Build Your Own ENERGY STAR Benchmarking Competition

What is a Benchmarking Competition?
For organizations seeking to increase participation in their energy management efforts, a benchmarking competition that leverages EPA’s Portfolio Manager tool is a great way to generate excitement, attract attention, and deliver results.

A competition sponsor can gain positive visibility for promoting energy savings and environmental stewardship, and can highlight efforts through a media-friendly initiative.

Why Should We Focus on Buildings?
The energy used in the buildings where we work, shop, play, and learn is responsible for nearly half of our national emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change.

Additionally, up to 30% of the energy consumed by the average commercial building is wasted, which creates significant opportunities for building owners and managers to efficiently reduce their energy consumption, and consequently, their energy costs and associated greenhouse gas emissions.

Why a Competition?
Time and time again, leading ENERGY STAR partners have found that a spirit of healthy competition and the opportunity for recognition are some of the best drivers for participation in organization-wide energy management efforts. A growing number of organizations have launched benchmarking competitions, and are seeing the benefits from their efforts. In particular, a competition can:

- Offer incentives for participants to pursue higher levels of energy performance;
- Foster increased awareness of energy efficiency, helping everyone’s bottom line; and
- Provide a communication platform to promote energy management efforts to staff, tenants, guests, and the general public.

Who Can Launch or Participate in a Competition?
Many different types of organizations can launch a benchmarking competition, including local governments, industry associations, and private companies. Because any building can benchmark and track energy use in EPA’s Portfolio Manager tool, anyone can take part in an ENERGY STAR benchmarking competition!

5 Benefits to Hosting a Challenge

1. **Show leadership.** Make a commitment to fighting climate change and take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with building energy consumption.

2. **Turn your goals into gold.** Help participants recognize that reduced energy consumption will result in environmental and financial savings.

3. **Attract media exposure.** Everyone loves to hear about a competition, so take the opportunity to create a splash when launching your competition and announcing the winners.

4. **Reach a large audience.** With recognition and prizes at stake, it will be easier for you to communicate your energy efficiency goals and promote activities to meet those goals.

5. **Make efficiency fun!** Building a competitive spirit and providing recognition can attract more interest and sustain support for your activities.
What Are Some Examples of a Benchmarking Competition?

**Louisville’s Kilowatt Crackdown**

Louisville, Kentucky is one of the many communities around the nation that is using a benchmarking competition as a platform for improving energy efficiency and fighting climate change. Led by Mayor Jerry E. Abramson, the city teamed up with the Kentucky Department for Energy Development and Independence and Louisville commercial real estate associations to launch the Louisville Kilowatt Crackdown, a competition designed to promote the benefits of energy efficiency in commercial buildings across the community. The competition is open to commercial buildings, such as schools, offices, hospitals, and hotels, and all participants measure energy consumption using Portfolio Manager.

Based on benchmarking results from Portfolio Manager, the city offers a variety of awards for participants, including “Most Efficient Building,” “Greatest Improvement in Energy Efficiency,” and the “Kilowatt Cup,” which is awarded by a jury for superior achievements in energy management.

Over 100 Louisville buildings competed in the 2009 contest year. Collectively, these participants reduced their CO2 emissions by 3,423 metric tons, equal to the annual electricity use of 415 homes.

http://www.louisvilleenergyalliance.org/

**EPA’s National Building Competition**

EPA is hosting a national competition among commercial buildings to save energy and fight climate change. Competitors will “work off the waste” through improvements in energy efficiency, with help from EPA’s ENERGY STAR program. The building that sheds the most energy waste will be recognized as the winner.

Nearly 200 buildings applied to compete. In the end, 14 were selected, including schools, hotels, dormitories, stores, offices, and a museum.

Participants will measure and track their building’s monthly energy consumption using EPA’s online energy tracking tool, Portfolio Manager; make improvements to their building’s energy performance; and share their progress. The building that demonstrates the greatest percentage-based reduction in energy use intensity over the contest energy performance period will be recognized as the winner.

As of the competition’s midpoint, the 14 competitors have reduced their CO2 emissions by more than 2,700 metric tons. They have been featured in stories in more than two dozen media outlets.

www.energystar.gov/buildingcontest

**Additional ENERGY STAR Resources**

ENERGY STAR connects you with a broad range of tools and resources that can help you frame, plan, and implement a successful benchmarking competition. Reducing energy use and increasing energy efficiency is a proven strategy for controlling costs – all while improving environmental performance and achieving good returns on investment. For more information on these resources, visit [www.energystar.gov/buildings](http://www.energystar.gov/buildings)

**ENERGY STAR Challenge:** The Challenge is a national call-to-action to improve the efficiency of America’s commercial and industrial buildings by 10 percent or more. Organizations can take the Challenge and can access many resources to help them make energy efficiency upgrades and spread the word about energy efficiency. [http://www.energystar.gov/challenge](http://www.energystar.gov/challenge)

**Portfolio Manager:** Portfolio Manager is an interactive energy management tool that allows you to track and assess energy and water consumption and greenhouse gas emissions across your entire portfolio of buildings in a secure online environment. [http://www.energystar.gov/benchmark](http://www.energystar.gov/benchmark)