

BEMCS Helping hotels meet the carbon challenge

The challenge facing hotels to monitor and manage their energy use goes beyond simple cost management measures, explains **MARK DREDGE** of Haden.



In today's world, the installation of a quality Building Energy Monitoring and Control System (BEMCS) is critical to reducing the carbon footprint of a hotel as desired in the 2020 initiative (2020) and to satisfy the desire of corporate travellers to demonstrate their green credentials through the accommodation they select.

Hotels are currently dealing with the competing demands of a clientele with increasingly sophisticated, high energy demands (eg temperature controlled rooms with individual setpoints, plasma TVs in standard rooms etc) and regulators requiring a reduction of energy use within all commercial buildings.

Energy costs are second only to staff costs in most hotels, so it is imperative to know where your energy is being used in order to better manage your systems. With mechanical services as one of the key consumers of energy (typically 50-60% of all energy consumed for a modern office) and water in many hotels during operation, this is the ideal place to start when looking at managing your hotel's running costs.

An energy benchmarking project by the Commonwealth Department of Resources, Energy and Infrastructure reported that best practice hotels are those which monitor and report on their energy use, focus on energy efficiency in their operations and during refurbishments or upgrades, and are proactive in their quest for progressive efficiency technology.

BEMCS's provide an ideal support tool for mandatory disclosure in existing and new hotels. Systems can be configured for whole building energy use, not only bedrooms and suites, but also facilities such as conference rooms, swimming pool areas and restaurants.

Simple, but effective systems

The new systems available on the market are easier to use, particularly for regular hotel staff. No longer does a duty manager need to wait for an engineer to reset temperature set points in a reception area or conference centre. Now, with new touch screens and interaction between mobile phones, staff can reset systems from anywhere so that staff can take back control of their venues, keep their guests happy and manage their schedules with a minimum of fuss.

The Cylon SiteGuide BEMCS has a simple three-button navigation for easy use. And because the SiteGuide uses an [IP] connection the whole hotel can be accessed from any location by the hotel staff.

Integration with reservation systems

In an important development for the industry, BEMCS's can now be integrated with the OPERA Reservation System from MICROS-Fidelio, the leading computer reservation system in hospitality. This allows the duty manager to maintain empty rooms at a lower energy setback temperature, reducing energy usage in these rooms but also ensuring that the temperature is maintained at a level that will not lead to mould or bacterial growth due to extremes in temperature and humidity. When a room is checked in using the reservation system, the BEMCS automatically restores the room to the standard comfort conditions for rooms in that particular part of the complex.

Using a UnitronUC32 system, for example, up to 2,000 rooms can be handled using a single gateway. Hotels which have stand alone fan coil control have other options that they can use, but many are taking this into consideration when upgrading and developing new specification so that the property will in future be fully networked.

Easy use for guests

BEMCS can also take input directly from guests through the use of user-friendly display systems in rooms that use individual fan coil units. Connecting the system to guests' key cards allows the room to be set back to an energy efficient setback temperature when the guest leaves the room, and automatically activated as soon as the guest returns, saving energy when the room is empty which often occurs for many hours during the day.

Smart hotels are making the move now to more efficient monitoring and reporting systems knowing that this is a great differentiator for many large corporate customers. This will

provide early adopters with an opportunity to thrive in the current economic crisis that we face today by reducing their energy consumption and costs while increasing their green credentials. ■

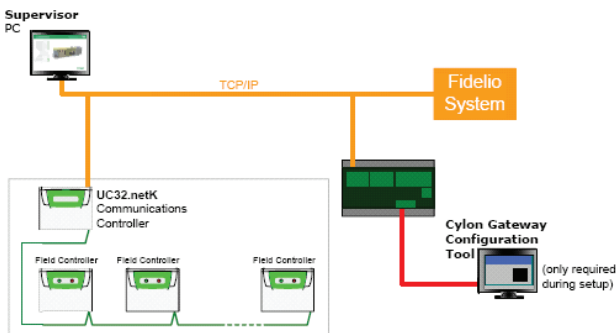
Mark Dredge is BEMCS Manager for Haden Engineering.

Haden is a leading provider of HVAC and mechanical services in Australia, holding the leading position in the Australian HVAC maintenance services market.

Website: www.haden.com.au Phone: 1300 4 HADEN (1300 442 336)

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When it comes to energy usage (Water or Electricity) and measurement a BEMCS system is an essential tool not only in reducing operational costs but in also providing continuous feedback to staff and guests, for a guest with green concerns being able to validate your claims is paramount, but if you could also include on their invoice CO2 footprint for their stay, even better.

Hotels taking part in Melbourne City Council's 'Savings in the City' program have demonstrated that there are still real gains are to be made by using a BEMCS tool. There is a tried-and-true process that should be used when evaluating the best way to improve energy management and reporting:

1. Identify the issue
2. Break the bigger issues into their smaller components
3. Establish a baseline
4. Provide feedback to management and staff
5. Develop and implement an action plan
6. Build energy reporting into your invoicing.
7. Develop a continuous plan to educate staff and guests.

ADVERTORIAL

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We met business owner and inventor Konrad Schuster of Global Bath Insert who spoke to us about the often uncomfortable subject of unloved and unhygienic Hotel Bathrooms.

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Konrad prides himself on being innovative and has worked over time to invent this eco friendly DIY Kit of the product, until recently, he offered only to a select few. His bath and shower inserts, tried and proven for over 2 decades, are now available for everyone to access and benefit from.

"The difference is astounding; one hotel updated their shower bases which assisted them in gaining an additional star on their rating; their prices were increased as was the value of the hotel. The new equity more than paid for the inserts!"

**Inventor and Entrepreneur
Konrad Schuster**

"My advice to managers is to always stay ahead of the pack..."

This product certainly allows you to do that!

"My advice to managers in accommodation is to always stay ahead of the pack; for us this is reflected right down to the fungal and mildew-repellent silicone we use when finishing our work."

Global Bath Insert offer a personalised service as well as the DIY component, Konrad even offers to come and train a team member for those less confident. An easy solution to make your hotel look and feel loved against a cost which will leave the finance department smiling. ■

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