

Future-proofing offices: How businesses can shield workplaces from energy costs in 2023 and beyond

Just when we all thought that working from home would become the norm, the cost-of-living crisis pushed many to return back to the office. Energy costs went through the roof, and employees saw the office comeback as an opportunity to save on their energy bills.

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But what's more interesting is that we could continue to see working habits change on a seasonal basis throughout 2023. With the economy showing no signs of being a linear journey this year either, workers will continue to come and go as their energy bills and personal finances see fit. Truth be told, this phenomenon might even last out 2023 with the energy crisis expected to last until at least 2024.

As such, it's important that businesses shield themselves from these ever changing trends, as notable changes in office use can have a tangible impact on the business bottom line.

The good news is that companies can finally future-proof their energy consumption with smart energy optimisation solutions that don't break the bank. Some of the measures below are already helping organisations in the UK keep their energy bills under control ahead of an unpredictable year.

Explore energy-flexibility services

Some of the most forward-thinking companies in the UK are already using 'energy flexibility' services to cope with soaring energy costs. In fact, amidst the changes in office use, leading organisations headquartered in London such as the Financial Times and law firm Pinsent Masons are currently deploying these services to intelligently cut their overall energy consumption without having workers notice.

Interestingly, these services not only enable organisations to save energy and money, but they create new revenue streams for businesses. Here's how: as their technology automatically adjusts energy consumption in accordance with grid operators' supply, they get a financial compensation in exchange. To be more precise, these rewards can rise to as much as £3,000 per MWh.

And that's not all. The best part of these services is that they don't even require a capital investment or even the slightest tech overhaul - it only takes the quick instalment of a small device to monitor and regulate the infrastructure's energy consumption.

Don't underestimate interior design

Interior design is often associated with aesthetics, but it shouldn't. The benefits of having the right interior decoration can have a huge impact on energy efficiency. So if your company wants to reduce the office's energy bills, this area is a good place to start.

I often advise clients to not miss out on the small changes that can make a big difference. For example, rearranging the office furniture so that the most populated areas exploit the office's warmest spots is something many people overlook. You could even go bolder and move the kitchen - which workers only use for a short period of time - into one of the colder

areas.

In short, it's critical that companies assess which areas their employees use most in the office and then make the appropriate adjustments in interior design.

Proof doors and windows from draughts

The level of protection buildings have from cold draughts of air truly varies - even amongst new buildings. This is something that needs to be addressed as these draughts often enter through loose fittings which can reduce the overall temperature of the building.

The easiest way to check for these imperfections is to run a finger along the cracks between closed doors and windows and the frames that hold them in place. If you'll feel a breeze, it's a draught coming through.

These fixes usually only require small adjustments to latches and hinges. The doors and windows should fit their frames as tightly as possible. Similarly, you could invest in draught-proof strips.

Chantel Scheepers, CEO of *OakTree Power*.