

Isolé Controls Plug Load Costs for 3Com

Often, facilities managers focus only on lighting and HVAC upgrades to achieve energy savings without recognizing the potential right on their own desktops – plug loads. In Silicon Valley, 3Com adopted The Watt Stopper's Isolé control products to harness their plug loads with impressive results.

With a large corporate campus in Santa Clara, California, 3Com knew that employees' habits of leaving computer monitors and task lights on at lunch time, during meetings, even over the weekends was impacting the company's energy consumption. In fact, nearly one-third of the facility's total demand was represented by plug loads. And while approximately half of this load was essential, the 3Com facilities team wanted to control the remaining discretionary portion.

An industry leader in networking and personal information management solutions, 3Com has a reputation for innovation in environ-

3Com estimates it will save more than \$88,000 annually through the application of The Watt Stopper's Isolé products.

mental and conservation issues. The company's facilities management team had already achieved its



goals in minimizing energy use in HVAC and lighting. Now, they focused on a strategy to reduce plug load energy consumption.

After assessing a variety of office power control products, the team decided to install The Watt Stopper's Isolé IDP-1000-A in each of the campus's 3,272 cubicles. 3Com Facilities Manager Dan Hoffman says, "We selected the Isolé product for a number of reasons. The product offered a higher quality power strip and warranty protection than other products. It also displayed a more pleasing aesthetic style and was priced competitively." 3Com had previously used The Watt Stopper's occupancy sen-

sors for the company's overhead lighting control, and was very pleased with the results.

Following a pilot program to assess Isolé performance and user acceptance, 3Com began installing the product on the Santa Clara campus. To streamline installation, they customized the process, mounting the sensor via magnetic strips under cubicle shelving. They also began developing plans to install Isolé on 3Com's other campuses, located in Rolling Meadows, Illinois, Mount Prospect, Illinois, and Marlborough, Massachusetts.

Phasing in the new office power controls involved employee education. 3Com and The Watt Stopper teamed up to produce desktop quick reference cards. For the Marlborough campus, employee education also included information employees could access from the corporate intranet.

3Com sought the support of its energy supplier, Silicon Valley

CASE STUDY

3Com, Santa Clara, California

Power (SVP) to accomplish the Santa Clara campus project. The company applied to the utility for funding assistance for the project, and was successful. In fact, 3Com received funding from SVP that covered the implementation costs of retrofitting the Santa Clara facility. The 3Com team finished the project in May 1999.

In all, 3Com has implemented more than 7,600 desktop controls at the four U.S. facilities. Hoffman is

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satisfied with the success of the program, estimating the facilities team has fielded only minor concerns from employees, which represent fewer than 1% of the number of units installed.

“At the minimum, every cubicle contains two task lights, a computer monitor, and CPU. In addition, employees may have radios, fans,

The Watt Stopper’s Isolé sensor (seen here to the right of the cubicle task light) ensures that desktop equipment is on when cubicles are occupied, but off when the space is vacant.

adding machines, or pencil sharpeners. Using Isolé, we can ensure that equipment isn’t on when cubicles are vacant. At the same time, we’re protecting sensitive computer equipment against disruptive power surges,” says Hoffman, adding, “Isolé is now part of our specifications for any additional new construction the company undertakes.”

3Com estimates it will save more than \$88,000 annually on its Santa Clara campus alone, based on energy saved by switching off only the minimum cubicle equipment (CRT and two task lights). Annual savings for the Marlborough campus are projected to exceed \$30,000, with similar expectations for the Rolling Meadows facility. “From our experience, it seems clear that every company should consider occupancy-based control of their plug loads for increased energy savings,” Hoffman says.

Is the Future of Plug Load Control in the Palm of your Hand?

3Com’s popular product, the Palm Pilot, may offer some unique opportunities for advancing control technologies for workspace lighting and equipment. The Palm Pilot, a hand-held personal information management device, features an infrared port capable of transmitting signals to receiving ports (such as TVs, VCRs, printers, and other devices). Using this capability, a Palm Pilot user could signal a receiver to provide individualized control of desktop equipment. Says Hoffman, “Integrated with the right technology, our Palm Pilot users could turn equipment on and off with a simple click of their Palms.”



