Avient Colorants USA LLC

WHY 50001 READY?

The U.S. Department of Energy's 50001 Ready program is a self-paced, no-cost way for organizations to build a culture of structured energy improvement that leads to deeper and sustained energy and costs savings. Recognition is available for facilities and organizations that self-attest to the implementation of an ISO 50001-based energy management system without external audits or certifications.

Overview

Avient Colorants USA LCC (Avient), headquartered in Avon Lake, OH, is a manufacturer of advanced composites, specialty polymers, color and additive systems, and more. End-use products include a wide range of everyday items such as shampoo and conditioner containers, as well as plastics for paint buckets and poker chips. A total of 37 sites spanning the United States and Canada include manufacturing plants, sales offices, and innovation centers. Avient's West Chicago facility, the focus of this case study, is a manufacturing plant.

Avient's West Chicago facility. Photo credit: Ed Stromek, EHS Manager at Avient (West Chicago).

Solutions

Staffed by roughly 130 employees, Avient's West Chicago, IL, facility is the first in the organization to participate in 50001 Ready. Having successfully implemented a 50001 Ready energy management system and achieved its 3-5% energy reduction goal, the West Chicago site team is now motivating other Avient facilities to pursue 50001 Ready recognition as well.

Key Takeaways: Implementing a 50001 Ready Energy Management System

- **Built-in resources:** The 50001 Ready Navigator provided a single location where Avient staff could organize and consolidate all of their tasks and progress. In reviewing the Navigator's sub-tasks, staff learned that they had already achieved several milestones, which cut down on the time required to implement an energy management system. This tool offered clear guidance regarding energy savings projects and other means of energy use improvement at Avient.
- **Corporate alignment:** The synergy between West Chicago's environmental and energy cost reduction goals (notably in electricity bills) and the broader 3% corporate carbon reduction target ensured the team's initiatives would be backed at the corporate level.

"Combining the SEM cohort with 50001 Ready helped us achieve corporate goals."

–Paige Stuart, Maintenance Manager and Energy Champion
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Avient Colorants has strengthened its commitment to energy and cost savings by participating in the DOE's 50001 Ready Cohort Training. This 6–12-month program was facilitated by CLEAResult and ComEd Energy Efficiency Programs that provided a combination of personalized expert assistance and peer-to-peer learning.

Click here to learn more

Energy reduction discussions during staff operations meeting. Photo credit: Ed Stromek, EHS Manager at Avient (West Chicago).

- **A reliable team:** Although West Chicago's energy team consisted of only two people, in conjunction with a strategic energy management coach, a total of 10 people (consisting of maintenance workers and mechanics) carried out the work necessary to implement 50001 Ready's energy management system. The effort resulted in a time commitment of no more than five hours per week, totaling 40 hours over two months.
- **Process Optimization:** Stemming from this heightened employee engagement and sense of responsibility, the Avient West Chicago facility saw direct improvements in the optimization of its operational processes. Empowered staff became more active in monitoring equipment use and contributing to ongoing enhancements, exemplified when an employee suggested installing green running lights on extruders for a clear visual indicator of their operational status—a practical process improvement. Furthermore, the implementation of the 50001 Ready system significantly bolstered communication between the facility and its staff. This system inherently underlined a shared responsibility in energy management, making continuous improvement more approachable and leading to significant, compounding returns through refined procedures and more effective teamwork.

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Other Benefits

The initiative at Avient West Chicago fostered a significant culture shift, starting with staff gaining a heightened awareness of energy use and practical ways to reduce it. This increased mindfulness translated into tangible changes in staff behavior, leading to more proactive energy reductions and a rise in employee-driven suggestions for energy- and cost-saving solutions. For example, after the installation of LED lights with occupancy sensors in some areas, staff developed an increased sense of responsibility, independently turning off lights in rooms lacking these sensors. These behavioral and cultural shifts proved helpful, as the ability to crowd-source information and rely on collective insight not only empowered employees but also cultivated a more conservation-conscious and efficient team environment.

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