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Companies save money, energy by getting new fixtures

By [Catherine F. Toth](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

Ed Nakano saw such a benefit in replacing the lighting in the office and warehouse space of C.S. Wo & Sons that he did it at home, too.

The vice president of the 95-year-old furniture giant, realizing how much energy — and money — the company would save by going energy-efficient, went to Home Depot to change the fixtures in his Royal Summit home. He replaced the less-efficient magnetic ballasts — devices used to stabilize the current in a circuit — with electronic ones and replaced his incandescent bulbs with new efficient fluorescent ones.



Ed Nakano and Dan Garnozick, both executives with C.S. Wo & Sons furniture store, are pleased by the decision to replace the lighting at the company's 90,000 square-foot warehouse. The change has created a safer work environment and saves money.

"They had to be changed anyway," Nakano said. "Why not change them so that it will afford you some savings?"

C.S. Wo & Sons is one of more than 150 local businesses that have found a simple way to save energy and lower their electricity bill: retrofitting their lighting.

Eugene Tanner • The Honolulu Advertiser

And the company did it with the help of Hawaiian Electric's Energy\$olutions for Business program.

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"The fastest way for a company to start saving money on energy is by retrofitting your lighting," said Sam Nichols, customer efficiency program analyst with HECO.

Beginning last August, C.S. Wo had retrofitted light fixtures in several stores and its 90,000-square-foot warehouse in Salt Lake.

In total, more than 900 fixtures were changed, saving about 198,000 kilowatt hours per year. The estimated total savings for C.S. Wo is \$24,000 per year.

With an \$11,000 rebate from HECO, C.S. Wo will make up the cost to retrofit its lighting in about two years.

And already it's been worth it.

The new lamps in the warehouse are nearly four times as bright as incandescent ones, making for a safer work environment, Nakano said. And because these lights are on at least 12 hours a day, the energy saved will translate into money saved on the company's monthly electricity bill.

"We're getting more light with less energy consumption," Nakano said.

While retrofitting light fixtures isn't the only way for companies to cut back on energy consumption, it's easier and more affordable than changing larger units such as air conditioners or chillers.

The reasons why companies are moving toward energy efficiency are largely the same.

"Some (companies) are energy-conscious," Nichols said. "But more of them are looking at how they can make their businesses more profitable. When they realize their fixtures are old, it makes sense for them to change them all so they can start saving energy."

HECO has done 325 audits, with 170 businesses actually implementing the

For more info

- General energy efficiency inquiries: 94-POWER (947-6937)
- Lighting retrofit inquiries: 543-4753
- www.heco.com

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Benefits of program

Part of Energy\$olutions for Business:

- Offers a simple way to retrofit lighting to conserve energy
- Free audit and report
- Instant one-time HECO rebate
- Payment plan for retrofit through licensed contractor

For small business (10 to 199 fixtures) and big buildings (200 to 800 fixtures)

• • •

What makes T8 lights better

Advantages of more efficient T8 fluorescent lights over older T12 fluorescent lights:

- Saves about 30 percent on the lighting portion of your bill.

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lighting retrofits.

HECO conducts audits for businesses at no charge and provides a detailed report of the results.

If the business wants to go forward with the retrofit, HECO arranges for a licensed contractor to do the work at a discounted cost.

For small businesses, Energy Conservation Hawai'i does the retrofit at a discount of 20 percent, said president Darren Kimura.

Better Brands, a wholesale beverage distributor, retrofitted its offices last year. The company then retrofitted its Waipi'o warehouse, too.

- T8s run at cooler temperatures, which means your air conditioner doesn't have to work as hard to cool your rooms.

- T8 lamps have 10 percent more lumens — a measure of light output — than T12 lamps and less lumen depreciation so their light levels don't diminish as much as they get older.

- Because of the tri-phosphor coating on T8 lamps, the color rendering is better. Products such as food or retail merchandise look better.

- T8 lamps fire faster than T12s, which may help employees who suffer from headaches because of flickering lights.

Source: Hawaiian Electric Company Inc.

Certified Management Inc., a property management company, changed the light fixtures in its parking garage and emergency stairwells, saving 54,000 KWH a year with an annual savings of \$6,000.

"It's successful because we've taken the guesswork away from the customers," Nichols said.

Before the program started in 1998, business owners had to arrange for audits with lighting companies on their own. This way, she said, they feel more comfortable with HECO providing the data.

In addition, the program does all the work for businesses interested in retrofitting its fixtures — and at an affordable cost. HECO pays the contractor upfront, with businesses able to reimburse HECO in interest-free monthly payments.

That's huge for small businesses, who may not be able to afford the retrofit cost upfront.

"It's popular because the cost is low," Nichols said. "And we allow them to pay us back in monthly payments. That's a big deal for smaller customers that they don't have to pay this huge bill at one time. They're able to spread it out."

Some businesses benefit more than others. Those who keep their lights on longer, such as parking garages for example, will save more.

The Ice Palace skating rink retrofitted about 80 fixtures in its offices, retail shop and storage areas last November, costing about \$3,000.

But saving 28,000 KWH a year translates into a \$4,000-a-year savings for the company. The retrofit project should pay for itself in less than nine months.

"We're very, very happy with it," said John Beck, general manager. "It seemed brighter immediately. It's great because we're consuming less (energy). It's good for the island and, of course, we're paying less ... Saving money, more light and costing us less — that's all very attractive."

Reach Catherine E. Toth at 535-8103 or ctoth@honoluluadvertiser.com.

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