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In the January issue, we discussed how to determine if and when an energy assessment is right for your plant. An energy assessment is an on-site study of your facility that captures how energy is used and identifies potential savings.

If you're practicing motor management, an assessment may be the next step to managing your energy use. Alternatively, an assessment may point to a motor-management program as a means to capture future energy savings.

What can you do to maximize the value of an energy assessment, and ensure that the money and time invested are well spent? The following three steps will help you get started:

Develop a plan
Understand your goals in advance of the assessment and capture these in a plan that's accessible to plant staff and management. After the assessment, use these goals to guide follow-up activity. For example, you might commit to saving energy by implementing all measures below a certain payback or all measures with safety or reliability benefits. Support this plan with a commitment of financial resources to advance specific corporate or plant-level goals identified in the plan.

Consider the opportunity to bundle measures together to enhance the cost-effectiveness of "deeper" savings measures. For example, an air compressor replacement may not qualify under your company's capital improvement requirements. Bundling this measure with a cost-effective lighting change-out may reduce the overall project payback to an acceptable range, and increase your overall savings.

Assign clear roles

Make sure key personnel and their managers understand their roles in supporting the energy assessment. This means involving management in development of the assessment plan. To help ensure their support, invite them to walk the floor and see the savings opportunities—*this is more compelling than simply reading about them in an assessment report*
. Once measures are identified and prioritized according to the goals, assign clear responsibility for their implementation.

Communicate the value

Communicate to all involved that energy is a manageable cost, and that their efforts to continuously implement energy-saving practices and identify new opportunities are valued by plant management. Communicate to management—as well as to the segment that financed savings measures—*the amount of energy-cost savings those projects produced*. Finally, look beyond savings for other benefits that the assessment of follow-up measures may have yielded (i.e., improved safety, reliability, operator comfort, etc.). Such benefits may be as important as energy savings to certain decision makers and should not be overlooked. **MT**

Additional resources

1. ENERGY STAR® offers guidance for industrial companies at this site , and industry-specific tools and resources here
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2. Motor Management tools and case studies are available from the MDM campaign at www.motorsmatter.org
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