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Building Health Check: Energy Management

Energy management is more than an energy audit and quantitative data about your building – energy management is about taking action. Your building has a heart-beat and each component inside the building needs to be healthy in order to function at peak performance. Taking action to improve your building's performance capabilities will ensure a long life and help you guarantee your residents' well-being.

1. Make energy management a priority

There is a lot of chatter surrounding what energy management is and is not. Make energy management your own project by defining what it looks like for your condominium, encouraging every resident to be on board with the program. This could mean posting up the regulated rate for electricity in common areas or having a graph comparing water usage year over year. By educating residents on their energy usage, it ensures the topic of energy management and savings will be easier to discuss.

Ask the experts in energy management what the best options are for your building specifically. Do not let sales talk get in the way of achieving actual results. Every building is different and will need a custom-built energy management plan in order to start seeing money and energy savings. Do your research on your own building first, ensuring you are



familiar with your building's inner workings. This may include the HVAC system, water piping, electricity wiring, hydro bills, and how old various structural and mechanical parts of the building are.

2. Set goals

Once you know what energy management will look like in your building, the next step is providing tools for property managers, tenants, consultants, and vendors to ensure everyone is working on the same page and for the same result.



Personalizing the goals set out by the building will ensure residents feel they can participate in and contribute to the discussion and action being taken. A survey could be conducted to see where residents' thoughts are at. What do residents and employees of the building think the best course of action is to ensure energy usage is reduced? The survey could ask questions like: Do you think all outdoor areas should have sensor lighting to reduce unnecessary electricity usage? Always leave a space for further comments and recommendations, inviting feedback.

3. Make everyone accountable for their decision making

Incentives are powerful tools for participation. A prize for the suite that has

the most decreased electricity usage over 3 months incentivizes all residents to reduce electricity usage. It is a win-win situation.

Another idea is to host an educational evening with the local utility provider or your submetering company. They can assist residents in better understanding their utility bills and allow them to ask questions. Include some interactive games that explain the stages that water goes through before it reaches your tap. For example, you could have pictures cut out

and the residents must place them in order from where the water utility journey begins, through the lifecycle, and where the waste water ends up.

making changes. Trees and greenery also increase property value, clean the air, and reduce flooding and erosion. Another example is to focus on composting or start an organics collection in the building. Provide each condo with a plastic carrying bin so residents can collect compost for a few days before bringing it down to the larger bin. Include information packages about what items should be placed in the garbage and what can be composted. If you are able to reduce the amount of trash your building throws out, you could reduce your Solid Waste bill.

Consider the internal and external parts of your building as one cohesive system. When you decide to upgrade internal energy systems with submetering or new piping, for example, don't forget about the outside of the building, too. Energy management should be a com-



4. Live green

There are small steps a building management team can take to get the ball rolling with energy management. Start by planting more greenery or trees in the outdoor common areas. This action will set an example, showing the condo community that the building is serious about

preprehensive approach to investigating your building's energy functions and creating a roadmap for the next ten years of functionality. Good energy management is one aspect of good management. Don't forget that small changes can have big impacts: even simple flowers in the lobby can brighten someone's day. 