



Staying Lean and Green

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By Matt Hudgins

With rising demands for sustainable space, successful operators answer the call to save resources

What's the difference? LEED EB measures performance rather than hardware and materials. While LEED for new construction examines how much construction waste is diverted from landfills, the existing buildings program looks at how much trash generated by a building's occupants can be eliminated or recycled.

A property owner can apply to the U.S. Green Building Council annually for recertification in LEED for existing buildings as a way to demonstrate that an asset is indeed still green and not simply resting on its laurels of an earlier certification. While annual recertification is optional, LEED EB expires after five years, so that reapplying becomes a must for properties that want to keep the certification.

Maintaining synchronicity

Conservation measures that constitute green building vary widely. A rigorous water conservation program may be the hallmark of a sustainable building in Florida, where water systems are stretched thin. Air quality may take precedence for buildings in smog-challenged Los Angeles, while energy efficiency is paramount at a building in San Jose.

Regardless of the specific resources being conserved at a given property, what really makes a building green is efficiency, says attorney **Estrellita Sibila**. A property manager is ultimately responsible for ensuring the building's various systems are operating at peak performance, says Sibila, who specializes in green-building practices at Miami law firm **Weiss Serota Helfman Pastoriza Cole & Boniske**.

"A green building is designed so that all the different components work together in an optimized fashion," she says. "If the property management company doesn't understand how all that works together, there could be failures."

Consider an HVAC system engineered to perform in an office building with shaded windows and a lighting system designed to produce as little heat as possible. Problems can arise if a tenant replaces the lights with fixtures that give off more heat, or a property manager replaces storm-damaged windows with conventional materials that don't insulate as well as those the building was designed to use. Either way, the air conditioning would

be forced to operate longer to compensate for the additional heat and fall short of the owner's power conservation goals.

The ability to monitor a building's performance over time gives property managers an important tool for improving green practices, according to Skopek of Jones Lang LaSalle. Skopek was the CEO of ECD Energy, which Jones Lang LaSalle acquired earlier this year. ECD Energy developed the technology underlying the Green Globes environmental rating system, which measures a building's sustainable features and operations.

Using the Green Globes checklist, a property manager can benchmark a property for comparison with others in a portfolio or monitor its performance over time. The online tool also provides a report complete with hyperlinks to additional information that explains the processes covered in the checklist.

The technology of green building may be new, but the responsibility for ensuring building performance is long familiar to property managers.

“Our value has increased absolutely and significantly, and will continue to do so because we will be the green experts,” says Abel of BECO Management. “It's going to be the property managers who have to keep the operating expenses down and meet the demands that society is requiring.”

Matt Hudgins is an Austin-based writer.