



Energy Management = SEX

The title of this article sounds cheesy... but I have got your attention. Most practicing energy managers are adults, have many years of experience in both subject matters and know the difference. Cheesy as it sounds, there are a lot of similarities between energy management and sex, and there are many transferable knowledge and skills.

For the launch of the EMA Magazine, let's take a light-hearted journey of SEX, I mean, energy management...

1 Everyone is doing it, yet people are 'shy' to acknowledge it.

Many people are switching off lights at home, powering down the TV before bed. Some people are turning down the thermostat in preference for thicker clothing or voluntarily reporting a faulty air conditioning unit or leaky windows and doors. There are people who are consciously replacing their light bulbs with LEDs, taking the bicycle, car-pooling or taking public transport and looking at energy labels when buying new appliances. All of this has an impact on reducing energy consumption at home and at work. Yes, many do it for non-energy saving reasons, but the effect is the same: you already know how to save energy and are doing it.

2 Those new to it want lots of it, and they want it quick. Those who become aware of their daily activities and energy savings, tend to want energy savings as if there is no tomorrow. Although these efforts and aspirations are commendable, just like any daily routine, people do not save energy 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There will be time to convince others to join your cause. Some times, it is just not the right time: you need to focus your attention to other activities; you are in the middle of a crisis; saving energy hinders your ability to do productive work; you need to coordinate with others for the perfect time to get things done.

3 It is fun when people other than yourself are involved. An interesting observation is that when it comes to energy management, many would pre-



fer to go at it solo. Experience shows that you will need to involve people for generating ideas and cross-fertilising ideas to make them better. You need to get colleagues on-board; seek cooperation; obtain permission and/or resources for implementation; and sustain the achieved savings. Evidence from psychology and social science indicates that celebrating successful endeavours as a team is often more enjoyable and motivating than solo celebration. It also encourages further collaboration that brings about more energy reduction. Engaging people also soothes personal egos and may help you achieve success faster.

4 Many are obsessed with acquiring new toys, but it is using them at the right time that counts. As most want to undertake energy management on their own, they rely on applying energy efficient technologies: buy the latest electric car; retrofit with the greenest condensing boiler; install the coolest LED light. Research by Cambridge University and the Fraunhofer Institute

suggests that there are technologies to reduce 70% of all energy consumption. Yet, on a global basis, figures from International Energy Agency reports a 1% reduction due to energy efficiency. In fact, there are simpler means to achieve energy savings. As an alternative to LED lighting, you can either turn off the light or reduce the number of light fittings in the room. In the case of boiler retrofit, the heating system may operate at a set point at which condensation does not occur.

5 What works for one might not work for another. As discussed before, there are many tools and techniques available in the market and not all will suit your needs and expectations. There are relatively few that meet everyone's needs universally. The selected method needs to fit the context of the situation. It's good practice to learn about them to find out how they are applicable to you. Once you have made the selection, many also assume that buying energy efficient equipment would automatically result in reduced energy consumption. This is far from the truth — they also need to be installed and implemented correctly. Finally, the new method of operation needs to be reinforced and embedded until it becomes a normal habit.

6 Too much of a good thing can leave you bored and drained. Many also think that energy management is about applying a series or barrage of best practice tools and techniques. Energy management efforts can become tiresome, boring, and burn you out if your practice is purely to implement best practice. In fact, too much best practice can be a bad thing if it does not support you or move you in the right direction. So, a masterplan of where you want to be, mini steps of getting there and time-frames to check progress are essential.

7 Good practices can be learned. As with all good things, good energy management practices can be learned. It does not require you to be schooled up as an energy engineer or be capable of doing detailed technical stuff. As it turns out, a basic grounding of technical skills, a good glug of people skills, a sprinkling of an inquisitive mind and a bucket load of common sense can go a long way to great energy management.

There you go, seven transferrable skills from SEX into energy management. While I am almost 100% certain that you will be having more sex than energy management, you are all energy managers... even if at an amateur stage. So, next time you are about to get between the sheets, ask yourself if the energy consuming equipment needs to be ON? If not, consider turning it off or down and save some dosh.

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