



THE UNIFIED GROUP

We are an independent association of the country's elite HVAC commercial contractors. We help our members increase productivity, profitability and customer retention, and we also provide a network for national and regional customer business solutions. Visit us at www.theunifiedgroup.com.

COMMITMENT AND CHARACTER

Strong Words That Keep AirTight Focused

Commitment is what transforms a promise to reality. It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions, and the actions that speak louder than words. It is making the time, when there is none. Coming through time after time, year after year. Commitment is the stuff character is made of. The power to change the face of things. It is the daily triumph of integrity over skeptics.

—TAKEN FROM:

A Week at Ridgeview High School, Columbia, SC, August 1996

“The true measurement of character in a person is how she treats those she does not need.”

—ANONYMOUS

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TAKE CARE OF THEM AND THEY'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU

Smart building owners know that their employees are an investment in the success of their businesses. Therefore it makes sense to ensure that your employees are comfortable and satisfied, and as dedicated to your company as you are dedicated to them.

The direct link between employee comfort and productivity can be seen in buildings all over the country. When office workers are satisfied with their environmental conditions, and can work in greater comfort, they will be more productive. In fact, studies have shown that increases in productivity of up to 20 percent can be achieved by improving employee comfort.

In the United States alone, billions of dollars are lost each year due to decreased productivity resulting from employee discomfort. This reduction in performance can have a drastic affect on your bottom line. And although an exact number may be complicated to determine, if you know roughly what you're paying for the square footage occupied by each employee, you can calculate how much you would reduce your expenditure per square foot if you gained one minute of productivity per hour for each employee.

According to the International Facility Management Association (IFMA), comfort complaints are consistently the number one

and number two tenant complaints, and have been since 1991. Because workers' salaries constitute the major cost of operating a commercial building, even a small increase in employee productivity can substantially increase a company's financial return. In fact, energy savings and an increase in productivity can in some cases save building owners millions of dollars each year.

But the effects of poor comfort reach beyond productivity losses. An improperly maintained system can cause employee dissatisfaction, even increasing employee turnover. And since the costs involved in gaining new employees greatly outweigh the costs of keeping them happy in the first place, you'll see even greater losses. In fact, an increase in retention of just 5 percent can result in an increase of at least 10 percent to your bottom line.

Your HVAC system plays a major role in overall operating expenses and occupant satisfaction. A well-chosen HVAC system and service provider can pay off in real energy savings and superior employee comfort and productivity. It is also critical to the long-term comfort and performance of your building. With technology and improvements in performance, organizations can see a considerable reduction in the expenses that they incur over the life of a system. But the key to realizing this reduction is employing an HVAC contractor who is familiar with your needs and has the capabilities to achieve them.

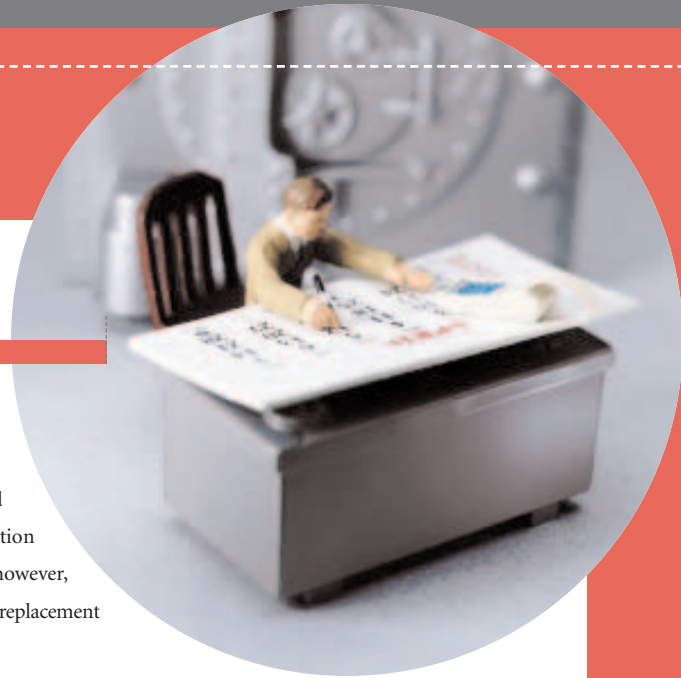
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EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT AND RETROFIT PLANNING

The goal of an HVAC system is to provide comfort and safety, and to maintain conditions for any process function while keeping operating costs reasonable. There does, however, reach a time in every piece of equipment's lifetime when replacement must be considered.

HVAC systems need replacement or retrofit for three essential reasons: One - they simply wear out. This is common but in many cases may occur sooner than necessary. If a machine is properly maintained, its life expectancy can be increased two to three times. Two - new technology creates better ways to achieve results. And three - the system doesn't perform well, either energy-wise or comfort-wise. This may be due to deficiencies in the initial design or installation, or inadequate or improper maintenance.

