

# Shoe Retailing T O D A Y

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## Energy Management Systems:

# What to Expect from Wireless EMS Systems

DAVIS WATKINS



Davis Watkins

Most retail shop owners have heard great advice about working smarter, and being more energy efficient. However, few know about the recent advances in wireless network technologies and how these advances offer significant financial growth for their operation.

What is being heralded as a new class of "drop in" energy management systems (EMS) for small to mid-size retail establishments has arrived, made possible by the recent advances in wireless technologies. These affordable, feature-rich wireless EMS products offer real energy savings that enhance profitability and a reduced carbon footprint in line with increasing demand for retailers to employ green business practices. What's equally exciting about this technology is its operational simplicity and ease-of-use.

Until now, most retailers with small to mid-size commercial buildings have had no affordable option to implement an

a wireless network in your home can support multiple devices, like a laptop, desktop, printers, and handheld video games, a wireless network system can now be deployed into a retail building. These wireless networks will support multiple controls for that building's main energy using equipment - HVAC and lighting. The system also allows for real-time wireless monitoring of the total electrical consumption (KwH) for the entire building. More importantly, it takes the entire process straight to the Internet, enabling remote monitoring and control from a central location.

What makes these wireless EMS systems so attractive is their simplicity, effectiveness and affordability. Most HVAC contractors can install these systems in just a half-day or less by replacing the existing thermostats in the building with radio-equipped wireless thermostats. A factory accessory will

icals. Simply enable the power and Internet connection button on the back of the touch panel, and the building is now saving energy, saving money and controllable remotely via the Web.

In addition, these systems offer users the opportunity to establish a remote "gatekeeper" of each retail building you upgrade with these wireless EMS products. From setting schedules through the Web interface, to being the contact that receives and responds to any over temperature alarms, to creating monthly comparative energy consumption reports, full control of a retailer's energy consumption may be managed remotely.

In the retail business segment clamoring to controlling energy costs, the only discretionary expense that can be better optimized for enhanced profitability in this sector, wireless EMS systems offer unprecedented opportunity as a scalable solution that can be affordably deployed.

As the economic picture gets a little brighter, try not to fall back into old habits and complacent business practices that have limited fiscal upside. Continue to look for new strategies and technological opportunities that will help differentiate your retail establishment--and not only maintain, but increase, its profitability. ■

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energy management system of any notable scale. And ironically, a large portion of this building-size segment uses more energy per square foot than any other commercial space. As you might imagine, HVAC equipment on the roof is the largest source of energy drain for these businesses. And, until recently, there have been no practical energy management solutions to better control these HVAC and other mechanical systems and, therefore, no opportunity for retail shop owners to save money.

So how does wireless technology rectify this situation? In much the same way

allow wireless control of up to eight other circuits for lights and ventilation. Basically, any equipment that could benefit from having an operation schedule applied can usually be joined to the network. Next, simple current transformer clamps are slipped around the main electrical feed lines to the building, and they are joined to the network. Then, a real-time graphic interface touch panel display is installed on the wall in a manager's office. This panel is actually the new local central control and monitoring point for all HVAC equipment, lighting, and other mechan-

## Energy Management Systems: Top 5 Considerations for Retailers

GUS EZCURRA



Gus Ezcurra

The economy has forced most if not all U.S. retailers to seek ways to reduce non-essential and otherwise variable costs. A new opportunity has emerged in recent years with the advent of affordable lightweight energy management systems that can be controlled on-site or remotely--particularly those designed specifically for previously underserved small to medium sized retail facilities like restaurants, convenience stores, strip mall shops and bank branch offices.

Today's dashboard touch panel-controlled "smart" energy management systems enable retail users to easily view and reduce their resource consumption in real time with the mere touch of a button, resulting in utility bill savings upwards of 20% or more per month. Although extraordinarily feature-rich, modern retail energy management and control systems are now far more cost effective to deploy, with low starting price points, nominal

management system:

**1. Ensure the solution specifically focuses on the HVAC system.** Most energy management products on the market today are too complex to appropriately leverage or too simple to achieve the desired goal. To maximize your energy savings, minimize related costs and realize a fast payback, seek a product that specifically focuses on the HVAC system--the largest controllable source of energy drain in a retail space and, thus, the quickest and easiest way to produce material savings. Additional sensors to monitor and control other sources of energy use--such as lighting, security, and office equipment--can always be integrated into today's flexible, scalable products.

**2. Seek a product that offers both on-site and remote measurement and control.** Not only should an energy management system be controllable

enables the immediate flagging of consumption swings and other anomalies, which can indicate larger mechanical malfunctions early on. Ultimately, remote monitoring better assures that the installed product is being used to the best of its capabilities and is facilitating the expected energy and cost savings.

**3. Opt for a quick-install system with low initial fees and ROI in less than 12 months.** The best commercial energy management systems on the market today can be delivered and installed in a retail establishment for \$2,000 or even less and with a monthly service contract below \$50. When one considers a monthly business utility bill of \$3,000, even a 15% monthly energy savings would provide a return-on-investment in well under 6 months. Some companies also offer flexible payment terms, such as a higher monthly fee and lower upfront payments--particularly for multiple unit operators. It's also important to ensure the system can be installed rapidly to further mitigate upfront fees.

**4. Obtain a product with a robust yet user-friendly core feature set.** In addition to graphical viewing of real-time and historical resource consumption, today's best-of-breed energy control products provide a robust feature set that, among other capabilities, allows retail users to establish thermostat heating and cooling limits and set points for different times of the day, and offer an automated "peak shaving" option designed to reduce consumption during peak demand periods. Such advanced systems can also readily block

**By using these 5 tips as a guideline, retailers can best assure they'll secure a well-rounded and cost effective energy management system that will reduce their carbon footprint and energy consumption while delivering notable monetary gains.**

monthly fees and rapid return-on-investment in just 6 to 12 months.

Such advancements have generated enormous marketplace demand among small and medium sized retailers seeking proven, cost-effective ways to "go green" and, in doing so, their boost bottom lines. Here are 5 key considerations to help retail executives make informed decisions when considering an energy

on-site, but also remotely by either company personnel or even the manufacturer's operations center professionals. By connecting to the installed system via the Internet, manufacturers offering remote capabilities, and dedicated administration thereof, can monitor a retailer's real time energy consumption and ensure that temperatures do not go beyond a business' pre-set parameters. Such continuous monitoring also

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