

## The Importance of Energy Management Firms

*Richard Morris*

It goes without saying that the word "partnership" is integral to the Better Buildings Partnership. A group of partners that is highly instrumental to the success of the Better Buildings Partnership is one that we refer to as Energy Management Firms (EMFs).

Collectively, EMFs provide expertise that is invaluable to the planning, delivery, and final measurement and verification of energy project results. They are in the business of energy solutions with their understanding of customer needs and the proven technologies and systems that are best positioned to address those needs. As such, they are essential partners for BBP in improving the energy efficiency of Toronto's built environment, ultimately shrinking the city's carbon footprint and reducing the peak demand on our electricity system so that Torontonians can rely on their energy supply every day of every year.

BBP works proactively with dozens of these firms, ranging from small specialized firms, to larger multi-disciplinary consulting engineers, to giant multi-national equipment manufacturers. Their products and services are far-ranging, including energy audits, feasibility studies, project proposals, equipment supply and installation, project management and more. Some EMFs go even further, helping customers finance their energy projects with a guarantee on energy savings results, total cost and payback. For any given project, the type(s) of EMF that is best suited depends on such things as the size and nature of the project and the availability of in-house expertise and resources. Some EMFs target their work to certain sectors.

Working with EMFs over the years has helped BBP be smarter and more effective in identifying and funding energy conservation programs that have the right features and benefits for Toronto buildings. In addition to offering attractive energy savings incentives, the role that BBP plays is to be an 'honest broker' that helps building owners and managers find and work effectively with well-suited EMFs, giving a level of confidence that their energy dollars will be spent effectively to produce the results that they expect. One way we do this is by ensuring that all BBP-assisted projects are properly evaluated by third parties at the outset and then verified upon completion.

I'd like to take a moment to focus on one great success story of an energy retrofit led by an energy management firm, in partnership with BBP, that is paying back substantial dividends.

In 1986, West Park Healthcare Centre began its focused efforts to improve energy efficiency on the 27-acre campus of its rehabilitation, complex-continuing care and long-term care facility. The hospital provides 487 beds to patients who are overcoming health barriers to help them live full lives. West Park employs 920 healthcare staff, and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The most recent project in West Park's long-term energy plan was the result of an engineering review conducted in 2008 by HH Angus and Associates that revealed an opportunity to improve the cooling system and achieve significant operating cost savings.

The engineering study proposed that the replacement of a 30-year-old chiller with two smaller, energy-efficient units that better matched the building's needs, would cut West Park's carbon emissions by 127 tonnes and reduce energy consumption for air-conditioning use by an estimated 37 per cent. To achieve these goals, West Park teamed up with BBP and we were able to offset the \$1.4-million expense of the project through an incentive of \$47,480 based on verified demand savings of 118.7 kW, thus reducing the payback period of the project to an acceptable timeframe.

As an institution that has been serving the community for over 100 years, West Park is proud of its delivery on a commitment to reduce its operations' impact on the environment. In continuing its commitment to energy conservation, West Park appointed Michael Bonnah as Chief Energy Conservation Officer in May 2009 to oversee the institution's ongoing journey to improve energy efficiency, in part through ongoing relationships with EMFs and BBP.

In short, energy conservation has been a vehicle for demonstrated leadership and partnership for West Park Healthcare Centre. That's exactly what the BBP is looking for in its partnerships for a better energy future.

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