



Free Energy for Sale... Are You Buying?

Every once in awhile I walk into a room at home and discover that someone has left the lights on. Sometimes it's the TV. Other times the stereo. I have four kids between the ages of nine and 16, so it happens more often than I'd like. It's not that they're bad kids, or that they're careless. In fact, if you spent any time with them, I'm sure you'd agree that they're smart, responsible and thoughtful.

But sometimes they get distracted. Occasionally, they need to be reminded of the impact of their decisions. Saving energy isn't always their first concern.

In some ways, they're a lot like engineers.

Of course, engineers have a lot more responsibility than just turning off the lights—and the distractions that keep them from focusing on saving energy aren't trivial. Very often, cost, timing and organizational momentum—that

compulsion to continue doing things the way you've always done them—can be overpowering factors in the decision-making process. Budgets may be decided by people in business suits more concerned about the bottom line than saving the environment.

So maybe it's a little unfair to compare engineers to my children. But then again, maybe not. Engineers make a lot of decisions regarding the energy consumption of the machinery they design and operate. And one of the easiest ways to save energy is to use more energy efficient equipment. Improving energy efficiency should be an easy sell. Everyone knows it's in our best interest. Everyone knows it's the smart thing to do. After all, who wants to be wasteful?

Even at the highest levels of industry, business and government, energy efficiency is at the forefront of thinking. For example, President Barack Obama's

2012 State of the Union address was peppered with ideas about how energy efficiency can save money, create jobs and lead to energy independence. "The easiest way to save money is to waste less energy," he said. It's not exactly a controversial idea, either. Democrats, Republicans, Independents—everyone's jumped on that particular bandwagon. Even my kids agree that saving energy is a smart idea.

So what's stopping us?

In this issue, we've delved into the topic of energy efficiency with Matt Jaster's article on page 19. We've talked to several companies who are keenly interested in helping you make the most of the equipment you design or operate. They're experts in developing more efficient processes, recovering energy and upgrading systems. You might also be interested in reading William Gilbert's article on page 42, which examines ways to save energy in the drive systems of paper converting plants. If you're interested in making a difference with your designs or the machinery you operate, both articles are definitely worth a read.

I know—it's easy to continue doing what you've always done. Sometimes you have to convince some guy in a suit that it's the right thing to do. But if Democrats, Republicans and my kids can all agree, then it shouldn't be too hard to get everyone else on board, too.

Randy Stott,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Stott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Managing Editor

