



# The Evolution of the 7-Point Challenge

Suppliers Endorse Challenge, Bring Innovation and New Technology to Marketplace

By Laura Horsley

**T**his July will mark three years since the 7-Point Challenge was introduced to the commercial real estate industry, and, in that time, more than 120 commercial real estate companies and BOMA local associations have endorsed the Challenge, representing more than three billion square feet of office space.

Market transformation is happening. As Challenge endorsers work to meet the goals of the program, they are implementing strategies, technologies and tools to enhance energy management and reduce consumption. And, as the 7-Point Challenge has gained recognition across the industry, it has evolved to include government agencies, such as EPA ENERGY STAR®, as well as city and county municipalities.

The evolution of the Challenge continues with the recent announcement by BOMA International that BOMA

associate members—providers of products and services to the commercial real estate industry—are now being called on to institute sustainable practices in their business operations and endorse the 7-Point Challenge.

Similar to the goals of the original 7-Point Challenge, BOMA associate members will be asked to decrease energy consumption by 30 percent by 2012 in their corporate facilities. Beyond that, the Challenge asks vendor endorsers to reach milestones specific to their business, including the development and enhancement of cost-effective, green product solutions for the BOMA community, actively participating in public-private partnerships to identify voluntary energy-efficiency strategies for existing buildings and working with policymakers to enact incentive programs to aid implementation of green strategies. (See sidebar

for all seven goals of the Challenge.)

“Suppliers of commercial building products and services play an integral role in optimizing energy efficiency and sustainability in our industry,” notes BOMA International Chair James A. Peck, RPA, FMA, senior director of asset services, CB Richard Ellis. “By signing on to the Challenge, BOMA associate members demonstrate to their customers, peers and the industry at large that they are committed to providing green solutions that benefit the environment and the bottom line.”

## Walking the Walk

IB Roof Systems was among the first BOMA associate members to endorse the 7-Point Challenge. For Shawn Stanley, marketing director with IB Roof Systems, adopting the Challenge fit in with IB Roof Systems’ sustainable initiatives. A company that has been carbon-neutral since 2008, IB Roof Systems follows a corporate pledge to, among other things, continue to be carbon-neutral, continue to network with sustainable partners and continue to produce roof systems that maintain long-term high reflectivity. “When we looked at the 7-Point Challenge, we saw that it was right in line with what we’re already doing,” says Stanley. “As far back as the early ’80s, we were touting reflective roofing as a way to reduce energy costs. Back then, energy costs were so low, people didn’t care.”

With the steady increase in energy costs, people now care quite a bit, and energy-efficient and sustainable products are becoming the smart solution to both offset rising costs and improve a company’s carbon footprint. Says Stanley, “Regardless of someone’s incentive to become more energy efficient, whether it be about the bottom line or for environmental reasons, these types of technologies are fantastic. Any time we can reduce our dependence on resources, the better we’re going to be.”

Acuity Brands, another early endorser of the 7-Point Challenge, looks inward as much as it looked outward when developing a sustainability

mission. "Taking this challenge helps businesses retain their clients and employees," explains Cheryl English, vice president of Market & Industry Development with Acuity Brands. "In our operation, employees are critical about the working environment. It becomes a more satisfying place for them to work."

Acuity Brands has established an e-mail forum, called "Green Ideas," that allows employees to identify where they see environmental waste or suggest opportunities for improvement. Since Acuity Brands began vigorously pursuing energy-efficiency and sustainable initiatives in 2006, it has reduced electricity by 42 percent in its Georgia headquarters building and has achieved 35-percent waste diversion. One of the company plants in Edison, N.J., has a 75-percent waste diversion.

## Bringing Solutions to the Marketplace

Goal One of the BOMA Associate Member 7-Point Challenge is to continuously develop, enhance and market energy-efficient and cost-effective new product and service offerings to the BOMA community. IB Roof Systems has been developing energy-efficient reflective roofing since the '70s, and it's a product that not only reduces the heat load on roofs through reflection, but also has a life expectancy of up to 30 years. "We have always had a very long life-cycle in our products," says Stanley. "Other roofing materials last 10 to 12 years. We have proof in the real world: Roofs we put on in 1979 are still functioning."

IB Roof Systems' designs also support solar energy on its roof systems. The once cost-prohibitive technology is becoming more and more affordable. "What makes solar attractive are the state and federal incentives that go along with it, plus prices have come down significantly in the past couple years," says Stanley. "Today, you can have a payback of two or three years on a solar energy system; before, the payback could have been 20 years."

