



Case Study: SmartOES



Shared offices and co-working spaces have been growing in popularity and presence. Many companies are choosing this model, especially start-ups with limited capital and a need to minimize risk. This is similar to the approach taken by Bryan Hassin, founder and CEO of SmartOES. The office suite is not owned or leased by SmartOES, but by SmartOES CFO William “Zak” Zakoff, who leases the office space from the building management and then subleases out spaces to a few select businesses.

The Office Space

Hassin leases an individual office in a small group of offices that share a reception, kitchen, printing and conference space. This allows his start-up business to develop with minimal expenses and carbon footprint while the operation is still small. Hassin told us how this changed their approach. “Some of the challenges that we met you would expect from being a tenant, but we ended up with some challenges that were more like being a landlord, since we have multiple companies working in this office. You can’t necessarily just tell people what to do.” Fortunately, the other companies within the office were quite receptive to the changes. Being in an office suite that has been occupied by other tenants, SmartOES inherited a junk mail problem from some of the previous tenants. They have had to make efforts to cancel subscriptions from previous tenants of their office space. Additionally, Hassin has created a makeshift standing work station, which he says improves his productivity.

Energy Consumption

SmartOES develops systems and equipment for office energy use management and was able to apply some of their products and software to carefully monitor their office’s energy use. Using adapters to monitor plug-loads, smart circuits to measure energy consumption in different parts of the office and software to keep track of it all, they were able to fine tune their office’s operations to minimize energy use. By determining when their machines and facilities were using the most energy and when they were not being used, they were able to reduce their peak energy use and energy waste by turning off unused appliances. Their product even learns the best times to turn equipment on and off in order to maximize efficiency and convenience.



SmartOES Circuit Monitor



SmartOES Plug-load Monitor



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Lighting

SmartOES has tried to extend its sustainability goals farther out into the building and has even gone so far as to turn out the lights in the public restrooms on their floor when they're not in use. "I just learned the hard way that you have to check the stalls before you turn out the lights" Hassin jokes. In most of the offices, the large windows allow you to work efficiently without any artificial light, meaning the lights don't have to be on for most of the day. Even in the interior public spaces, keeping the office doors open most of the time allows enough natural light into the hallway and reception areas that artificial lighting is not always necessary.

The Public Space

In the public area, which houses the kitchen area and shared printer, the cabinets are well stocked with glasses and coffee mugs so employees don't have to use disposable paper or plastic cups, and there is a water cooler with refillable tanks; however, their energy use analysis revealed that the water cooler was their largest energy consumer of any of their plugged in appliances. It was running 24/7 to both cool and heat water, and by turning it off overnight and during weekends, they were able to reduce its energy use by more than half. The building does not offer building-wide recycling to its tenants, so Hassin has been keeping his old green recycling bin from home in the public area to collect and haul their own recycling to a nearby recycling center. With the exception of one private printer, all employees in the office use a shared wireless printer, which is turned off on nights and weekends when the office is not in use. Though Hassin himself has gone completely paperless, the office as a whole has reduced its paper consumption but plans to do a paper use audit in the coming year to further reduce their paper waste.

It is no surprise that a company called Smart Office Energy Solutions would be able to operate with very low energy costs, but SmartOES has assessed many aspects of its office environment to greatly reduce its waste and overall carbon footprint enough to win Most Improved Tenant in 2011. Hassin is still determined to make improvements and find new ways to make the office greener and believes there is room for improvement in the coming challenge year.