

Promising Practices



Property Managers

World Exchange Plaza in Ottawa a Green Management Model

In December 2010, the Canadian company Bentall LP merged with Kennedy Associates to form Bentall Kennedy. Both Bentall LP and Kennedy Associates had received recognition for being at the forefront of numerous sustainability initiatives, and Bentall Kennedy is no different. Ottawa's World Exchange Plaza is just one example of a Bentall Kennedy property striving for sustainability.

In 2009, with sustainability management consulting firm Five Winds International, Bentall LP developed an Environmental Preferable Purchasing (EPP) program called ForeverGreen. The EPP provides employees with tools on how to navigate, select and purchase environmentally friendly products and services in the property management field. The program forces employees to use the life cycle approach and think of the impact of products from resource extraction to disposal. The program is particularly impactful because of its reach: over 10,000 suppliers and 600 commercial real estate properties are involved in ForeverGreen.¹

Bentall Kennedy's corporate business operations are carbon neutral. To achieve carbon neutrality, a carbon footprint consultant and a Green Team measured greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) related to the company's operations and then assisted in the implementation of energy efficiency plans. The company purchases 100% renewable electricity from Bullfrog Power and offsets any additional carbon use via Carbonzero.²

Bentall Kennedy offices compete in a Cross Country Challenge to attain the designation of being the most environmentally friendly. The "Caught Green Handed" program has employees use a One Minute Carbon Calculator and then further engages them by providing tips on how to implement green practices at work, such as by

reducing printing and transportation. Employees have access to a Ride Share web program as well as web conferencing tools to reduce GHGs associated with travel.³

In April 2009, Bentall LP was selected for Hydro Ottawa's Companies for Conservation Award, which in particular recognized the World Exchange Plaza's annual energy savings of 800,545 kWh—enough to power a minimum of 89 houses for a year—resulting from the ForeverGreen program. Exit signs and Christmas lights were upgraded to LED lights, and a campaign called "It's Cool to be in the Dark" encouraged tenants to reduce their lighting use in the summer. Air conditioning and the building automation system were upgraded to further increase efficiency.⁴

The World Exchange Plaza has mastered the use of solar light. On the south side of the building, blinds control glare and thermal heating from the sun. On the north and west elevations, the building uses daylight harvesting, meaning natural light takes the place of artificial light. To fully execute the project, occupancy sensors and lighting controls were installed and 295 light fixtures were retrofitted with dimmable ballasts. The daylight harvesting saves 26,250 kWh a year.⁵

The building uses a grey water catchment system to reduce its strain on municipal water reserves. Rainwater is captured on the roof and then transported via pipes to a storage tank in the lowest level of the parkade. The water is subsequently brought to cooling towers as needed and used to cool the building. This system saves 1.6 million litres of water annually, reducing the building's municipal water consumption by 12% or the equivalent of the annual water use of roughly 13 homes. The catchment system also improves the building's storm management by providing rainfall and snowmelt control.⁶ Furthermore, using rainwater in the cooling towers and for site irrigation reduces the water

pollution associated with the city storm sewers that dump water directly into the river.⁷

Some of the World Exchange Plaza's other green initiatives include: favouring drought resistant perennials in its landscaping, installing low flow toilets, and having an extensive waste diversion program that includes hand towel composting, wood pallet recycling and e-cycling—the recycling of electronic goods.⁸

Its many environmental features led the World Exchange Plaza to attain a Level 3 (of 5) BOMA BEST (Building Environmental Standards) certification.⁹ Such an award is not out of the ordinary for Bentall Kennedy, which has the highest number of BOMA BEST certified buildings in the private sector.¹⁰ The company does not stop after gaining recognition; it always has its eyes set on energy conservation. Currently, the managers are looking at opportunities to: install light sensors in closets and the parkade, expand the grey water system, and install additional variable frequency drives (VFDs) and variable speed drives (VSDs) on key equipment.¹¹ VFDs and VSDs change the frequency of the electrical drives to match system demands, saving energy by not constantly running at a peak rate.¹²

Bentall Kennedy sees sustainability and energy conservation as beneficial to the company, noting that energy efficiency has resulted in better performance through lower bills and greater tenant satisfaction.¹³ In its business case for sustainability, the company argues it increases profitability, fits with its core values and makes it a market leader.¹⁴ Its green projects at the World Exchange Plaza are perfect examples of Bentall Kennedy showing environmental stewardship in property management.

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- ⁷ Partner, P. Email communication. 12 July 2011.
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- ¹⁰ Supra note 3.
- ¹¹ Supra note 7.
- ¹² Natural Resources Canada. "Variable Frequency Drives Introduction." 20 April 2009. <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/industrial/equipment/vfd/vfd.cfm?attr=24>. Accessed July 2011.
- ¹³ Supra note 3.
- ¹⁴ Supra note 2.

