



Importance of the Retail Sector

Because of its broad reach, the retail sector has the potential to effect significant change in society in a way that no other industry can. Corporately, retailers can define environmentally-oriented purchasing requirements and, at the store level, they can educate consumers. Retail controls and acts as the gatekeeper for the goods and services consumers are offered and, as such has the ability to influence behaviour and consumption patterns.

It is estimated that if 5% of retailers and their suppliers in Canada reduced their energy consumption by 10%, the energy savings in the first year would provide enough energy to power 465,000 homes, a city the size of Ottawa, or would be equal to taking 233,000 cars off the road.

The retail sector has the ability to play a pivotal role in the transformation of our communities and in the creation of a sustainable future.

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The goal of the Greening Retail program is to help retailers reduce their environmental impact and at the same time, save money and improve the bottom line.

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To help retailers find and adopt these practices we are doing six things:



Here are just a few of the actions being taken and the savings being achieved:



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- **Documenting Best Environmental Practices:** conducting in-depth interviews with 12 to 15 leading retail companies from around the world to discover how they are successfully carrying out good environmental practices.
- **Creating On-Line Resources for Retailers:** making information and tools, such as our searchable best practices database, available to retailers on-line.
- **Contributing to Courses and Seminars:** incorporating the wealth of information gathered by the program into existing and new courses.
- **Developing Green Retail Guidelines, Standards and Certification:** assessing the need for and feasibility of developing Greening Retail guidelines, standards and a system for certification.
- **Creating Partnerships and Publications:** working with sector associations, universities and governments to publish and broadly disseminate the program findings.
- **Initiating Demonstration Projects:** working with leading retailers to demonstrate environmental best practices, measure results and develop benchmarks.

- In a study prepared by the Hescong Mahone Group, sales performance in 108 stores were compared. Skylighting boosted sales by an average of 40%.
- Immediate low/no-cost improvements at BJ's Wholesale Club saved the company over \$1 million and 12 million kilowatt hours of electricity alone.
- Staples' energy upgrades resulted in almost \$1 million of savings per year, with a payback of 3.15 years or a 29.3% annual rate of return on their original investment.
- Gap Inc. is encouraging all distribution centres to increase the reuse of boxes, which would cut their cardboard supply in half and save an estimated \$3.5 million annually.
- ShopRite's Save-A-Bag program, in which customers are offered a two-cent refund for returned bags, has saved customers \$1.2 million and has saved ShopRite \$1.5 million since its inception in 1990.

- Walmart Canada has found that "There is a great marriage between environmental sustainability and business sustainability... less lighting means we save more than a million dollars in energy costs while also taking the equivalent of 500 cars off the road." (*Source: CNW Group article*)
- A senior executive at Larry's Markets noted that, "One per cent of my gross sales is spent on utility costs, and my net profit is also 1%. By implementing energy upgrades that cut my utility costs by 20%, I am essentially achieving a 20% increase in net profit." (*Source: Energy Star web site*)

(All of the examples were sourced from the internet.)

Visit our website to learn more, refer an environmental best practice case study or express your interest in working with us to demonstrate these practices.



For more information on Greening Retail, please visit: www.greeningretail.ca