

# Stories of Success

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## Yurich Creative

*The home-based marketing firm in Cleveland, Ohio, has saved \$1,300 annually in energy costs, thanks to new practices, space, and equipment.*

“Yurich’s advice to other home-based businesses? Start small, experiment, and be creative.”



### Company Profile

**Industry:** Marketing/Communications **Size:** 2 employees **Space:** 1,540 sq ft **Website:** <http://www.yurichcreative.com/> **Blog:** <http://yurichcreative.blogspot.com/>

### Ideas from Yurich Creative

- Use Skype and online conferencing for meetings
- Diversify your travel methods: walk, use a bike, scooter, and public transit for local travel
- Print only one day a week
- Shrink your workspace
- Shrink your marketing materials in size, quantity, and variety
- Make your messaging energy efficient
- Get a programmable thermostat
- Learn about energy efficiency from books, community sessions, and conferences (or their websites)
- Share your energy efficiency story

### Yurich Creative's Success Story

When Beth and Dennis Yurich started Yurich Creative in 1997, they were determined to create their own space within the marketing industry. Initially, working in an industry laden with excess and designed to drive consumerism concerned the owners of this Cleveland-based marketing communications design firm. They then set out to run Yurich differently.

Yurich Creative incorporates sustainability and energy efficiency measures in their services on multiple levels. “Many companies simply have too many pieces, which creates excess waste. We figure out what our clients really need and redesign the program,” says Beth Yurich. Through what the owners call a green audit, Yurich accesses the environmental impact of a client’s existing pieces and then redesigns to maximize message impact and minimize the use of materials and energy. The redesign also follows guidelines for responsible print design including material selection, production, and printing.

As a home-based business, Yurich tackled operational energy efficiency somewhat differently than a traditional office-based business. For Beth and Dennis, the benefit of working from home was the flexibility and freedom to design a multi-use energy efficient space. Plus, by reducing energy consumption and utility expenses, the owners saved in two ways, both professionally and personally.

In 2005 the Yurichs moved their business, and they purposely picked a home that needed

renovating so they could redesign the space. They took advantage of appliance credits and installed energy efficient appliances and a programmable thermostat. With the move, Beth and Dennis downsized by 1,400 square feet. About the renovation, Beth says, "If you look at your square footage and what you need, you can get creative and save a lot of money." Since moving and installing new equipment, the owners estimate their annual energy costs have decreased by \$1,300. "We've never taken out a loan to do this work," Beth explained. "If you do things in steps and you have a plan, you will experience the benefits and can do more in the future."

Their ability to create a practical multi-use space for themselves has also turned into a business opportunity. Yurich was recently hired to help a client find a cost effective and functional office space to accommodate the business' nearly 30 employees. Following Yurich's advice, the client now operates out of a compact space with smaller offices and large multipurpose common areas. Not only is the business saving money and reducing its environmental impact, but the employees are happier, and the new environment makes them more social and interactive.

Business travel and transportation presented Yurich with another opportunity for energy saving solutions. Several years ago, Beth and Dennis regularly traveled across the country for client meetings. Now they hold meetings virtually and train clients to use video conferencing and Skype, a change which Yurich's clients appreciate because it saves them money and time. Beth also consolidates all of her Cleveland-area meetings into one day a week and plans them in close proximity to each other. Just last year, Beth put 5,000 less miles on her vehicle, saving on gas and vehicle wear and tear.

Beth and Dennis encourage other businesses to follow suit and reduce waste and energy usage, and they have found that, by incorporating sustainability more fully into their services, their clients are happier and more apt to refer them, referrals are more solid referrals, and they are introduced to more long-term clients and more sophisticated clients.

Yurich's advice to other home-based businesses? Start small, experiment, and be creative.

## Taylor Companies Case Study

Smart manufacturing practices earned this furniture company a 58.8% reduction in use of natural gas, electricity, and water consumption. New equipment alone dropped annual energy costs by \$65,000.

