

SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC SOUTH AFRICA

LEADING BY EXAMPLE




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Schneider Electric is in the business of improving energy efficiency; but rather than just telling others what to do, Jeff Daniels has discovered that Schneider has also shown the world what to do



Schneider is a long-standing business: started by two brothers in 1836 to run a foundry, it became inextricably linked with electricity as long ago as 1891. It's now a global specialist in energy management, with operations in more than 100 countries offering solutions and products across a vast range of market segments. By focusing on making energy safe, reliable and efficient, the company's 130,000-plus employees achieved sales of €22.4 billion in 2011.

With such a diverse company, it's hard to provide even a snap shot of what is possible; but in South Africa, where Schneider has a local manufacturing facility in Durban as part of its extensive global capability, the company is deeply involved with the process of energy management and energy efficiency. "We want to help people make the most of their energy," says Carl Kleynhans, country president of Schneider Electric South Africa, "and to make energy safe, reliable and efficient in homes, offices and factories. At the same time, while energy consumption worldwide continues to rise and the supply side struggles to keep pace with demand, more efficient use of energy must remain at the top of the agenda, otherwise we shall be failing future generations of citizens." To demonstrate its credentials in this area, Schneider has put its own house in order before trying to tell the market what it should be doing. In June 2011, Schneider Electric's corporate headquarters in Rueil-Malmaison, France, was certified as complying with the new ISO



Schneider Electric
promotes energy
efficient buildings



50001 standard for energy management systems: the first building in the world to earn such designation.

The building has become something of a showplace for Schneider's capabilities. Prior to the introduction of ISO 50001, it had obtained ISO 14001 and NF EN 16001 certification—then the highest yardsticks of performance available. "Because it is an international standard," says Kleynhans, "it's expected that the new standard could impact 60 per cent of energy usage in the world, with broad applicability across national economic sectors."

The thirst for knowledge about energy saving is enormous. So far, 20,000 visitors



Carl Kleynhans

have made the pilgrimage to Schneider's headquarters to see first hand what is being done. The development team's target was to reduce energy consumption by a factor of four compared with the former facility and to achieve a consumption rate

of 80 kWh per square metre per year (244 kWh per square metre per year is the average office building's consumption in France).

By intelligently integrating all building systems on a single IP platform and using a mix of monitoring and control, schemes that take best advantage of natural light and heat (and therefore renewable energy) and more efficient cabling and components, the solution



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development team was able to achieve up to 30 per cent energy savings—the same energy performance that is promised to customers.

However, Schneider Electric South Africa is certainly not resting on its laurels and can also attest to a saving of 32 per cent on its local head office energy bill, thanks to the implementation of the company's own solutions to measure and analyse its energy usage, control lighting and air-conditioning and look for ways to continuously improve consumption.

Schneider Electric South Africa agrees that education and knowledge is critical to the adoption of energy efficiency; to this end it has partnered with the Vaal University of Technology and French Ministry of Education to establish the French-South African Schneider Electric Education Centre (F'SASEC), with the vision of accelerating artisan training across the country and

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As a small South African company, it is a privilege to work with an international company such as Schneider Electric. This has given us a lot of exposure and experience and has helped us to grow as a company.

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preparing young South Africans from disadvantaged backgrounds for the job market. The company also delivers in-house training and offers training bursaries; is engaged with a community programme for the education of women; and runs a sustainable programme to bring safe, clean electricity to people in developing countries, called BipBop—an acronym for 'Business Investment and People at the Base of the Pyramid'.

Doing more with less is a familiar mantra at companies in South Africa and around the world, especially when it concerns energy use. Managers at all levels are looking for meaningful ways to permanently reduce energy consumption and boost performance



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Renewables will form an important part of future energy generation

for the sake of the environment as well as the bottom line.

“This is with good reason,” Kleynhans explains. “Energy demand is expected to double by 2050, and some experts forecast the energy demand of the machine-to-machine internet to be 100 times greater than the current human-to-human network. We are learning the hard way that the earth’s energy capacity is finite. You don’t have to be a scientist or economist to recognise the simple outlook for energy supply and demand. Simply put, energy is expensive today and it promises to become even more costly in the future.”

