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On the Cover

Carlotta Jacobson, president of Cosmetic Executive Women. Photography by Juergen Frank. Photo editing by Michael Block.

Save Energy, Save Money

10 energy-saving tips to increase your bottom line.

By Brad Wilhelmsen

Beauty store and salon owners are always on the lookout for ways to lower their overhead. The problem is, how do you reduce expenses without losing revenue? For example, cutting back on your marketing budget could hurt sales. However, one surefire way to painlessly reduce expenses is by cutting your energy bills. It's a complete win. There is no downside, and the money you save goes directly to the bottom line.

The financial rewards can be significant. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified energy savings potential up to 41 percent for typical retail stores. So if you haven't started an energy-saving program for your operation, it's time to get going.

Roya Adjory, founder of Nori's Eco Salon, is a long-time leader in the green revolution. Nori's Eco Salon is a winner of the Climate Leader award from Cool California, a department of the California EPA Air Resources Board. Adjory is a persuasive advocate of the benefits of green business practices. She says, "I am always happy to share information with anyone interested, especially other small beauty stores and hair salon businesses like ours that have nothing to lose, and can gain in every way by going green."



“Fortunately, there are lots of simple practices that can be incorporated in small increments, and over time, they add up.”

—*Monica Tierney, Sustainable Beauty Network, founder*

IT'S EASIER THAN YOU THINK

For the average beauty store, it's not required that you become a scientist or engineer to start cutting down your energy consumption. In fact, it's actually quite simple. Many of the energy-reduction tips you'll read here are ideas that you've probably heard before. To get cost-saving results, you simply need to apply them consistently.

Monica Tierney, founder of Sustainable Beauty Network, says, “Most businesses believe in a green mission, but they don't want to make a huge investment. Fortunately, there are lots of simple practices that can be incorporated in small increments, and over time, they add up.”

Energy use falls into four main areas: lighting, heating and air conditioning,

water heating and electrical equipment. How energy consumption breaks down for beauty stores varies widely, depending on your geographical location, the type and age of your building, and the equipment you currently have installed. As a rough average, the typical beauty store uses about 50 percent of its energy on lighting, 40 percent on heating and air conditioning, and the remaining 10 percent on electrical equipment.

Lush is a cosmetics manufacturing company with over 700 retail stores. The sustainability officer at Lush, Katrina Shum, advises beauty stores and salons to prioritize. Shum says, “Look for your biggest opportunities to save energy (and money). Lighting upgrades to LEDs and improving the efficiency of HVAC systems are a couple of quick wins we looked at when we first started.”



Nori's Eco Salon is the first green-certified hair salon to receive the Climate Leader Award.

LONG-TERM GOALS

Once you have the basics in place, there's always more you can do to reduce your energy consumption. Nori's Eco Salon founder, Roya Adjory, says, “For 14 years we have been a green salon. When we moved to our current location we had the opportunity to start all over again, so we created a double door and that's where our journey really started by bringing in materials that were all about energy savings.”

Keep these tips in mind when you are considering remodeling or upgrading your beauty store, or moving to a new location.

- ▶ Caulk and weatherstrip drafty doors and windows.
- ▶ Consider replacing older air conditioning units. They can be costing you more money to operate than they should.
- ▶ Painting the outside walls white and the roof a reflective coating will lower cooling costs.
- ▶ If you have a flat roof, installing skylights will lower lighting costs and add natural light.
- ▶ Adding insulation can greatly reduce heating and air conditioning costs.
- ▶ Find out if adding solar panels is a practical option in your building.
- ▶ Check out spectrally reflective window glazing. It reflects heat from the sun while still maintaining visibility from the outside and allowing ample outside light to enter.
- ▶ Contact an energy consultant in your area for an energy audit and recommendations on what additional actions would be cost effective for your beauty store or salon.