*“You have to keep changing to stay alive. Sustainability is a business opportunity.”*



### Company Profile

Industry: Manufacturing Annual Revenue: \$10 – \$20 million Size: 65 employees Space: 132,000 sq ft (Bedford, Ohio factory) Website: <http://www.thetaylorcompanies.com>

### Relevant Links:

[Business Week Spotlight – When Going Green Isn't About Marketing](#)

### Ideas from The Taylor Companies:

- Keep changing and adapting
- Seek tax incentives that will benefit your business
- Purchase the most energy efficient equipment and systems on the market
- Make sure energy efficiency projects will pay for themselves within three years
- Invest in an energy audit
- Turn off equipment and lights when not in use
- Engage employees in the process of implementing energy efficiency
- Communicate your bottom-line impact of energy efficiency measures to employees, customers, and your industry

### Taylor's Success Story

For The Taylor Companies, energy efficiency is not just a green business practice but an

economic imperative. As the oldest furniture manufacturer in the United States, Taylor constantly looks for new methods to reduce costs and improve productivity and quality. Jeff Baldassari, Taylor's president, says, "Business, just like life, is an evolution. You have to keep changing to stay alive. You cannot be stagnant and remain competitive. Sustainability is a business opportunity."

Improvements can be traced to 2005, when Taylor purchased an abandoned and polluted plot of land near the company's long-time home in Bedford, Ohio. Taylor planned to remediate the site and build a new facility. The redevelopment project not only helped revitalize the surrounding community and environment, but also made financial sense. In most communities, Brownfield remediation offers tax incentive for new landowners.

Taylor invested \$6 million dollars in the new property, and the company needed to find a way to pay for it. First on the list was reducing energy costs. Shortly after moving to the new site, Taylor invested in energy efficient equipment and systems, including an air compressor to power staple guns and finishing spray guns and a programmable thermostat. The new equipment dropped Taylor's annual energy costs by \$65,000. Baldassari's approach to investing is energy efficiency is simple, and he says, "All projects must be cash flow neutral on day one and cash flow positive within three years." Translation: all investments must more than pay for themselves in energy cost reduction within a 36 month period.

A 2007 energy audit revealed opportunities for further energy conservation. Simple changes like turning off task lights during employee breaks, installing programmable thermostats throughout the factory, and adjusting the pounds per square inch setting on the air compressor added up to another \$15,000 in annual savings. For Taylor, these savings translated to a staggering 2900% return on investment for the energy audit. In total, Taylor's energy conservation and equipment upgrades reduced its natural gas, electricity, and water consumption in the new facility by 58.8%.

Taylor's success in improving energy efficiency was a jumping-off point for adopting other practices to save money and reduce environmental impact. Waste reduction is another success story for the company. The new facility redirects over 90% of its waste through recycling, reusing, and composting measures.

Employee buy-in has been critical to Baldassari's success. Effective utilization of resources is a practice deeply imbedded in Taylor's 194-year history and corporate culture. Baldassari's leadership took this one step further by engaging employees in the process and communicating the bottom-line impact of energy efficiency measures. Through their efforts, employees know they have saved jobs, increased sales, and improved margins for their company. In fact, last year when the office furniture manufacturing industry dropped by 16%, Taylor enjoyed a 10% boost in sales. While these impressive results cannot be totally attributed to sustainable practices, such efforts clearly created opportunities on the sales front for Taylor to capture. To be sure, sustainable practices made a measureable difference on both the top and bottom line for the company.

## King's Daughters Inn Case Study

*The owners of this historic North Carolina inn are saving \$1200 - \$1800 per month in utilities. Meanwhile, their reputation for being environmentally responsible differentiates them from competition and attracts guests.*



### Company Profile

**Industry:** Hospitality **Annual Revenue:** \$500,000 – \$1,000,000 **Size:** 5 employees **Space:** 20,000 sq ft **Website:** <http://thekingsdaughtersinn.com/>

### Ideas from King's Daughters Inn

- Engage your customers (KDI provides guests with everything from on-site recycling, to complimentary bicycles, to a daily breakfast using locally-produced foods.)
- Educate your customers
- Keep track of your energy savings before and after improvements
- Research your purchases during remodeling
- Market your energy efficiency successes to differentiate yourself from the competition
- Invite other businesses, the community, and students to tour your business and learn about energy efficiency practices

### King Daughter's Inn Success Story

The King's Daughters Inn (KDI), a boutique inn located near Trinity Park in Durham, North Carolina, is proof that energy efficiency and historic preservation go hand-in-hand. Colin and Deanna Crossman, the owners of KDI, believe that reuse and repurpose—in this case, that of a historic building—make a lot of sense in terms of reducing energy costs and environmental impact, supporting the integrity of the community, and offering guests a one-of-a-kind lodging experience. “If you have the opportunity to do the remodel, do it right. It makes sense for the business, the planet, and the community. You can also do it at a minimal cost,” Deanna says.

