Overview

For more than a decade, 3M has been driving energy efficiency improvements through its annual internal Energy Recognition Program. Established in 2003 to boost employee participation in the company’s energy efficiency efforts, the Plant Energy Awards provide recognition to employees for quality work and innovative ideas that improve performance toward broader corporate energy goals. Since 2005, 3M has successfully reduced its energy intensity by about 18%. The awards program has contributed to these savings by motivating 3M employees to identify projects and implement best practices that save energy.
Like many companies, 3M relies on its employees to identify and implement energy-saving projects and practices. To help drive employee action, in 2003, 3M established a corporate awards program that recognizes plant-level leadership in energy efficiency. The idea originated from 3M's corporate energy manager, who saw it as an opportunity to elevate the importance of energy efficiency across the organization, provide a sense of accomplishment to award recipients, and motivate all staff to take on energy efficiency efforts.

3M's approach challenges employees to identify new processes and products that use less energy. In support of this, 3M built upon the Annual Energy Recognition program by implementing the Energy Excellence Award. This award targets innovative and energy-conscious engineers. 3M has long recognized high-performing engineers at a formal celebration, but in 2010 began specifically recognizing engineering breakthroughs in the realm of energy efficiency.

3M's Energy Recognition Program boosts staff-level engagement and taps into the competitive nature of 3M's employees to drive results. The Plant Energy Awards Program uses a four-level rating system ranging from Bronze to Platinum, based on 3M's internal Energy Program Dashboard and Environmental Health and Safety scorecards. Winning teams are rewarded with a variety of prizes ranging from certificates to dinners with 3M management.

The annual Plant Energy Awards Program recognizes energy teams that make significant strides in helping their facilities cut energy consumption. The program identifies the following three performance metrics:

1. Progress made in support of 3M's corporate energy efficiency goals
2. The effectiveness of the plant's energy management program, determined by using an energy assessment scorecard
3. Cost savings achieved as a result of the facility's energy program

The facilities are scored on their performance in each area (as shown in Exhibit 1). Those that achieve 15 points—the maximum possible—earn a Platinum rating (as shown in Exhibit 2). All plants are evaluated with the expectation that they perform well in at least two areas. In 2014, four of the company's domestic plants and four international locations earned Platinum status, while ten additional facilities reached the Gold and Silver levels. Facilities that do not achieve one of the top three rankings but demonstrate efforts to improve energy efficiency are recognized with certificates.
Measuring Success

3M’s Energy Program Dashboard is used to evaluate projects and issue awards to teams. The dashboard considers certain criteria including energy per pound of product, total energy use, cost of energy, an energy assessment score and the value of energy projects implemented. Sites that are high energy users of energy (known as Tier I facilities) are automatically evaluated for recognition based on their performance tracked in the dashboard. These sites represent 80 percent of 3M's total energy use. Locations that use smaller amounts of energy (known as Tier II facilities) are also included in the program; however, they cannot qualify for the Platinum level. About a half-dozen Tier II sites receive awards each year; most typically the Silver level award.

3M’s corporate energy manager has identified three fundamental factors in implementing and maintaining a recognition program of this nature:

- **Remain vigilant** in assessing savings achieved as a result of the program and comparing that to the costs of running the program. For 3M, the financial savings and value of enhanced employee engagement exceed the expenditure.

- **Establish more than one evaluation method.** Utilizing multiple metrics to track performance allows for the most comprehensive and balanced picture of the business. It also challenges all facilities to perform their best, regardless of situational challenges or advantages. For example, a facility that designed a promising energy-saving program but did not fully realize those savings due to unusual weather patterns would still score well on the Plant Program Effectiveness criteria.

- **Maintain an emphasis on innovation and knowledge sharing.** As more efficiency is achieved, it is easy to become complacent and to stop hunting for new ways to reduce energy consumption. Platinum award winners are asked to share their Best Practices (i.e. – innovative projects, employee programs, utility engagement, etc.) during one of 3M’s monthly energy web conferences.

Outcomes

3M has made significant progress toward its goal of improving energy intensity by 25% by 2016. Over the past five years, energy teams at the company’s major facilities have implemented over 750 energy projects. While it is difficult to identify the precise impact the Plant Energy Awards Program has had on these metrics, 3M has identified the recognition program as a key enabler of these savings. In 2013, eight Platinum level winners demonstrated energy efficiency improvements that resulted in costs savings ranging from $200,000 to $5,000,000, making a strong contribution to 3M’s U.S. operation's overall cumulative improvement rate of 18% since its 2005 baseline year.