To determine whether a system needs to be replaced or retrofitted, the following need to be considered: the general appearance of the equipment; how much down-time has been experienced; a review of all maintenance and repair records; a review of all maintenance and repair costs; and the level of occupant comfort.

Once these items have been addressed, you can define the problem areas and the resultant opportunities if the equipment is replaced or retrofitted. Prioritize your replacement or retrofit project these six ways:

- Financially: Increase revenue, reduce or eliminate an existing expense, avoid future expenses.
- Energy Usage: Evaluate the energy used by the HVAC systems, the building envelope and the people.
- Safety Condition: Make sure safety is always a primary concern.
- Comfort Condition: Evaluate the comfort level of the facility.
- Scheduling: Some work may need to be accomplished before other projects are started. Schedule for a convenient time of the year and/or typical weather concerns.
- System Interaction: Some replacement or retrofit measures may be cost effective when viewed by themselves, but become counterproductive when analyzed in relation to the other systems.

By following these steps, and working with a qualified commercial contractor, you have all the tools necessary to make an informed decision and execute your plan.

MAXIMIZE COMBUSTION EFFICIENCY

At your plant or commercial facility, the boiler is most likely the largest heating fuel user. Unfortunately, it's also an inefficient fuel user.

At best, a boiler system might be 85% efficient. More commonly, efficiency ranges from 60 to 75%, meaning 40% of your energy and heating bill is wasted. Combustion losses are a large portion of boiler efficiency losses, so it makes good economic sense to maximize combustion efficiency.

A well-tuned boiler can dramatically lower the dollars spent on fuel. If the average cost for natural gas is 60 cents/therm, a 10,000 lb/hr boiler with an average annual capacity factor of 50% would save \$26,000 per year in fuel costs with a 10% increase in combustion efficiency. Even a 1% increase would save \$2,600.

Have a qualified technician perform combustion efficiency testing and a boiler tune-up. The annual fuel-cost savings are worth it.



BIG JOB HUGE RESPONSIBILITY

When one of the nation's largest healthcare management firms decided to re-vitalize its data center and environmental monitoring systems, they chose AirTight. This retro-fit job was the largest project in our six year history. "Since our start, we've been known as the data center problem solvers" says Greg Crumpton, founder of AirTight, "and this project proved to be a center in need of a complete over-haul."

The original mechanical system design called for an above the drop ceiling ducted air distribution system. The installing contractor added two additional units after the initial two units couldn't properly satisfy the computer equipment's heat load requirements. The largest and most obvious problem was a poor air distribution design and delivery devices, not a lack of tonnage.

After the initial installation, the client's IT staff purchased more equipment to deliver the cool air to the bottom of the racks as opposed to the top. This meant that AirTight had to remove the duct system from the ceiling while converting to a pressurized-raised floor air distribution system. And oh-by-the-way, the client would not be shutting any of their systems down.

On a Saturday morning the fifth floor windows were removed and four new precision cooling systems were lowered into the corner office and taken to the data center to be installed. As the work progressed, the room temperatures stabilized and the cool air was soon flowing from the perforated floor tiles. Several key team members got it done on time and within budget: team leader Ryan Gunto, Derrin Lail, Daren Coleman, Chad Pazera, David Farmer, Nate Morse, automation specialist Steve Smith and coordinator Russ Castilow.

If you need help with a troublesome data center, call AirTight and let us see if we can offer a solution for your IT situation.



AIRTIGHT: A COMPANY FOCUSED ON PEOPLE

Take a moment and read these next few sentences and then think about how you like to do business.

"Long-distance phone service, electronic mail, faxes and video-conferencing should have made the face-to-face business meeting obsolete, right? But meetings continue to be a major expense for corporations and support entire industries like hotels, airlines and rental car companies. Why do we insist on doing business in the flesh? Because we do not trust someone until we see what makes her sweat"

—STEVEN PINKER / How the Mind Works

We don't necessarily want to see you sweat, but we do believe that people do business with people, and if you work hard together for the common good a human-to-human relationship can pay dividends for all involved.

AirTight wants to be there when you need us, in person, to help solve your problems. If it is sales or service you are in need of, we will be there 24x7, 365 days a year. Shared experiences... that's what it's all about!

SHONDA - MAKING IT HAPPEN

Many of you have had the pleasure of talking to Shonda Hawkins when you call in for help, or maybe you just call in for a good dose of humor. Whatever the reason, your needs are usually fulfilled completely.

We'd like to take this opportunity to say best wishes to Shonda as she prepares to marry Tony Ruland this fall in a small ceremony in historic Charleston, SC. Shonda and Tony will reside in the Dilworth area of Charlotte and will stay plenty busy with Erin, Shonda's 6-year old daughter. It is truly a pleasure to have a co-worker who sets the benchmark for all of us in terms of commitment.

Shonda continues to prove why AirTight is known for customer service excellence.