In 2006, the couple purchased the property with a vision to combine their passion for historic architecture, environmental preservation, and new technology to create a green lodging

experience in Durham. Originally built in 1925, the building has been thoughtfully restored to reflect the energy saving technologies of the 21st century. The Inn features an array of energy efficient and water management technologies such as low-flow bathroom fixtures, a grey water system 10,000 gallon cistern, a pervious concrete parking lot, LED lights, and a cistern that collects rainwater for reuse in outdoor watering.

Each room is connected to the Inn's energy management system, which allows guests to adjust room temperature and uses infrared sensors to detect human occupancy. When a room is empty, the system turns off the lights and adjusts the room temperature according to the season. This interactive technology engages guests and introduces an educational element to their experience and an opportunity to learn about energy efficiency and environmental stewardship.

Choosing products such as low-flow fixtures and LED lights did not cost more, but was simply a matter of making an informed purchase. Features including the energy management, cistern, and the grey water systems were approximately \$60,000, but the payback exceeded the Crossmans' expectations. "We're looking at an approximately four year payback period on the improvements, which is much shorter than the expected life of the systems," says Deanna. As a result of these investments, the owners are saving between \$700 - \$1000 in electric costs per month, \$200 - \$300 in water per month and \$300 - \$500 in gas per month (during the winter).

Beyond the cost savings, the unique features of the Inn have also helped to differentiate the property from other luxury accommodations. The Crossmans note that a large number of their guests specifically choose the Inn because of its reputation and environmentally friendly offerings.

Since opening in April 2009, the business and buzz continues to grow for KDI. The hotel has already won numerous awards, including Urban Conservationist of the Year in 2009 and 2010, the Preservation North Carolina Carraway Award of Merit in 2009, the 2009 Golden Leaf Award, and the 2010 Green Plus Sustainable Enterprise of the Year Award.

## **Assembled Products Corporation Case Study**

*As a supplier to several Fortune 500 retailers, this manufacturer first implemented no-cost and low-cost energy saving practices to meet buyer's sustainability score card criteria. Today, energy efficiency is part of the culture.*



### **Company Profile**

**Industry:** Manufacturing **Size:** 150 employees **Space:** 164,150 sq ft **Website:** <http://www.assembledproducts.com/>

### **Ideas from Assembled Products Corporation**

- Engage all employees
- Focus on no-cost, low-cost energy saving opportunities
- Establish company-wide energy use guidelines and tips
- Educate employees on energy efficiency practices and the benefits
- Repair insulation in manufacturing facilities
- Measure your energy efficiency improvements
- Communicate improvements to customers

### **Assembled Products Corporation's Success Story**

Business as usual changed for Assembled Products Corporation in 2007. As a supplier to several Fortune 500 retailers, the Arkansas-based manufacturer of customer service products was strongly encouraged by these buyers to adopt sustainable business practices.

These sustainability requirements originally stimulated the company's endeavors, but Assembled Products quickly recognized the benefits on multiple levels. One of several areas of focus is energy. The company was not in a position to invest heavily in long-term payback initiatives, so the staff focused on no-cost and low-cost energy saving opportunities. The leadership team engaged all 150 staff members in the activities and established company-wide energy use guidelines and tips.



Raising employee consciousness about energy use and energy waste was key to Assembled Products' advancements. Stickers on light switches remind employees to turn them off. The factory loading dock doors are no longer left open when production workers are not loading or unloading. LED lights have replaced old bulbs. Employees dress for the season instead of relying on excessive heating in the winter. Leaks in factory insulation have been repaired. The impact of these low-cost changes is significant. As a retail supplier the company completes a sustainability scorecard for various buyers and reports its progress on a monthly basis.

Within two years of launching the program, Assembled Products decreased its electricity, water and natural gas consumption by more than 30%, 25%, and 14% respectively.

