

Case Study: Cost Savings through Energy Conservation

Putting the spotlight on energy savings, employee morale, and improved safety Main Steel improves quality of lighting at Bartlett, IL plant, saves on energy costs

➔ **The Situation**

Main Steel Polishing Company, Inc, a New Jersey-based metals processor, has been serving the aerospace, automotive, commercial and home appliance, food service equipment, and transportation markets (to name a few), for the last 50 years. Main Steel operates 10 processing facilities throughout the U.S. and Mexico, and proudly states that it neither buys nor sells any of the hundreds of million pounds of metal it processes.

Main Steel also maintains a membership in the private buying group Prime Advantage in order to gain access to new customers, as well as a broad list of qualified Suppliers that are audited according to a strict set of standards to ensure competitiveness and quality.

➔ **The Issue**

Main Steel's Bartlett, IL plant specializes in polishing and processing aluminum and stainless steel, catering to residential and commercial stainless steel appliances and the truck and trailer market. In 2005, Main Steel began a project to replace the lighting in its Bartlett building totaling 95,000 sq. ft.

➔ **The Program**

Through Main Steel's membership with Prime Advantage, the processor was able to assess options in solving its lighting problem. The industrial supply company Grainger, which has been a Prime Advantage Endorsed Supplier for many years, initially approached Main Steel at Prime Advantage's fall conference in 2004. Following the conference Prime Advantage organized a visit for Grainger and a lighting representative at the Bartlett plant in order to understand the current situation.

Luis Saez, general manager for the facility, oversaw the project which had also been recommended by the company's insurance provider in order to improve safety.

Main Steel planned to replace the lighting in one of the buildings, which measured 15,000 sq. ft. The retro-fitting project, which saw new lights installed in place of older lighting equipment, made an immediate difference at the facility, one that Main Steel employees noticed and enjoyed.

"The new lighting in the building made a significant improvement in visibility. It was as if someone had installed skylights, because it looked like daylight inside the building," said Saez. "The workers in the plant had complained in the past about the glare the old lighting cast when they wore their required safety glasses. Now with the new lights the glare is almost completely gone and we have a more comfortable work environment."

Over the past year and a half, the Bartlett facility has been gradually replacing its lighting row by row. Currently, Main Steel has converted half of its 95,000 sq. ft. The Bartlett plant is expecting to have the entire facility newly retro-fitted by 2008. In 2006, Main Steel built an addition of 10,000 sq. ft. which was immediately fitted with the new lighting.

The new lighting has not only made a noticeable improvement in the working conditions, but it has also been influential in cutting Main Steel's energy costs. It is estimated that Main Steel

saves at least \$2500 per year with the new lighting. The longer life span on the new lights has also improved, reducing the cost of replacement.

As an added benefit to the new and improved lighting, Main Steel has established a solid business relationship with Grainger. "Grainger has become a key Supplier for a variety of products for us. We are always getting the best deals through Grainger and the vendors it works with," said Saez.

→ **Background**

Prime Advantage is a private buying group dedicated to bringing its clients the best possible savings on raw materials, components, supplies and services. By combining the purchasing power of industrial manufacturers, Prime Advantage negotiates volume rebates and discounts with an exclusive group of world-class global Suppliers.

Through its privileged relationships, Prime Advantage provides savings on direct and indirect goods and services, as well as access to world-class Suppliers that provide additional value added services customized to the specific needs of Prime Advantage Members.

