

New Lights, New Look for Hilton Hotels



An Idea in the Making

In the hospitality industry, aesthetics are key. Many choices revolve around creating the ultimate customer experience. Guests want luxurious linens, exceptional cuisine and grand, open spaces in which to meet. There's one element that brings it all together: lighting.

When it came time to upgrade the lights at two Twin Cities hotels, management decided to replace the old, outdated lighting with brighter, more efficient options. Though different properties, there were similarities to the projects. Both focused on common areas like the lobby, ballrooms, meeting rooms, dining areas, lounges and corridors. Both wanted bright lights at the best cost, to lower their energy use and reduce environmental impact.

Xcel Energy knew how to help.

Stepping It Up

Hilton Worldwide has a long-standing commitment to environmental responsibility in its 3,750 hotel and resort properties. One example is the implementation of the LightStay program. LightStay is Hilton's sustainability measurement system that helps property managers tally energy use, carbon output, waste output and water use.

"It's all part of a continuum for us," says Scott Youngblood, General Manager of the Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America. "Everything we do goes back to what we feel is our responsibility to the community."

Even the hotel's motto, "Hospitable by Nature" conveys the top priority.

A Local Push

No strangers to conservation, both properties had been through many other projects to improve efficiency and promote sustainability. Examples include upgrading a chiller

PROJECT SNAPSHOT HILTON MINNEAPOLIS

Location	Downtown Minneapolis
Project	Converted more than 4,000 incandescent lamps in lobby, restaurants, lounge, ballrooms, meeting rooms, parlors and common areas/hallways to energy-efficient LED lighting
Cost	\$114,500
Xcel Energy Rebate	\$52,500
Estimated Energy Savings	\$82,750/year or nearly 1.2 gigawatt hours
Payback	Nine months

PROJECT SNAPSHOT HILTON MINNEAPOLIS/ ST. PAUL AIRPORT MALL OF AMERICA

Location	Bloomington
Project	Upgraded nearly 3,000 old, inefficient lighting fixtures with efficient LED lamps and fluorescent fixtures in lobby, ballroom, guest rooms, banquet rooms, boutique meeting rooms and corridors
Cost	\$181,000
Xcel Energy Rebate	\$83,500
Estimated Energy Savings	\$57,400 per year/ 721,000 kilowatt-hours
Payback	1.7 years

system; adding energy management points throughout the hotel including guest rooms and common areas; incorporating variable frequency drives in their heating and cooling system; implementing can, bottle, plastic and cardboard recycling; installing low-flow faucets and toilets and collecting food waste for local hog farm donation.

“Even when there’s a national standard in place, it takes someone on the ground to push initiatives,” says Sara Terrell, Xcel Energy account manager. “These property managers knew what they wanted and once they realized how much money they could save and how quickly they could recover the cost, they were ready to make the change.”

Terrell says both property managers favored LED (light emitting diode) lighting due to high efficiency and low environmental impact.

“Some of these lights are always on and some are dimmed much of the time so the functionality was the top priority,” says Dale Nelson, Director of Property Operations at the Hilton Minneapolis. “But saving money was a pretty close second.”

Retrofitting lighting to chandeliers poses a particular challenge because the replacements need to do many things: fit the fixture, have a long life for lower maintenance costs, be dimmable and offer soft, warm color.

Worth the Wait

LED lighting has come a long way since it was first introduced, but Terrell recommends specific steps to be assured of the technology before completing the project, including buying products from a respected manufacturer, installing test fixtures to ensure the color and functionality, and checking the product life and warranty to estimate future maintenance needs.

“Taking the extra time to do it right is always worth the wait,” says Terrell.

The two properties combined replaced over 7,000 lamps with high-efficiency LEDs in candelabra, recessed cans and spotlight applications.

“The whole place looks better and it’s costing us less,” says Nelson. “As an added benefit, the bulbs in the ballroom chandeliers really stand out now. There’s plenty of light, but it’s soft and the color is perfect.”

“The lights are more vibrant,” adds Youngblood. “They have an energy now that didn’t exist before, so it’s more of an uplifting environment.”

Both say their guests have complimented the new look and added that the upgrades make the space more attractive for event planners.

Next Steps

Hilton Worldwide is committed to making continual improvements to overall sustainability results each year. Both managers will continue to work with Terrell on other efficiency improvements. They say the process may never be complete but they welcome any improvements that enhance the guest experience and boost their bottom line.



For more information about Xcel Energy’s energy efficiency and rebate programs, visit xcelenergy.com/LightingEfficiency.