## Greenfire Development Case Study

*Through energy efficiency and green building, Green Fire Development is continually improving the overall quality of life in Durham, North Carolina, by creating opportunities for people to live, work, play, and invest in a vibrant downtown area.'*



### Company Profile

**Industry:** Real Estate **Annual Revenue:** \$1 - \$5 million **Size:** 10 employees **Space:** 900,000 sq ft (includes 30 properties) **Website:** <http://greenfiredevelopment.com/main/>

### Relevant Links:

[The 200 North Magnum Street property](#)

### Ideas from Greenfire Development

- Define your business's core values
- Identify your business's place and potential in the community
- Design energy solutions for your own business that will benefit your community, when possible
- Reuse and repurpose
- Search online for solutions to your specific needs
- Research tax credits before assuming you'll get them
- Encourage energy efficient habits by design and example

### Greenfire Development's Success Story

With every property Greenfire Development redevelops, the culture of energy efficiency spreads. The business, founded in 2003 in Durham, North Carolina, is dedicated to improving the community while reducing environmental impact through green building. As clients live and work in Greenfire Development's spaces, they learn habits and principles that contribute to a

positive community and environmental experience. It sees itself as far more than a traditional real-estate company. With a long-term view of Durham's urban environment, the business considers itself a community development company and even an educator.

Greenfire Development's portfolio includes a wide range of projects, specializing in mixed-use property developments (retail, office, and residential), renovation of historic properties, and green building property development. Incorporating energy efficiency measures in these works has always been an integral part of the business's goals. Among many habitual practices that lead to enhanced energy efficiency, Greenfire Development reuses and repurposes building materials as often as possible, specifically when renovating historic properties. This not only saves money, but reduces the company's carbon footprint and diverts building materials from landfills.

Greenfire's internal business practices also reflect these values. It is located in an office space that it owns and renovated to incorporate a variety of energy saving technologies. Especially convenient is its location in downtown Durham. The company's 10 employees can walk to their project properties—not even public transit is needed. Greenfire also encourages employees to reduce their energy use by offering a significant discount to employees who want to live in a Greenfire property within walking distance to the office.

While each project is different and requires a unique renovation, Greenfire has found success implementing energy efficient components such as low-flow fixtures, LED lights, geothermal heating, heavy insulation, and the use of natural light. The physical location of the properties is also critical to energy conservation efforts. Greenfire purposefully selects properties near public transit because the company firmly believes that creating and supporting urban, walkable environments is the most impactful way to save energy.

Rogers Alley, a collection of three historic buildings in downtown Durham, is an example of a Greenfire property that incorporates a wide range of energy-saving technologies. The property has a geothermal well system for climate control, low-flow water fixtures, daylight monitors, and proper insulation. For Greenfire, the energy savings on these investments are already apparent. The utility costs for this property are roughly \$1 per square foot, while unrenovated properties have utilities costs between \$1.40 and \$1.60 per square foot. The Rogers Alley project, in total, regularly saves 40% on its utility bills thanks to retrofitting.

Another energy efficiency development project is a pilot project of small-scale retrofits replacing old light bulbs with LED lights. The company invested \$1,000 in this project and expects a payback period of three to four years. In addition to savings on energy bills, LED lights also provide Greenfire Development with lower maintenance costs: LEDs last longer than traditional bulbs. To finance many of its projects, Greenfire Development takes advantage of both state and federal historic tax credits. Essentially, with these credits, the company gets a percentage of its investment back so the business can put in better quality energy systems and improvements from the start. Construction manager Joe Lemanski notes that there are specific stipulations to every type of credit, and he encourages businesses to check with accountants or product vendors before assuming a tax credit can be applied to their work.

Implementing energy efficiency measures has contributed to Greenfire's bottom line in many ways: improvements help attract good tenants, both residential and commercial. Businesses

that rent space in green commercial buildings have found benefit from the reputation of being environmentally conscious. Greenfire properties currently house renewable energy companies, finance companies focused on sustainable businesses, a social enterprise incubator, and several “farm-to-table” restaurants. This high concentration of like-minded businesses has created a great energy conservation network within the Durham community.

As tenants live and work in the Greenfire buildings, they learn more about energy usage. Tenants work with the business to reduce energy consumption by turning off lights and adjusting temperatures, and the buildings’ upgraded technology allows tenants to participate in energy efficiency practices at first, with ease, and eventually as a part of daily life. The ability to orchestrate cultural shifts like these makes Greenfire Development’s work especially important and a great example of what might be done in other parts of the country.

