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STEP 5: Implement Action Plan

People can make or break an energy program. Gaining the support and cooperation of key people at different levels within the organization is an important factor for successful action plan implementation in many organizations. In addition, reaching your goals frequently depends on the awareness, commitment, and capability of the people who will implement the projects.

To implement your action plan, consider taking the following steps:

5.1

[Create a communication plan](#) — Develop targeted information for key audiences about your energy management program.

5.2

[Raise awareness](#) — Build support all levels of your organization for energy management initiatives and goals.

5.3

[Build capacity](#) — Through training, access to information, and transfer of successful practices, procedures, and technologies, you can expand the capacity of your staff.

5.4

[Motivate](#) — Create incentives that encourage staff to improve energy performance to achieve goals.

5.5

[Track and monitor](#) — Using the tracking system developed as part of the action plan to track and monitor progress regularly.

STEP 5.1: Create a Communication Plan

Good communication does not just happen. It requires careful planning and implementation.

To communicate strategically, you will need to identify key audiences, determine the information that they need, and adapt your messages appropriately for each one.

The online [Challenge Toolkit](#) contains ideas, examples, and templates that your organization can customize to help you spread the word to employees, customers, and stakeholders.

STEP 5.2: Raise Awareness

Everyone has a role in energy management. Effective programs make employees, managers, and other key stakeholders aware of energy performance goals and initiatives, as well as their responsibility in carrying out the program.

Communications strategies and materials for raising awareness of energy use, goals and impacts should be tailored to the needs of the intended audience. To raise awareness, consider doing the following:

- [Increase general energy awareness](#)
- [Improve facility energy awareness](#)
- [Gain management support](#)

Increase general energy awareness

Most people are unaware of how their everyday actions and activities at home and work affect energy use and impact the environment. Increasing overall awareness can be an effective way to gain greater support for energy initiatives.

Increasing general awareness of energy use can be accomplished through:

New employee orientation programs

Provide basic information on organizational and individual energy use to new employees.

Poster campaigns

Develop attractive and informative posters for break rooms, bulletin boards, etc, that discuss energy use.

Download the ENERGY STAR [Break room poster](#)  (3.6 MB)

Earth Day events

April 22 is Earth Day and provides an appropriate context for increasing awareness of the environmental impacts from energy use and how to reduce these impacts through everyday actions at work and home.

Intra and Internet sites

Publish information on energy use, environmental impacts, and energy-saving options geared towards a general audience on your organization's web site or intranet site.

Pay statement mailers

Include energy-savings tips and energy efficient product information with pay statements.

Fairs and summits

Conduct an energy fair or summit oriented towards employees with information on energy saving activities and products.

See the ENERGY STAR [Employees and Sales Training Tools](#) for useful information on general awareness campaigns

Improve facility energy awareness

Individuals working in or even managing a facility may have little understanding of the energy performance of the facility or its impact on the organization and environment. Targeted efforts designed to increase awareness of facility energy use can help build support for energy management programs.

Like general awareness efforts, facility-oriented energy awareness can take many forms. In developing facility energy awareness programs, consider using the following types of information:

Summary statistics

Use general facility energy facts and figures, such as overall energy costs, costs to operate equipment, environmental information related to energy use, and so on.

Sources of energy

Most Americans do not know how the energy they use is generated. Providing information on the sources of energy used at your facility along with the associated pollution that results from its use could increase awareness of the

environmental aspects of energy use.

Energy use of equipment

Provide information on the energy performance of equipment or processes that employees regularly use as part of their jobs. For example, most employees probably do not know how much energy their computer uses during the day and how much that costs the organization when it is on, but not in use.

Scorecards

Develop charts and graphics that illustrate energy performance across your organization or compare it to a national standard, such as the ENERGY STAR buildings rating system available through [Portfolio Manager](#) and industrial plant rating system available through industry specific [Energy Performance Indicators \(EPIs\)](#).

Gain management support

Frequently, managers who are not directly involved in energy management are not aware of how energy use affects the organization. Increasing the awareness of managers can help to build support for energy management initiatives.

Key steps include:

- Identify key audiences, such as:
 - Executive management
 - Facilities managers
 - Operations managers
- Purchasing officers and procurement staff
- Communications and marketing staff
- Tailor the information to address the chief concerns of each audience, such as cost of energy per pound of product, or cost per square foot of building space.
- Determine the most effective way to communicate with each audience. This could range from a presentation, to a memo, or an informal meeting.
- Maintain regular contact to keep managers up-to-date on progress or changes in performance.

