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MacDonald-Miller Makes Energy Efficiency a Priority



Perry England, V.P. Building Performance, MacDonald-Miller

By Sara DeHoff for BetterBricks

With a winning formula for success, MacDonald-Miller is one of the Northwest's premier mechanical contractors. Always looking for new ways to help their customers be successful, MacDonald-Miller decided to shift their focus to "energy first." The result is tremendous energy savings for their customers and a healthy revenue stream for the company.

New opportunity inspires a novel strategy

MacDonald-Miller has always been dedicated to meeting their customers' needs, whether it's construction-related engineering, building maintenance or capital equipment replacement. In recent years they have identified another opportunity with enormous potential: use these same services to help customers fine tune their buildings to run as efficiently as possible and save money.

Leveraging their core competencies, MacDonald-Miller made energy savings the top priority in all their projects. Their objective was to make each building perform at optimum efficiency. As a result, their customers are seeing impressive benefits:

- Significant savings in energy costs.
- Reduced repair costs.
- Increased comfort for tenants and occupants.
- Fewer comfort complaints.

Gus Simonds, president of the company, realized that to achieve this goal of peak performance in every building, MacDonald-Miller would need to add new skills. So he hired Perry England to create and run the Building Performance Services Group. They brought on highly skilled, experienced engineers who could work across all three profit centers—Construction, Service and Special Projects—to develop optimal solutions for their customers' buildings. They reorganized the infrastructure of their personnel to better align skill sets and create groups that could cross-collaborate and learn from each other. They trained their technicians in the latest technology. They oriented their sales staff to focus on "energy first" in their presentations. The result is a seamlessly integrated team with a single focus: high performance buildings.

Taking a novel approach to the market, MacDonald-Miller focuses on building tune-ups before pursuing large retrofit and capital investment projects. Their first priority is to improve the operations and programming logic so the building runs at peak performance. It's a strategy that consistently results in significant savings for their customers.

MacDonald-Miller's track record with this approach speaks for itself:

- Two high rises in the Seattle area achieved over \$100,000 in avoided costs over an 8-month period. During the coldest winter in 30 years, their energy bill actually went down.
- A building in Tumwater, WA saw a 36% decrease in gas energy consumption in the first month.
- Another building in Seattle reduced its energy bill by 40% in one and a half years by simply optimizing their existing systems.
- In Federal Way, WA, owners of a 105,000 sq. ft. building realized 50% ROI on their investment in the first year. It is projected to reach 135% at the end of their 3-year contract.
- One building in Seattle had an ENERGY STAR rating of 99. Not satisfied, MacDonald-Miller tuned the systems through programming changes and saved the owner \$145,000 over the next year. It was the first high rise in the country to score an ENERGY STAR rating of 100.

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