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ENERGY STAR Success Story: Staples, Inc.

Staples, the world's largest office products company, has been an energy management and environmental leader in the retail industry for several years. Staples first partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) *Green Lights Program*, the predecessor to ENERGY STAR, and in 1999, won the *Green Lights Partner of the Year* recognition. Staples also has the distinction of being one of the first retailers to benchmark its entire portfolio of over 1,500 retail stores and 200 distribution centers. Even as the company's building portfolio has grown, with total square footage increasing by over 6 percent in just the past three years, Staples has reduced its building portfolio-wide energy usage by more than 11.4%, and recently became the first retailer to earn ENERGY STAR Leaders recognition! In just the past three years, Staples improved their portfolio-wide energy performance score from 47 to 61. In 2011, Staples was named an ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year for its outstanding energy management achievements.



Energy Management with ENERGY STAR

Staples' approach to reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gases is based upon the ENERGY STAR [strategic approach to energy management](#). Prior to the availability of the retail 1-100 energy performance scale, Staples used energy intensity (kBtu/sq ft/year) as a primary metric to measure and track energy performance. Since 2007, Staples has benchmarked using Advantage IQ, a service provider, to benchmark buildings in [Portfolio Manager](#) through the ENERGY STAR [automated benchmarking](#) system¹. Monthly tracking and reporting is an important component of Staples' *kWh Reduction Initiative*, in which the company utilizes energy usage metrics (including the ENERGY STAR score), outlier identification, and store re-commissioning, to improve building performance.

As part of the *kWh Reduction Initiative*, Staples has implemented several major energy efficiency projects including:

- Retrofitting the lighting in 600 stores to upgrade from 32W T8s to 28W T8s with new ballasts, for a cost of \$7,000,000 and a Return on Investment (ROI) of 2-3 years.
- Replacing HID lights in distribution centers with new T8/T5 lights and motion sensors, for a cost of \$5,000,000 and an ROI of 1-2 years.
- Expanding store energy controls and monitoring programs allowing for more innovative operating strategies, driving reductions in energy consumption.
- Launching the *North American Distribution Center Energy Reduction Program* in 2010, focusing on re-commissioning facilities and increasing employee awareness of energy management, while using the rating as a competitive motivator to drive improvement within each region. The pilot program resulted in participating distribution centers achieving an average energy reduction of 13 percent.

Since late 2009, Staples has earned the ENERGY STAR for over 130 properties, which includes over 100 retail stores, 27 distribution centers, and the Staples corporate headquarters. Additionally, in March 2010, the Staples Chief Financial Officer, John Mahoney, announced a corporate goal of earning the ENERGY STAR for 500 facilities by the end of 2012.

Feature Property: Retail Store #00183 in Cambridge, MA

The Staples' store in Cambridge, MA has benefited from Staples' aggressive corporate energy management strategies. The store, which opened in 1998, has undergone a number of energy efficiency improvement projects over the past few years, including:

¹ Automated benchmarking allows energy information service providers to transfer data into Portfolio Manager automatically. This service facilitates the initial upload of all building and energy data into Portfolio Manager, and allows for the easy update of energy performance scores with new utility energy data.



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Energy Efficiency Improvement Project	Payback Period
Increased energy awareness among managers through Black Belt program, part of the Six Sigma process (a management methodology driven by data)	Ongoing
Energy awareness campaign for associates featuring Inspector Wattson	Ongoing
Added occupancy sensors to offices, break rooms, restrooms, storage areas	1 year
Upgraded existing T8 lighting to next generation T8 lamps and high efficiency ballasts	2 years
Upgraded to new high efficiency rooftop HVAC units in 2009	N/A

The store had initial energy costs of approximately \$55,000 per year. After implementing these energy efficiency projects, the store reduced its energy use by 40 percent, saving Staples over \$20,000 per year. In addition to these financial savings, the store's rating increased from a 45 in December 2000 to an 81 by June 2010, earning the ENERGY STAR in 2010.

Other Green Initiatives and Accomplishments

Through their participation in EPA's *Green Power Partnership*, Staples is one of the largest corporate purchasers of green power in the country. In addition to purchasing renewable energy certificates, 32 sites have solar installations producing 20,000,000 kWh of emissions-free electricity.

Staples continues to highlight ENERGY STAR qualified products, such as computers, printers, phones, and CFLs, in their stores and catalogs, and the list continues to grow. Customers know to look for the *EcoEasy* icon to identify products that, in their production or use, demonstrate reduced environmental impacts compared to other products in that category.

Employee Engagement and Communications

Staples promotes staff involvement across the entire organization to create a culture of energy awareness, and has used ENERGY STAR resources to communicate the importance of energy efficiency to both employees and the public. As part of *Energy Awareness Month* in October 2010, Staples held a [Bring Your Green to Work](#) day at its headquarters, and distributed materials describing what employees could do to save energy in the office and at home. The Staples mascot for energy efficiency, *Inspector Wattson*, is featured on posters and other materials with tips on how to reduce energy consumption through measures such as turning off lights or conveyor belts (in distribution centers) when not in use.



When a facility earns the ENERGY STAR, Staples highlights their accomplishment to employees and the public. Informational posters in employee break rooms capture the energy conservation measures used to achieve the ENERGY STAR and how a building's success ties into Staples overall goal of being a leader in energy efficiency. Facility managers of ENERGY STAR buildings receive special recognition. Staples recently held an event at its Hagerstown, MD distribution center to recognize the facility managers of the first 100 Staples' facilities to earn the ENERGY STAR. Staples also proudly displays door-clings and banners at the entrance to their ENERGY STAR stores for their customers to see.

Continuous Improvement

In 2010, Staples joined the [ENERGY STAR Challenge](#) to improve building energy performance by 10 percent or more. Actions to reach this goal include meeting the company's commitment of 500 ENERGY STAR certified buildings and focusing on improving the energy efficiency of its lowest performers. By tracking energy performance scores monthly in Portfolio Manager, Staples can determine which buildings need improvement and which are eligible for the ENERGY STAR. The Staples' energy management team identifies best practices from high performing facilities and works with the facility managers at the lower performers to implement better energy management practices.

By using the *ENERGY STAR Guidelines for Energy Management* to improve the energy efficiency of their portfolio, Staples is successfully lowering energy costs, reducing carbon emissions, and demonstrating leadership in fighting climate change.