— Read the [Elevating Energy Management Tip Sheet](#)

— See the ENERGY STAR [Challenge Toolkit](#) for additional information and templates.

STEP 5.3: Build Capacity

Investing in training and systems to share successful practices helps ensure the success of the action plan by building the overall organizational capacity. Many organizations have found that informed employees are more likely to contribute ideas, operate equipment properly, and follow procedures, helping to guarantee that capital investments in energy improvements will realize their potential.

Training

Using training to help staff understand the importance of energy performance provides the information necessary to make informed decisions. Training also provides an excellent opportunity for gathering employee feedback and evaluations.

The type and nature of training will vary by organization and your specific action plan. Common training programs include:

- **Operational and procedural training** — Provides instruction on new operating methods or procedures designed to reduce energy use. Such training is typically targeted towards specific audiences, such as facility managers, operations, and maintenance staff.
- **Administrative training** — Includes reporting, monitoring, data collection, and other administrative efforts that support energy management.
- **Specialized training** — Gives specific instructions on using and maintaining equipment or tools to ensure more efficient operation.

Knowledge and Management Information Systems

Computer-based information systems provide a robust means for sharing information on best practices, technologies, and operational guidance. While these systems can range from complex databases to a simple intranet site, they are a centralized and accessible place to store and transfer energy management information within an organization.

Knowledge & Management Information Systems are usually organization-specific. They typically include information on:

- **Best practices** — Catalogs successful and effective practices for energy management within an organization.
- **Technologies** — Contains information on known, used, or recommended technologies, equipment, lighting, HVAC, and so on.
- **Procedures** — Houses up-to-date information on specific procedures and operating practices.

Suggestions

- Support certification of energy management credentials and other continuing education opportunities.
- Use ENERGY STAR Training and Partner Networking to build an informed staff.

STEP 5.4: Motivate

Offering incentives for energy management is one way many organizations create interest in energy initiatives and foster a sense of ownership among employees.

Examples of how organizations motivate staff and employees include:

Internal competition — Use tracking sheets, scorecards, etc. to compare performance of similar facilities and foster a sense of competition.

Recognition — Highlight and reward accomplishments of individuals, departments, and facilities.

Financial bonus and prizes — Offer cash bonuses and other rewards if goals are met.

Environmental responsibility — Use environmental messages to promote a sense of environmental and social responsibility.

Financial responsibility — Use financial messages to promote a sense of fiduciary responsibility.

Performance standards — Tie employee performance standards to energy goals.

STEP 5.5: Track & Monitor

A tracking system is the means by which an energy program's activities are monitored. The system should be centralized and available for all to use in gauging progress toward established targets, milestones, and deadlines.

Maintaining a tracking system enables you to assess necessary steps, corrective actions, and identify successes. Periodic review of the activities outlined in the action plan is critical to meet energy performance goals.

The steps below focus on using your tracking system to advance the goals of the energy management program:

Perform regular updates

A system is only effective if the information it contains is current and comprehensive. Data needs to be collected and incorporated into the system at an interval of time effective to the program. Many organizations perform weekly and monthly updates to their tracking systems.

Conduct periodic reviews

Periodic reviews of your progress in meeting interim goals and milestones should be conducted with the management team, the energy team, and selected groups of employees. The frequency of these reviews will vary depending upon the audience. Such reviews should focus on progress made, problems encountered, and potential rewards.

Identify necessary corrective actions

A tracking system is a good way to determine whether a program is performing well. It will help identify when a specific activity is not meeting its expected performance and is in need of review.

In Practice

The Walt Disney Company

Walt Disney World Resorts is made up of nearly 200 buildings. To effectively track and manage energy at these facilities, Disney developed an innovative intranet-based computer program called the Utility Reporting System (URS). This system publishes utility and submetering data on Disney's intranet system and tracks the results from energy savings efforts. By publishing performance data, the URS continuously "shines a light" on utility usage at each facility and allows similar facilities to be compared to each other. Since no facility wants to be at the bottom of the list, the system helps drive continuous improvement at the facility level.

Information and reports generated by the URS help Disney's energy managers identify areas that need improvement. When a facility is not performing as expected, Building Tune-up (BTU) Teams are formed from Engineering and Operations to review the building and energy management systems control devices, programming, and settings.

Disney estimates that its URS has facilitated a 5–20 percent reduction in utility usage and ensures that all building systems are operating at peak energy performance.