

Taking the "LEED" in Office Space



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LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a rating system developed by the *U.S. Green Building Council*. The LEED system awards bronze, silver, gold and platinum certifications to buildings based on a checklist of environmentally sensitive requirements and amenities.

Adobe Systems Inc. spends \$1.4 million *upgrading its San Jose, Calif., headquarters in 2006* and saved \$1.2 million a year since then. \$400,000 in tax rebates allowed the company to return its investment in just 9 1/2 months, according to Buildings magazine. Similarly, New York landlord Anthony Malkin is engaged in a retrofit of the landmark Empire State Building.

"For the small business, LEED for Commercial Interiors (LEED-CI) provides the opportunity for an individual tenant to earn LEED certification for its office space," explained Tom Doherty of *WB Engineers*.

Here are some of the areas in which a small business can take steps toward LEED-CI certification:

Site Selection: If a small business is in the process of looking for office space and has future LEED-CI certification in mind, it can start by taking green building strategies into consideration during its site selection process. The green efforts that are taken by a building will contribute to a tenant's LEED-CI qualifications, so when choosing a space, ask about building initiatives such as these:

- Water reduction systems
- Renewable energy
- Storm water control, both in quantity and quality
- Light pollution reduction

- The "heat island" effect of the building. Buildings can take steps such as "white roofs," which reflect more heat and reduce the building's contribution to the city's "heat island."

Water Efficiency: A small business that has moved into an office space can earn credit towards its LEED-CI certification by reducing its water use by 30%, 35%, and 40% below the baseline for tenant spaces.

Energy and Atmosphere: A tenant will also earn credit toward LEED-CI certification for optimizing its energy use. The tenant will earn more or less credit depending upon the percentage by which energy use is reduced. Ways to optimize energy include:

- Installing energy-efficient, ENERGY Star-rated equipment and appliances
- Reducing lighting power
- Installing lighting controls, such as day light controls and occupancy sensors, to minimize wasted energy
- HVAC equipment efficiency, zoning and controls, and energy cost reduction