and natural daylighting. These internal comforts can be further enhanced with the addition of individual controls for lighting and HVAC within work areas.

Experience has proven the benefits of building green. Genzyme Corporation's corporate headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts reduced its energy consumption by 42% and water usage by 34% by incorporating green design into the building. Warner Brothers Studios renovated its Building 151 in Burbank, California and it reduced utility consumption by 38%. Average utility consumption and costs for a green designed facility are 10% lower than the conventionally designed building or interior.

Besides operational costs savings, benefits include increased productivity, reduced absenteeism and turnover, and increased moral. Toyota Corporation experienced a 14% drop in absenteeism when the customer-services unit occupied a LEED Gold Certified expansion at its North American headquarters. PNC Financial Services experienced a 50% drop in employee turnover in its Silver Certified building. Studies have shown that employee productivity is up 15% in green constructed facilities. A 1% increase in productivity is worth \$3.00/SF to a company, correlating to \$600 to \$700 per employee per year savings.

Green improvements to commercial interiors can incorporate many aspects of sustainability:

- High efficient water fixtures to reduce water consumption
- Low profile furniture to increase outdoor visibility
- Energy efficient lighting fixtures and controls
- Maximization of HVAC systems and controls
- Use of low VOC carpets, paints and finishes to improve air quality
- Office recycling procedures to reduce waste and disposal costs

Green improvements can be accomplished through research of available products and prudent selections of interior finishes. Today most manufacturers offer green products and materials with low VOC (volatile organic compounds) and reduced levels of urea-formaldehyde are readily available. As the green initiative gains momentum, costs of green products are becoming comparable to market line costs. With minimum increases in green construction costs, the benefits of increased productivity, and lower operating costs, and a company's ROI (return on investment) is increased, thus green improvements are profitable.

When considering the increased ROI and the human benefits of "going green," the decision of sustainable improvements is an easy choice. Green, sustainable construction is the air conditioning of the '50s. It's not a fad. It's here to stay.

*BOMA Greater Cleveland is proud to provide this space to our Associate Members so they can inform, educate and share their knowledge with property management professionals. This article was written by Allan Welter, LEED-AP is a Project Manager with D-A-S Construction Co. He obtained his LEED Accreditation in New Construction in 2007 and an active member of D-A-S' Green Building Committee. He can be reached at 216+662.5577 x124 or awelter@dascon.com. D-A-S Construction Co. has been a BOMA Greater Cleveland member since 2003.*



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