Of the company's findings, she says, “For our retail shops, we did energy assessments and found HVAC and lighting to be the two areas that are the biggest drivers of energy consumption. We are now taking a targeted approach to get the biggest bang for our buck in reducing our overall energy use.” For the typical beauty store and salon owner, the path to greater efficiency is easy to find. Follow the money.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Before you do anything else, find out how much you have been paying every month for the energy your beauty store consumes. That includes electricity, gas and water. You'll need to go back through your bills and put together an energy-use spreadsheet of the last three years of payments to find the average monthly payment for each month.

Shum is emphatic on this point. “You can't manage what you don't measure,” she says. “Our first step was to under-

stand how much energy our shops consume. However, where you are paying utilities, you can easily pull monthly electricity consumption data.”

The goal is to compile at least three complete years of information from your billing history. If you start today, go back to January so that you'll have three full years of monthly averages from 2014 to 2016, and one partial year. Make three grids in your spreadsheet for electricity, gas and water. Across the top row of each grid enter the months from January to December. And down the left side add labels for 2014 down to 2017. The last column of your spreadsheet will contain the totals for each year, and below the bottom row of data you will put the averages for each monthly column. Once you've gotten your spreadsheet created, you'll want to update it each month so you can see how you are faring in your energy-reduction efforts.

It may take you a couple of hours to create your energy-use spreadsheet, but



Lush replenishes all energy used with renewable wind and low-impact hydro sources.

it's important for a number of reasons. It provides you with a baseline for future progress, it highlights seasonal changes and their effects on your energy costs, and it will keep you focused on the prize—saving money!

TIP #1 Turn off the lights.

Turn off the lights when you, or a staff member, are the last person to leave the room, such as a lunchroom, restroom or storage area. If that's not convenient, add an inexpensive timer or room occupancy sensor to do the job for you. And of course, implement a company program to turn off everything at closing time.

Tierney says try not to forget anything. "Turn off cash registers, computers, printers and any other equipment by end of night," she says.

TIP #2 Put equipment on a power strip.

Even when you think a piece of equipment is off, it may not be. Many electronics items such as computers, monitors, printers, TVs and appliances use a lot of electricity even when the switch is off.

Tierney recommends that beauty store owners "purchase a smart surge protector that will shut off power to all devices that are plugged into it." That way, you need to flip just one switch to turn off all the energy vampires at once.

Adjory makes it a nightly ritual. She says, "Every time we leave the salon, we unplug our blow dryers. And for everything else, we have a device that shuts off everything."

TIP #3 Switch to LED lighting.

Swapping out incandescent and CFL lights and replacing them with LED lights will save you a significant amount on your electricity bill—and you'll see that immediately reflected on your energy-use spreadsheet.

If you are now using CFL bulbs, that's a good start. Tierney says, "CFL bulbs use 75-percent less energy and can last five-times longer than incandescent bulbs. Over the life of the bulb, \$30 per bulb can be saved."

But the future is the LED bulb. Adjory says, "The first step is the light bulbs. Switch from the older bulbs that create heat and force you to turn on the air conditioning. With LED lights, they put out almost no heat and last practically forever."

TIP #4 Replace magnetic ballasts.

If your beauty store has fluorescent tube lights, make sure they have electronic ballasts and not the older magnetic ballasts. If your lights flicker or you can hear a buzz when you turn them on, you have the magnetic ballasts. Switching to electronic ballasts will save you 50 percent on the energy they use.

Electronic ballasts are inexpensive and easy to replace. And while you're at it, swap out the tubes for new LED tubes and you'll save even more. The EPA reports that a lighting upgrade from T8s (fluorescent light bulbs) to LED lights, can result in a 30-percent reduction in energy consumption.

"Being green is really about caring for one another—caring for yourself and caring for other people—and caring for the planet we live on."

—*Roya Adjory, Nori's Eco Salon, founder*

TIP #5 Turn down the temperature on your water heater.

You probably don't require boiling hot water from the tap in your beauty store or salon. Turn down the temperature gauge on the tank to warm, which should be fine for washing hands as well as clients' hair.

If you have an older tank, consider replacing it with a newer, more efficient one. In addition, older gas water heaters can release dangerous fumes when not properly maintained. So check it regularly.

