

Potters brings energy, and profitability, under their control

Case Study

Company Name:
Potters Industries

Business Type:
Glass manufacturer

Location:
Potsdam, NY



Overview

Potters Industries is a 102-year-old company that operates a manufacturing facility in Potsdam. Potters is world-renowned for its precision engineered glass materials, which are used in a wide variety of applications, from highway safety striping to industrial explosives. With so many customers in different industries depending on its products, Potters' three priorities have always been safety, quality, and timeliness.

In November 2017, NYSERDA offered Potters an opportunity to focus on how it could incorporate energy efficiency into its business operations—a chance to save energy and improve its profit margin while maintaining its stringent standards.

NYSERDA's free SEM program helps industry grow

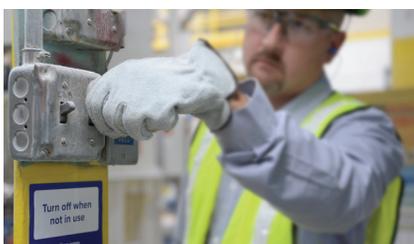
For Potters, energy costs have always been a significant and sometimes volatile expense. In 2017 NYSERDA invited Potters to participate in a pilot program aimed at helping the State's industrial sector save energy through a new approach to energy efficiency: strategic energy management (SEM).

During the pilot program, Potters gained access to powerful SEM tools:

- One-on-one coaching with SEM experts in industrial technology and employee engagement.
- An onsite "treasure hunt" that brought together staff from across the company to uncover hidden energy-saving opportunities.
- Energy modeling to learn where and how energy was being overused throughout Potters' facility to help prioritize and evaluate projects.

“This is a fraction of a Level 2 audit cost. And instead of empowering one guy, you’ve empowered your team. The results could be exponential.”

—Jason Bell,
Potters’ Energy Manager



Empowering people, and businesses, to save energy

Jason Bell, Potters’ Energy Manager, learned that practicing strategic energy management opens people’s eyes to opportunities for cost savings. Prior to its participation in the program, Potters’ staff took high energy bills for granted as one of the costs of doing business. Now, everyone at the facility is beginning to see how his or her individual actions can help keep energy use low and profit margins healthy. In fact, much of the progress Potters has made so far has resulted from individuals considering energy use within the scope of what they do and suggesting adjustments.

“SEM helps us build operators rather than maintainers,” said Jason. “People who will help drive the process rather than just sit in a control booth and make sure bells and whistles don’t go off.”

Potters’ SEM-driven improvements include:

- **Compressed air reduced by 15%**—By repairing leaks and lowering supply pressure.
- **Furnace upgrades**—Including completely reworking one furnace, replacing the liner on another, and adding a new heat recovery unit to eliminate the need to operate additional drying equipment.

NYSERDA is contributing \$270,000 toward the cost of the dryer and furnace upgrades through its Industrial Process and Efficiency program. Potters’ electric utility, National Grid, has also contributed several thousand dollars in efficient equipment rebates. Many more projects are in the works, with projected savings and paybacks that have everyone excited.

SEM paves the way for a new era of energy efficiency

The NYSERDA pilot has been eye-opening for everyone at Potters. Everyone, from personnel on the shop floor to upper management, is more aware of their roles in saving money for the company through energy efficiency. Employees in Potsdam are currently reaching out to their colleagues at other Potters sites in North America to share their experiences and learn about energy efficiency successes that other teams have had at their sites, that they could implement at Potsdam.

If Jason were to say one thing to other businesses about the program, it’s this: “This is a fraction of a Level 2 audit cost. And instead of empowering one guy, you’ve empowered your team. The results could be exponential.”

The NYSERDA Strategic Energy Management Program

Through the Strategic Energy Management Program, NYSERDA funds training that guides companies and their employees through the process of establishing and implementing an SEM system. The program helps companies apply the principles of continuous improvement to energy management, to create a long-term comprehensive approach that fosters substantial long-term savings.

Discover how to bring energy costs, and profitability, under control with NYSERDA.

Visit nyserdera.ny.gov/SEM

