

An Interview:

Swiss Re Leads the Way as Commercial Tenants Cut Carbon Emissions with NYSERDA

John Clifford, Head of Corporate Real Estate & Services (CRES) Americas for Swiss Re, one of the largest international reinsurance companies, discusses their recent NYC office upgrades.

Through participation in NYSERDA's Commercial Tenant Program, Swiss Re channeled their sustainability goals into their new LEED-certified office space on 6th Avenue. The space boasts more than an outdoor terrace with Central Park views; it is also energy efficient and designed with carbon reductions in mind. In the interview, John shares what the project entailed and how it is benefiting the company. Swiss Re heard about the Commercial Tenant program through their engineering consultant, Robert Derector Associates.

Tell us about your company and why energy efficiency is important to you.

The Swiss Re Group is a leading wholesale provider of reinsurance, insurance, and other insurance-based forms of risk transfer. Sustainability and resilience are key topics in all our operations, particularly real estate projects, and are integrated in our office design and performance. At Swiss Re, we firmly believe it is important for a responsible company to minimize its environmental footprint, thus leading by example. Our efforts are concentrated in areas such as reducing carbon emissions, increasing energy efficiency, and improving the careful use of limited resources.

What were your main drivers for participating in the program?

The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and therefore our overall impact on the environment in which we all live and work.

What types of measures did you study and/or install?

Swiss Re installed:

- High efficiency LED lighting
- Solar film on glazing
- Occupancy and daylighting controls
- Energy demand controls to reduce consumption
- Certified ENERGY STAR® equipment and fixtures
- Motion-sensing and automatic water fixtures

Along with the list of measures to the side, we installed a holistic recycling program and have achieved overall reduction in the use of paper and plastic.

Our IT department set all compatible devices to utilize the "sleep mode" as the default function to reduce energy consumption.

A campaign encouraging employees to use the internal staircase versus the elevator is currently in progress. We have also replaced vending machines with fresh and seasonal fruits and similar healthy snacks.

Measures and Estimated Annual Savings

Measure Description	Energy Savings (MMBtu)
Equipment	
 Occupancy Controls	34
Efficient Hot Water Fixtures	3
ENERGY STAR® Equipment	287
Automatic Plug Load Control	71
Computer Sleep Mode	122
Solar Film on Glazing	1,040
Stair Use Campaign	23
Lighting	
 Daylighting Controls	1
Reduced Lighting Power	109
High Efficiency LED Lighting	198
Total Savings	1,890

Now that the project is complete, how are the results comparing to your expectations?

We are still evaluating the actual benefits. However, by reducing the use of steam for the entire building and the use of electricity by Swiss Re, the annual reduction in greenhouse gas emission equivalency is projected to be 115 tons per year and an annual cost saving in excess of \$100,000.

What do you think are the most beneficial results of participating?

Employees consistently express interest in the company's efforts to reduce our carbon footprint, and this ties back to the Swiss Re global initiative for the environment. Further, our employees pride themselves on contributing to the positive difference that Swiss Re makes in its operations and the fact we lead by example.

How was your property manager/building owner involved in the process? Were they onboard and interested in working with you for the project?

This property is LEED-certified through the landlord, which fostered a partnership where they were integrated into our planning for the project. For example, the landlord installed solar film to our windows, which helps reduce our overall energy consumption.

Has this process changed your relationship and how you work with your property manager/building owner?

Swiss Re always looks for ways to actively partner and create beneficial working relationships with all our landlords. This project is another great example of this philosophy.

Does your company have any corporate sustainability goals? Has this project helped work toward achieving those goals?

Swiss Re has a long-standing and firm commitment to corporate responsibility. Swiss Re has been an industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index since 2004 through programs such as our goal to improve the company's energy efficiency by 2% per year per full time employee and commitment to RE100. Another example is our investment in solar plants to help reduce our electrical consumption in our large facilities in New York and Bangalore.

This article was written for NYSEERDA's Commercial Tenant Program (CTP), which offers financial assistance for energy studies in tenant spaces.

Learn more about NYSEERDA's Commercial Tenant Program.

Visit nyserda.ny.gov/ctp

