

Top 5 Reasons Your Franchise Needs an Energy Efficiency System

by Gus Ezcurra

Trying economic times have forced many franchisees to operate more efficiently and economically to sustain profits. All too often, however, viable opportunities to cut costs are overlooked. Most notable among these is the power bill. While reduced energy consumption and marginally lower electric bills can be realized through simple solutions like installing energy efficient light bulbs, the greatest cost reduction opportunity lies with the heating and air conditioning (HVAC) system – a



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ciency systems have various price-points and functionality but, for small to mid-sized buildings, advanced systems can cost less than \$2,000 and can often be financed. Depending on a franchise facility's monthly energy bills, even just a 10% savings can provide a rapid return. Savings from a lower utility bill drop straight to a franchise facility's bottom line, increasing its profitability – without reducing head count or employee or customer amenities.

Moreover, many local utility

An energy efficiency system is one way to boost the bottom line.

franchise facility's largest discretionary source of energy demand and, thus, its highest controllable expense. Unfortunately, few franchise business owners and operators focus on HVAC and climate control energy efficiency as a means of cost savings, fearing expensive service visits from tradesmen and costly technology solutions with disappointing results.

Significant technological advancements in the field of commercial energy efficiency systems have finally made them far more affordable for operators of small to mid-sized facilities previously underserved in the marketplace, and also

deliver proven, highly quantifiable results. For the many small to medium-sized franchises seeking to reduce operating costs and employ green business practices, an energy efficiency system is one significant way to reduce carbon emissions and boost the bottom line with funds otherwise paid to the utility company each month.

Here are five key reasons your franchise storefront needs energy efficiency system:

1. Monetary Savings

Today's energy efficiency systems can lower a franchise facility's energy costs by 10-20% and provide a return on investment in just six to twelve months. Energy effi-

Customers appreciate environmentally responsible businesses.

companies throughout the U.S. are offering rebates and other business programs that will subsidize and facilitate the deployment of a commercial energy efficiency system, further reducing a franchise facility's installation expense.

2. Lower Environmental Impact

The lower energy bill franchise locations realize after installing an energy efficiency system is directly correlated to reduced energy consumption. Reduced energy usage means fewer carbon emissions and a smaller environmental footprint from operations.

3. Mechanical Equipment Longevity and Efficiency

Energy efficiency systems can quickly identify anomalies in consumption that may be attributable to malfunctioning HVAC equipment. Rapid response to equipment breakdowns not only increases the longevity of the malfunctioning equipment, but also other installed HVAC units that are forced to work harder to pick up the slack. Immediate action can make all the difference between an economical repair versus an extremely expensive replacement. While this particular benefit of an energy efficiency system is not as easily quantifiable as lower energy bills, in the long run it can lead to disaster aversion and dramatic cost savings.

4. Round-the-Clock Monitoring and Control

Many energy efficiency systems provide a variety of energy usage settings and control capabilities enabling users to set usage parameters that cannot be overridden by on-site employees, and can be managed remotely by authorized personnel through the Web. Best-of-breed manufacturers, however, also offer outsourced monitoring services through which specially trained account managers monitor and control a franchise facility's energy usage in each facility 24/7/365, minimizing consumption, maximizing savings, making seasonal adjustments, and immediately reacting to irregularities - all without increasing the owner or operator's personal energy management burden.

5. Marketing and Public Relations Benefits

Consumers appreciate businesses that are environmentally responsible. The installation of an energy efficiency system can and should be communicated to current and prospective customers as an example of its green business practices far beyond typical light bulb and recycling initiatives. Use of such technology can also bring positive local press attention and even awards, drive a positive brand image, and draw environmentally conscious customers to your store. Such practices are also a huge boost for intra-company employee morale.

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