

# ENVIRONMENTALITY

*More and more property owners are giving developers the green light for sustainable building.*

Anastasia Parsons

The idea of overnight success is a pretty fantastic one. That you'll most assuredly achieve success right away because you've got the vision, talent and innovation to make it happen. The reality of becoming an overnight success is that it could take months, years or even decades to make your voice heard. But when it is... look out world. Enter the concept of building green.

Green or sustainable building is actually a school of thought that's been around in some incarnation for thousands of years. Man working with the land in order to make it prosperous. The industrial age realigned man's thoughts on building, conceiving plans that became less about symbiosis and more about complete transformation. Now, after decades of scientific research regarding man's post-industrial age carbon footprint, and a nation focused on an approaching round of national elections, a new consciousness based upon old ideals has emerged in the realm of commercial building, and the architects, developers and brokers who have long since embraced these ideals are netting the accolades of becoming an overnight success.

Not all clients are convinced when they walk in the door, however. To them, green or sustainable building still seems fairly new or trendy; they're not certain if this should be their organization's direction.



Callan

"One of the greatest misconceptions is that it's [green building] going to be extremely expensive," says David Callan, senior vice president and director of sustainable design and high performance building technology for Syska Hennessy Group. "A green building doesn't have to be more expensive than another building of the same quality."

Another misconception pointed to by Dan Heinfeld, president of LPA

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Inc. in Irvine and Roseville, California, is that a building doesn't have to be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified in order to be green. Green building concepts can be integrated into almost any design to create a more sustainable and eco-friendly project.

Holistic is a buzzword heard regularly by those working with green concepts. By definition, holistic pertains to the theory that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. In architectural or development terms, holistic is the practice of looking beyond the immediate building costs to create a project that would produce both immediate benefits, such as lower energy costs, and future values, like reduced carbon emissions. Many organizations are also beginning to understand that being green is simply good business, says David Hobstetter, principle for KMD Architects of San Francisco. He states that being green can help attract the green in terms of desirable clients, and possibly produce future green by bringing in quality personnel.

And with buzz comes boom. Year-over-year, green building has increased exponentially, according to firms such as Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL). Demand has been so great for the Chicago-based organization that they, like many others within the design and development industry, have launched a new division focused specifically on green building and LEED-certified projects. Chief Operating Officer for Global Energy Diane Vrkic states that the strategic importance of fostering such a division was top-most in the minds of JLL's senior executives, including President and Chief Executive Officer Colin Dyer. Dubbed the Energy and Sustainability Services Group, the arm is headed by a leadership team of 10 senior executives, and features 50 engineering and operating professionals supported by a 35-member energy management team and 50 U.S.-based development services LEED professionals (which will be expanded to several hundred within the next 2 years).



Vrkic

"Overall we act as a kind of GPS system, showing them [the client]

where they are now, and showing them which direction they need to go to reach their destination," says Vrkic. A model, which has proven profitable for both the client and JLL. In 2006, JLL oversaw 24 million square feet in LEED construction management, and approximately 75 percent of JLL's green business was office space. They negotiated \$452 million in energy expense savings for their client and managed an overall 89,000-ton reduction in greenhouse emissions. And the future looks even brighter in 2007 for Vrkic predicts JLL's business will double.

"We already have a number of clients in various industries," she says. "We believe that we'll continue to see additional industry groups evaluate their industry strategy and move forward with sustainability solutions."

A tipping point within the industry, which Heinfeld has also encountered. "Now people aren't asking me about green, they're saying 'I want to be green, how do I go about it?'" he says.

The process of going green can be achieved by a number of factors. Some of the latest green building solutions being utilized by groups like JLL and LPA Inc. in the West and throughout the country include building placement, advanced façade design, climate responsive systems, renewable energy production and daylighting techniques. Knowing where the sun rises and falls in relation to a client's property is probably the most simple, yet effective, way to build green, according to Heinfeld. His firm regularly works in regional aspects of the build site, and then marries this knowledge with the time-honored principles of architecture — such as landscaping or alternative roofing materials to reduce heat gain — and today's technology to create a more cost-productive building. Execution of these processes can be seen in projects like LPA's 200,000-square-foot Jet Propulsion Laboratory's Flight Projects Center for NASA. It's the second of NASA's building to be LEED-certified.

Façade design, which is also referred to as the building envelop, is not only considered a trend in green building and energy conservation, but the next step in making all the other systems work, as pointed to by groups like Callan's Syska Hennessy. The performance of a building's façade can help control the internal climate and lighting of a building so that energy consumption for that facility is decreased without sacrificing the comforts or amenities required for a successful structure, be it office, research, hospitality or retail. Façades can also be

helpful in generating energy for a building. Hobstetter's KMD Architects has found innovative and unique ways to integrate natural force, renewable energy technologies, such as wind and solar, into the design of a facility in order to reduce its drain on centralized power sources. He states that finely tuning a building to its outside environment dramatically reduces its need for heavy carbon footprint technology, thereby contributing fewer harmful emissions. An example of KMD's successful use of these techniques can be seen in the 250,000-square-foot San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Headquarters. Both solar and wind collectors were used in this project to help achieve the city's higher mission of testing new technologies and, in addition to its energy saving systems, producing energy from the building as well.

Daylighting and climate-control systems can be used in conjunction with one another to create a building that requires less energy. Daylighting includes use of advanced window materials, glazing techniques and placement to allow in light but not the excess heat. This approach allows for a reduction in demand on climate-control systems, which run more efficiently than previous incarnations, to heat and cool the buildings.

Another trend is community support for green building. A prime example is Portland, Oregon. "Within the commercial real estate market, we're definitely leading the country in green development," says Jennifer Mezak, associate vice president for Portland-based NAI Norris, Beggs & Simpson brokers. "We've got a very green-minded community, an environmentally friendly culture overall," says Mezak. Portland has both fostered a demand for green building and the means by which to accomplish it. Organizations like Vestas America, a green technology company specializing in wind power systems, that already has a presence in the city, chose to remain for many reasons, according to Mezak. A target-rich environment, skilled workforce and incentives for building green are among a few. The Portland Development Commission has been instrumental in attracting new firms to the area, as well as convincing business such as Vestas — which secured a 40,000-square-foot green-focused property — to remain. In addition to the incentives, credits and lower-cost funds developers are being offered for building green, including the Business Energy Tax Credit (available to those who exceed code and use renewable and alternative energy sources), many find that



Mezak

"the green alternatives provide a way to stabilize the operating expenses of the building," says Mezak. A combination of factors helping to make Portland's green market boom.

As for the future of green building, technological advancements in energy saving techniques, renewable energy production and the combination of such factors to create even more high-performance buildings seems to be the current trajectory of sustainability. Even more than that, green building allows organizations to pass something positive on to the next generation. "With the Baby Boomers coming up in years, they are people looking beyond the dollars," says Mezak. "They're looking to leave a legacy, a better quality of life." □

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