Tax incentives are often the key to



## 7-Point Challenge for BOMA Associate Members

- 1** Continuously develop, enhance and market new product and service offerings to the BOMA community, giving members innovative and **cost-effective solutions** to deploy in the reduction of energy use in existing buildings.
- 2** Demonstrate leadership by working towards a goal to decrease energy consumption by **30 percent**, in comparison to an average building, by 2012 and implement sustainable strategies in their corporate facilities.
- 3** Actively participate in **public-private partnerships** (such as the DOE's Energy Alliances) to identify voluntary energy-efficiency strategies with proven results and application to existing buildings.
- 4** Share research and/or case studies on building operating and management practices, equipment replacement or building retrofit projects, etc., that achieve the goal of reducing energy consumption and result in a **positive ROI**.
- 5** Work with policymakers to enact **voluntary**, incentive-based programs to accomplish their goals of implementing green strategies.
- 6** Work cooperatively within the consensus-model building codes process to **develop responsible energy codes** and green buildings standards that reduce energy consumption, utilizing cost-effective and proven technologies.
- 7** Provide opportunities and support for company employees to participate in **education programs** about energy conservation and sustainable practices.

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## Cities and Counties Embrace 7-Point Challenge

Across the country, local governments are tapping into the power of BOMA International’s 7-Point Challenge, the innovative energy reduction plan designed to achieve market transformation in the commercial real estate industry. Through the grassroots outreach of BOMA local associations, five local governments—Albuquerque; Denver; Orlando; Orange County, Fla.; and Phoenix—have embraced the Challenge.

To fully maximize the Challenge’s impact at this level, these governments are incorporating its principles into their existing sustainability strategies. In conjunction with the private sector, they are also providing education and training offerings as a way to apply successful energy-saving techniques used by the commercial real estate industry in government buildings. In addition, they are encouraging other cities and counties to sign on. These endorsements confirm local governments’ willingness to work with the commercial real estate industry to position their cities for long-term sustainable growth and reduce energy consumption in the process.

getting the most efficient products at an affordable price. At *The Every Building Show*<sup>®</sup>, coming in June to the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center in Los Angeles County, Calif., staff from Acuity Brands will be discussing tax incentives that BOMA members should be taking advantage of for energy-efficient lighting. These incentives can make cutting-edge lighting products, like LED and Solid State Lighting, more affordable. Acuity Brands also recognizes the value of traditional types of lighting systems. “We provide volumetric lighting solutions, which are ‘kits’ that can replace components in existing lighting, and often reduce lighting energy by as much as 50 percent with minimal disruption to business operations and improved lighting quality,” says English.

## Success Through Partnering

Goals Three and Five ask 7-Point Challenge endorsers to participate in public-private partnerships and work with policymakers to identify and enact voluntary energy-efficiency strategies, respectively. Acuity Brands has forged partnerships with a number of groups, including the Department of Energy (DOE) Commercial Building Alliance and Retailer Energy Alliance, the Clinton Climate Initiative and the U.S. Green Building Council. It also helped establish the California Lighting Technology Center (CLTC), which utilizes public funds to research and install demonstration facilities in promoting energy efficiency, and has been recognized several times as an ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year.

Acuity Brands has also been involved on the legislative front in California and Capitol Hill. “We have been very active

in policy development,” says English. “We worked with energy advocates and members of Congress to develop consensus language for outdoor lighting regulations that save energy and promote good lighting quality.”

That involvement also includes working to establish criteria in the Building Star program currently being considered by Congress. This program, if passed, would provide attractive incentives for interior and exterior lighting renovations. On the state side, Acuity Brands is involved with the California Energy Commission in the development of energy standards in Title 24 and Title 20.

IB Roof Systems has also been closely following the Building Star program and has communicated with Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), who introduced the Building Star legislation this past March, to help establish a reflective roof component. “We have been working with the Senator’s office to show him that, to make the bill more complete, you need the energy efficiencies from reflective roofs along with adequate insulation,” says Stanley, who adds that the problem with just relying on insulation for energy reduction is that it “doesn’t improve concerns, such as the urban heat island effect,” that are addressed through reflective roofs.

The vendor addendum to the 7-Point Challenge allows suppliers and BOMA associate members to participate in market transformation by reducing energy consumption across their corporate facilities, while also providing the products, solutions and expertise to help BOMA members reach their energy-efficiency goals. Ultimately, though, the 7-Point Challenge is successful and continues to evolve because the market is ready, the business case is there and the solutions are before us. ■

For more information on the 7-Point Challenge, visit [www.boma.org/getinvolved/7pointchallenge](http://www.boma.org/getinvolved/7pointchallenge). To accept the Challenge, contact James Cox at [jcox@boma.org](mailto:jcox@boma.org).