



Background

Environmentally friendly products continue to become more reliable and inexpensive. More developers demand these products and building techniques be used in construction. However, information on these products is often confusing and incomplete. There is high demand for a tool that can help assist in bringing about a well informed transition from industry standard building practices and products, to green alternatives, as well as cut down on miscommunication between architects and contractors.

Goals

- Develop a website to host a user-friendly online database of green technology information for the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA) of the City of Chicago.
- Developing a template for the website was the primary focus for the first semester, due to the time constraint.
- Provide data on green electrical products with cut sheets, pricing and distributor information, return on investment projections, and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification facts.
- Set the ground work in research and industry contacts to facilitate completion in future semesters.

Methodology

There were two major components involved with completing the goals for this semester. The first was accumulation of data and the second was organizing the data into a workable template for a website. The team accomplished the task of accumulating the needed information by dividing into five sub-teams. These teams were lighting, power distribution, heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC), waste management, and the LEED certification process itself. In order to design the website the entire team created a flow chart, and then each sub team entered information where appropriate. A final team was then created which was responsible for the web page design and to create the initial website. Also, throughout the semester, each member took on individual roles and assignments which best suited his or her talents.

Obstacles

- Determining specific goal that would benefit the electrical contractors in the process of going green.
- Establishing scope of work for timeframe established.
- Grasping the terminology and the concept of the project by individuals not familiar with construction industry.
- Obtaining pricing and return on investment for products because so much of the industry uses job specific bidding.

In order to resolve these issues, research was done on LEED and on green technology. Discussions during team meetings with group sponsors and members helped the team establish a clear goal.

Accomplishments & Recommendations

This team has successfully organized a model from which future teams can expand. At this time a number of important industry contacts have been made and a template for future research is available. The ECA is already fully involved, but it is recommended that future teams attempt to gain the support of other industry players such as architects and general contractors. This will make the website more comprehensive and create a tool to help the entire construction industry move to more environmentally friendly practices.