

ENERGY CENTERS AS A TOOL FOR UTILITIES

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In this competitive era, added-value services are fast becoming a requirement for customer satisfaction. A utility Energy Center enables customers to take advantage of energy-efficient design, equipment, and facility management practices and to benefit from technologies that make workspaces and homes more serviceable, comfortable, and economical.

Establishing an Energy Center helps business customers thrive and residential customers live better. Through advisory services, a variety of educational classes, technical seminars and product demonstrations, this type of enterprise, helps building and design professionals understand and implement state-of-the art energy efficient technologies. Industrial customers can learn ways to enhance their processes and improve their productivity. Residential customers learn how to lower their energy bills and become responsible energy users in this environmentally sensitive era.

An Energy Center offers demonstrations and conferences on technology applications having the potential to improve a business's overall resource efficiency, lower their costs, and increase pollution control for significant sectors of local manufacturing community, offers seminars on topics such as membrane filtration, ultraviolet curing, UV disinfections and others.

Another element of a utility Energy Center can be a hub for teacher and student education outreach. Where it offers relevant training for teachers and students in the areas of electricity, energy and environmental issues. This outreach further solidifies the utility relationship with its customers, the community, and future customers, the children.

Visitors to these Energy Centers undergo the “Corporate Experience” when they step inside the specially designed building space. The enhancement of the physical area of such space puts a great emphasis on the mission of these centers, which revolves around energy efficiency and environmental responsibility. The tangibility of displays and demonstration aids for the customer, is an essential focus in the development of these centers as it allows for the interactive experience of the utility’s pro-customer philosophy. Ample space should be devoted to building science displays that communicate to both residential customers and building science professionals. Other displays should cover the most up-to-date technological advances in building technologies and information on the utility programs and services. More floor space should be devoted to sustainable building fixtures, materials and applications.

In regards to customers, an informed and energy savvy customer is a satisfied and loyal consumer. Being the catalyst in bringing unbiased solutions to a large energy user is an unmatched valuable service. In order to effectively and efficiently use the center staff and facilities in achieving its goals, programming should focus on the following objectives:

1. Developing informational, technical, and educational services that address the energy needs and concerns of various customer segments.
2. Providing self-guided learning experiences for customers visiting the Center, including a greater focus on the K-12 age group.
3. Creating customer contacts for utility staff (e.g., Key and Major Accounts Representatives and Energy Specialists) responsible for commercial, industrial or residential services to an account.
4. Assisting utility staff in increasing responsiveness to a customer's question, problem or need.