## Wohlsen Case Study

*Wohlsen has re-built, retrofitted, and weatherized its own offices to meet its 2013 goal of reducing energy use by 10%. The company will use smarter energy, too: it will purchase 100% renewable electricity for its Harrisburg office.*



### Company Profile

**Industry:** Construction **Annual Revenue:** \$150 - \$250 million **Size:** 200 employees **Space:** 4 locations totaling approximately 33,000 sq. ft. **Website:** <http://www.wohlsenconstruction.com>

### Ideas from Wohlsen Construction

- Set short-term and long-term goals
- Install efficient lighting
- Insulate and weatherize
- Replace older electronics with Energy Star electronics.
- Educate with seminars, webinars, and conferences
- Use online communication when possible
- Use consulting resources such as Green Plus
- Make transparency a part of your culture
- Share advice with other businesses

### Wohlsen's Success Story

Setting manageable goals has been key to Wohlsen Construction's success. Though values of integrity, transparency, efficiency, and stewardship have been a part of the company culture since its founding in 1890, the business has more recently sought programs and resources that could help it realize what it needed to do to become a more energy efficient business throughout its offices in Harrisburg and Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and New Castle, Delaware, and throughout its range of construction services in healthcare, senior care, higher education, state and federal projects, green building, industrial and manufacturing development, and historic renovations.

The Green Plus program in North Carolina "has been the first and most comprehensive resource for us as we evaluated our business as a whole," says William Sutton, the project manager charged with integrating sustainability into the company since 2008. "The workbook and grades we received as a result of the Green Plus process allowed us to focus our goals on the areas which needed improvement."

Besides enhancing awareness of what needed to be done, programs like this also helped Wohlsen and its 200 employees engage with the realistic goals. To enhance its sustainability work, Wohlsen has enlisted organizations including The Green Center of Central PA and The US Green Building Council, and from these relationships, Sutton began setting even more benchmarks for improvement. A primary focus became energy efficiency, what Sutton calls a

fundamental component of achieving sustainability that pays for itself over time. To start, the business set the goal of reducing the company's energy use by 10% before 2013.

To help achieve this energy efficiency goal, Wohlsen focuses on housing its business in Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certified office buildings. Wohlsen owns its headquarters office building in Lancaster, where it has implemented several upgrades in the last 10 years. These include the installation of more efficient lighting, the insulation and weatherization of the building envelope, and the replacement of all in-house technology with Energy Star electronics. The company will be fully moved to its new LEED Silver certified Lancaster headquarters by the end of 2010. This building will save between 15% to 20% of its energy consumptions annually. The Harrisburg office, meanwhile, has moved to a new leased location in a LEED Gold certified building, which saves 25% of its energy costs annually. Wohlsen also helps to clear the path for more widespread LEED-certified projects through its certification-consulting services and promotions.

Changing actions and habits are another important component of Wohlsen's energy efficiency work. They are reducing materials consumption, and reusing and recycling materials. The business also promotes product transparency and the awareness of life-cycle impacts by buying products that are certified through organizations such as the Forest Stewardship Council (SFC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Employees use online communication to minimize the printing of hard copy documents and the need to travel for meetings.

The company is also currently implementing a massive energy-reduction strategy by consolidating and virtualizing its servers. This will save 50% of current energy use annually in its IT departments. In addition, the company will purchase 100% renewable electricity for the Harrisburg office for the next two years. This is a carbon offset of 53,705 lbs. The Harrisburg Office also uses geothermal heating and cooling and a 42-kilowatt solar photovoltaic array on the roof.

Government and utility incentive programs have helped to cover Wohlsen's investment in energy efficiency. The costs associated with making these changes ranged from minor replacements of a few dollars to the construction of a new building. The majority of efficiency investments pay for themselves in 3-5 years, Wohlsen said, even including the new building construction cost.

Communicating its energy efficiency efforts is another important function of Wohlsen Construction. It has expanded its supportive and holistic employee management model to include a network of businesses seeking to achieve sustainability. The company regularly provides advice to other small and large businesses that ask for advice on how to "green" their facilities, and the company invites customers to join its seminars, webinars, and conferences. Providing tours of its green buildings for the public has been a beneficial public relations and marketing addition, too, for the company itself and for energy efficiency practices.