TIP #6 Turn up the thermostat to 76°F in the summer.

Remember that heating and cooling account for almost half of beauty store and salon energy consumption. So, set the thermostat to 76 degrees in the summer to reduce costs.

When customers first walk into your beauty store from a hot parking lot, your store will feel cool, even if the air conditioning is set to 76 degrees. To keep them cool, you can install a ceiling fan or

MARKET YOUR GREEN SIDE

Make sure to promote your energy conservation by letting customers know that you are trying to do your part to save energy, reduce waste and help the environment. Monica Tierney, the founder of Sustainable Beauty Network, says, "Get in the habit of asking customers if they want a bag and paper receipt. Many customers are okay with having a receipt emailed to them." Here are more marketing ideas to try:

- ▶ Offer e-receipts rather than printed ones. Most importantly, you get your customer's email address while saving on paper and printing costs.
- ▶ Provide shopping bags that are made from recycled materials.
- ▶ Have reusable shopping bags printed with your store name on them.
- ▶ Make sure to highlight your energy-reduction goals and achievements on your website.
- ▶ Add a few eco-friendly products to your inventory and monitor the sales.
- ▶ Most printing vendors offer an option to have marketing brochures, flyers or business cards printed on recycled paper, which is almost as inexpensive as regular paper. So, choose recycled paper.
- ▶ Find a green cause to support, and promote it in your store and on your website, such as wildlife conservation or planting trees. Pick one that suits you and your business and let your customers know you care.

two as well. Ceiling fans circulate the air and reduce any feeling that your store is hot or stuffy. According to the EPA, a ceiling fan will compensate for the raised thermostat setting by about 4 degrees. That means turning the AC to 76 degrees with the fan on will feel like 72 degrees.

TIP #7 Turn down the thermostat to 68°F in the winter.

Turning down the heat should not be much of a hardship for your customers during the winter months. When they visit your beauty store or salon, they will most likely be wearing coats and jackets anyway. Lowering the thermostat can cut your heating costs significantly during the winter season when your utility bills spike the highest. Staff members can dress a bit warmer during the winter and don sweaters or light jackets if they need to.

TIP #8 Keep your heating and cooling equipment well maintained.

An inefficient heating and cooling system

wastes energy and costs you more than it should to operate. It's important to change the filters regularly, typically every three months, but more frequently if they get dirty quickly. The filters, by the way, are not to clean the air for people, but to protect the equipment. So changing filters often will add additional life to your heating and cooling system.

TIP #9 Install a programmable thermostat.

People forget things, so the best way to ensure settings for heating and air conditioning are always correct is to have a machine do it for you. Just make sure to update the settings regularly as the seasons change. A good way to remember is to adjust the settings monthly when you add more data to your energy-use spreadsheet.

Shum recommends automating energy management. She says, "There are a number of sub-meter and energy-management providers who provide real-time energy usage, email alerts (i.e. you forgot to turn off your lights last night), tracking and

“You can't manage what you don't measure.”

—*Katrina Shum, sustainability officer, Lush*

benchmarking of electricity consumption and remote control capabilities.”

TIP #10 Look for the Energy Star label.

Next time you make a purchase of electronics or appliances, make sure they are Energy Star rated.

Tierney advises, "When it's time to buy new equipment, purchase Energy Star-rated items that use up less electricity and lower energy bills."

Adjory also follows this energy saving tip at the salon for water heaters, heating systems and more, saying, "Everything we have bought is Energy Star."

Bonus Tip: Don't stop now!

You're just getting started. Now that you have created your energy-use spreadsheet

to monitor your energy consumption and begun putting these 10 energy-saving tips into practice, congratulations! You're just beginning your green adventure.

As you work to further reduce costs and improve your beauty store's bottom line, you're becoming a positive influence for change. As Roya Adjory tells it, "It's a way of life. It's not just greenwashing for the sake of greenwashing, or just changing a few things. Being green is really about caring for one another—caring for yourself and for other people—and caring for the planet we live on." Now that you've started the ball rolling, you'll discover many more ways to green your business and save money. ■

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