



## q&a

**Paul Martin, Managing Director of TEAM (Energy Auditing Agency Ltd), answers some of the key questions about the process of reducing an organisation's energy bills.**

### your key questions answered

#### **Energy management is such a broad area, where is the best place to start?**

The first thing to do is to build up an accurate picture of how much energy your organisation is consuming now. Only then can you pinpoint areas where you need to make improvements.

The Carbon Trust offers a free, on-site survey for organisations with annual energy bills of over £50,000. The findings of this survey will identify energy saving opportunities and offer practical advice on how to put them into practice.

There are other independent surveys available if your organisation is not eligible for a Carbon Trust survey, or if you require a more broad ranging audit to take in other utilities such as water services.

#### **How affordable are energy saving measures and how long will it take to see a return on investment?**

It does not have to be costly to start taking steps to reduce energy bills. A number of effective measures can be identified almost immediately – many of which are low-cost and even no-cost solutions.

Typically, energy surveys will identify potential savings of about 25% on your current energy spend through the introduction of some common sense, practical and realistic measures. Most of these potential savings can be achieved by using no-cost or low-cost solutions that can be paid for out of the current year's revenue budget. A great example of a no-cost solution is simply ensuring that everyone in an office switches off their PC at the end of the day. You'd be amazed how many are left on overnight!

With energy prices rising rapidly, even where there is a cost involved, the return on investment is getting shorter all the time.

#### **How important is it to get employees on board?**

It is very important that staff are consulted and involved in energy saving initiatives, as they hold the key to making change happen. I would recommend that organisations carry out awareness raising exercises – through notice boards and intranets for example – to ensure that employees understand that through some very simple actions we can all contribute to making some very valuable savings.



For a full list of frequently asked questions, please visit:  
[www.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk](http://www.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk)

There is growing support for energy conservation and management, and so it is increasingly about letting employees know what these simple steps are.

**Many organisations are too busy to fully scrutinise bills and worry about making overpayments. What can be done about this?**

It is very common for organisations to make overpayments on their energy bills, as it is very resource intensive and time consuming to detect billing errors and chase repayments.

The most efficient and cost effective way of ensuring you are paying the correct amount is to outsource to a bureau service. The bureau will receive bills directly from your supplier and validate them for errors. If an error is found, the bureau service will pursue this with your supplier on your behalf and ensure the cost is recovered and paid back to your organisation.

Common errors include being charged for incorrect sites and inaccurate VAT and unit rates. Savings of approximately 3% can typically be achieved by outsourcing to a bureau service. In my experience organisations find that the savings achieved almost always outweigh the cost of the service.

**Is there any financial help available for energy management projects that require capital investment?**

There are various loans available to the public sector but it is important to do your research before making a decision. Currently schemes for the public sector are available through the Local Authority Energy Financing Scheme ([www.salixfinance.co.uk](http://www.salixfinance.co.uk)) and the Department for Communities and Local Government ([www.gos.gov.uk/national](http://www.gos.gov.uk/national)). The Low Carbon Buildings Programme from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform can provide assistance if you are considering renewable projects ([www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk](http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk)).

It is worth approaching your energy supplier if you have a high-profile project in mind, and your Regional Development Agency may be able to help too. The London Energy Agency may be able to provide assistance for projects in the capital.

**For those with many other responsibilities beyond energy management and conservation, what other options are available?**

There is an excellent TEAM Flexible Energy Manager (FEM) service provided through OGCBuying.solutions, which provides you with

the benefits of having an experienced energy manager on hand, but without the costs and overheads associated with employing a full-time member of staff. A Flexible Energy Manager will manage every aspect of your energy spend.

You can negotiate the amount of hours you require from the FEM, which may be dependent on a specific project. The amount of time the FEM spends with you can be structured to suit your organisation's needs.

FEMs will assess your energy consumption, discuss the opportunities for reductions with you and then implement the measures that you have agreed. Their role encompasses producing your energy strategy, project management, sourcing suppliers and securing funding. They can also carry out exercises to raise staff awareness and provide general energy saving advice to employees.

Under OGCBuying.solutions' Energy Managed Service, TEAM provides energy bureau services including: data collection and management; invoice validation and recovery; reporting; and software and consultancy for effective energy and utility management. For more details on the Energy Managed Service visit [www.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk](http://www.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk) or call 0845 410 2222.