## Lube Stop Case Study

*One simple change dropped Lube Stop's annual energy expense by \$3,500, and its introduction of more environmentally responsible products have drawn customers and industry acclaim.*



### Company Profile

**Industry:** Service (oil change) **Annual Revenue:** \$18 million **Size:** 250 employees **Space:** 11,000 sq ft (Corporate Headquarters) **Website:** <http://www.lubestop.com/>

### Ideas from Lube Stop

- Go for quick wins first
- Communicate the effects of poor practices
- Communicate the effects of responsible practices
- Educate employees
- Ask employees to educate customers
- Work with community members and students for a wide range of recommendations
- Cut out warehouses with more efficient shipping
- Speak to employees directly
- Engage industry peers to improve your entire industry

### Other Innovations from Lube Stop

- Offers extensive employee training program on sustainability (detailed in sustainability report)
- Offers e-refined anti-freeze that requires less energy to produce and is less harmful to the environment
- Offers 15% discount on all products and services to hybrid owners
- Offers significant fleet discounts to companies focused on the environment

### Lube Stop's Success Story

The catalyst for Lube Stop was learning an alarming statistic: motor oil from one oil change can contaminate 1,000,000 gallons of water. Lube Stop president Thomas Morley says, "This is an important message for our employees, customers and the community to hear, especially being on the shores of Lake Erie. Becoming more sustainable and adopting energy efficient practices made sense because it engaged employees, reduced costs, and addressed our environmental risk."

Lube Stop started small, making simple changes like turning off computer monitors during the evening and weekends. The energy savings added up quickly, dropping Lube Stop's annual energy cost by \$3,500. Morley encouraged all employees to speak with him directly regarding the business, including ideas to reduce Lube Stop's environmental impact, and as more good ideas arose, he implemented them. Moving forward, creativity was key in finding affordable educational resources so the company could learn more and do more. Lube Stop leveraged the intellectual power in the Cleveland community by engaging university student teams to perform an environmental audit and offer strategy and marketing recommendations.

These efforts also uncovered areas for cost saving and energy efficiency improvements in Lube Stop's supply chain and inventory management system. In recent years, Lube Stop's suppliers had become more accurate in the delivery of products, so instead of maintaining a warehouse to store products, Lube Stop had them shipped directly to stores. In doing so, the company eliminated the energy usage and transportation costs of weekly product deliveries to its stores. Morley explains, "From both a footprint standpoint and a financial standpoint, the warehouse did not make sense. We created an opportunity by eliminating the need."

Beyond Lube Stop's headquarters in Berea, Ohio, the company also extends energy efficiency improvements to its 37 service stations. Each station employs approximately six workers, all of which have completed a company-wide sustainability training program and as a result are conscious of their energy usage and knowledgeable about the environmental and business benefits of energy efficiency.

All of the sites offer EcoGuard®, a re-refined oil change service, which Lube Stop launched in 2008. This service offers customers the same quality with less environmental impact since it requires 85% less energy to produce re-refined oil than conventional oil. Customers have caught on quickly to the benefits of the service and it now represents 50% of the oil changes performed by Lube Stop. A key to this high adoption rate has been employee training and communicating the product's environmental and performance benefits to customers. As a result of these innovations and customer interest, annually Lube Stop now recycles more than 400,000 gallons of motor oil, 325,000 used oil filters, and 35,000 gallons of use antifreeze.

In December 2007, Lube Stop formalized its practices by launching the Lube Stop Sustainability Program (LSSR), which tracks sustainable practices and activities, achievements to date, and goals for the future. In doing so, Lube Stop established itself as an industry leader in sustainability. Also noteworthy, Lube Stop has saved over \$500,000 in expenses since launching LSSR in 2007. Moving forward, Morley looks to leverage this status to help other businesses in Northeast Ohio as well as the broader quick oil change industry adopt similar practices to raise the environmental standard of the entire region and quick oil change industry.



## Counter Culture Coffee Case Study

*This coffee wholesaler based in Durham wants to quantify the energy used by its consumers when making coffee at home. Although the business rents, it has many energy efficiency goals. Among them, Counter Culture Coffee plans to be carbon neutral by 2015.*

*“As a renter, focus energy efficiency efforts first on things you can control. On things you can’t control, be persistent with your landlord.”*



### Company Profile

**Industry:** Retail (coffee) **Annual Revenue:** \$5 - \$10 million **Size:** 38 employees **Space:** 19000 square feet **Website:** [www.counterculturecoffee.com](http://www.counterculturecoffee.com)

Sustainability score report:  
[http://www.counterculturecoffee.com/docs/CCC\\_Sustainability\\_Scorecard.pdf](http://www.counterculturecoffee.com/docs/CCC_Sustainability_Scorecard.pdf)

### Ideas from Counter Culture Coffee: For Renters

- Focus on things you can control
- Educate your stakeholders about energy efficiency
- Build an employee culture focused on energy efficiency
- Work on energy conservation
- Commit to utilities reduction
- Message success to stakeholders
- Begin a discussion on energy efficiency from the start of your renting relationship
- Share the bottom-line value of energy efficiency work with your landlord
- Be persistent with your landlord about changes that need made
- Create a sense of urgency behind your requests to your landlord

### Counter Culture Coffee's Success Story

Founded in 1995 in Durham, North Carolina, Counter Culture Coffee's interest in social, environmental, and fiscal sustainability is as old as the company itself. In the past few years, however, the coffee-roasting wholesaler has started to focus more on implementing energy efficiency measures as a means of cutting costs. By creating the Sustainability and Producer Relations position in 2007, held by Kim Bullock, the company began to formalize its commitment to triple bottom line sustainability and started to monitor its energy use. As a renter, the business strategically developed its plan around the things it could control with or without the landlord's input or investment.

How the business communicates to stakeholders is one thing Counter Culture can control while inspiring major impact. Though its primary service is roasting, the company also purchases all of its coffee and operates around a business model that includes building relationships with its growers, providing cutting-edge education to its stakeholders, and spreading a real dedication to sustainability throughout its supply chain. Outside of the Durham roastery, Counter Culture Coffee operates regional training centers in Asheville, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Charlotte, New York City, and Washington, DC. These centers provide hands-on training and education courses for interested baristas in the community. All of this offers Counter Culture a means of impacting energy efficiency practices.

Utilities use is another way Counter Culture can have an impact on energy efficiency. Bullock first looked to online sources and universities for guidance on possible energy efficiency changes when she began her job. The business utilized the various CERES publications, and students from Duke University and the University of North Carolina conducted free energy audits of the 17,000 square foot headquarters, as well.

Based on recommendations from these sources, Bullock started tracking the office's energy bills, and in 2007, she created a scorecard for the company that showed how it did in pursuit of triple bottom line sustainability. Bullock also conducted a carbon footprint analysis of the energy used in the training facilities during a 12-month period. From this analysis, Bullock discovered that energy used in end processes like coffee brewing is more intensive than any other part of the coffee's life cycle.

Counter Culture Coffee also installed energy monitors (The Energy Detective) on its coffee shop customers' equipment to determine the energy footprint of brewers, grinders, and espresso machines. Comparing this equipment allowed Bullock to quantify the energy pulled from the grid both at rest and while in use and helped the company to use each machine most efficiently. Moving forward, the company wants to quantify the energy used by its consumers when making coffee at home.

Employee behavior, is another major part of Bullock's focus: in November of 2009, Bullock engaged the company's 38 employees in an energy behavior survey, which contained questions such as, "Do you turn the lights off when you leave the room?" Based off of the responses, Bullock worked to improve signage and to make personal habits less relevant by installing light sensors and programmable thermostats. She also created employee competitions around mileage reduction.

Counter Culture followed up with another survey in June 2010. Bullock says, “The objective was to make it as easy as possible for employees to change their behaviors. According to the follow-up survey, peoples’ self-reported behaviors have been changing.”

The costs of the survey and carbon footprint analysis were minimal and are best quantified in terms of Bullock’s salary, since she collected and analyzed the data. The Energy Detective monitor cost around \$250 dollars. Counter Culture Coffee never calculated concrete dollar savings from these measures, though the scorecard reveals that there was a 5%, 6%, and 4% decrease in energy use from the prior year per pound of coffee sold for the years 2006, 2007, and 2008, respectively.

While renting has limited some immediate energy efficiency moves that the business could have made if it owned the property, Bullock says there are several things renters can do to effect change. “As a renter, focus energy efficiency efforts first on things you can control,” she reiterates. “On things you can’t control, be persistent with your landlord.” Starting a discussion about energy efficiency from the beginning of the renter relationship and sharing the bottom-line wins of energy efficiency upgrades with your landlord can make all the difference.

Even while renting, Bullock says the business has made great strides in energy efficiency work, and she believes that their energy efficiency efforts have improved the company’s reputation among its consumers over the past few years. Her next big goal? Making Counter Culture carbon neutral by 2015.