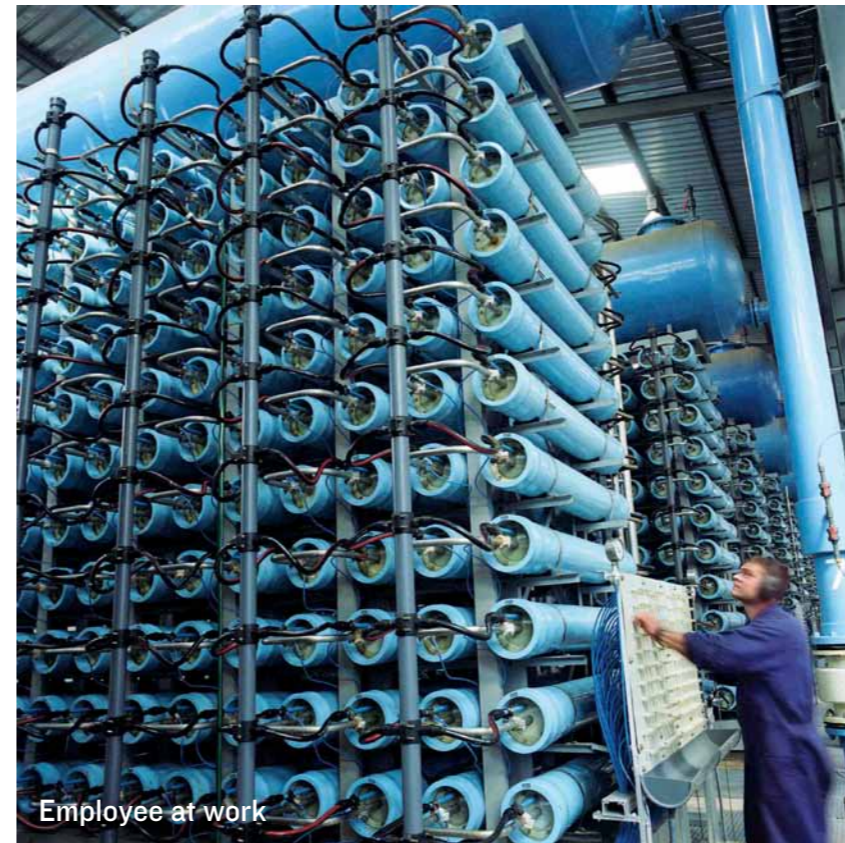
According to the World Energy Outlook 2009, IEA/OECD, as energy demands escalate from all aspects of commerce and culture, the most acute pain point is that due to intrinsic inefficiencies, 33 units of energy consumed at the point of use require 100 units of primary energy—the coal used to supply that energy unit. “It follows that the war on waste—a focus on ‘negawatts’, or watts not used—will deliver the best returns for business.”

He explains that those returns must come from all levels of an enterprise to be truly efficient. From point-of-use components to enterprise-level energy architecture, meaningful efficiency is a pervasive mandate.

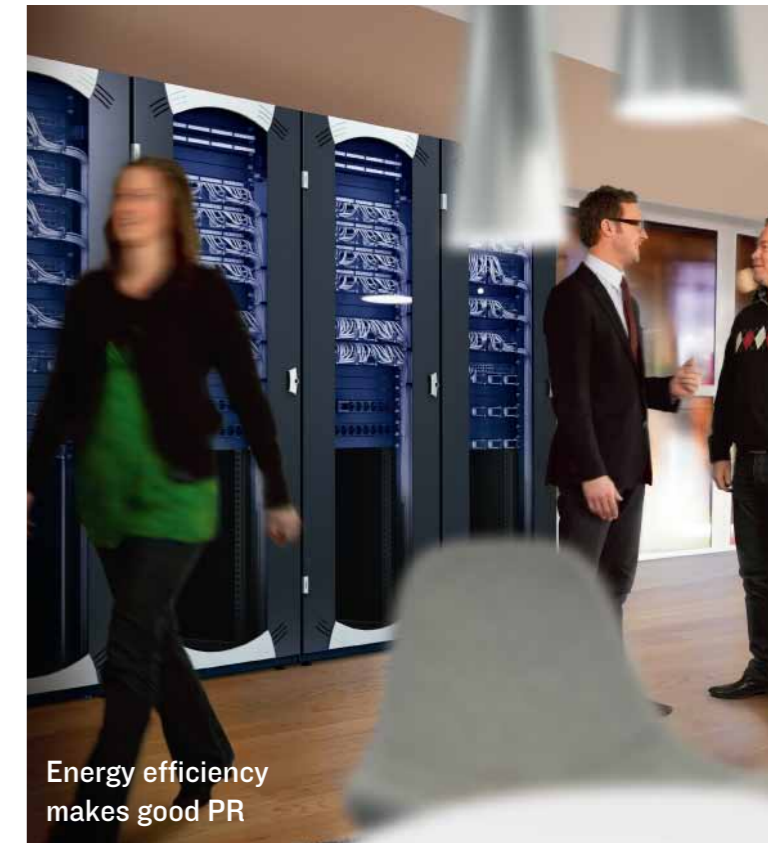
Of course, the most commonly heard argument is that saving money can only be



Conlog was acquired by Schneider Electric in 2000



Employee at work



Energy efficiency makes good PR

achieved by spending a lot of money first—and then there are no assurances that the full amount of savings will be achieved. “This is completely untrue—every business can increase productivity while consuming less,” says Kleynhans, “and energy savings of 10 to 30 per cent are within everyone’s grasp. But before you can drive business efficiencies and save energy, you have to be able to see it—and that’s where solutions from Schneider Electric South Africa come in.

“The EcoStruxure Active Energy

Management architecture is Schneider Electric’s response to the energy challenge as it turns a business into an efficient enterprise. That is, the solution is our method to creating intelligent energy management systems that are simplified, save money, and most importantly, reduce waste by enabling guaranteed compatibility between five critical domains: power, process and machine, IT room, building and security management.”

As consumers, businesses and entire economies become increasingly reliant on technology, they insist that devices become more intuitive, more efficient and more intelligent. “With EcoStruxure solutions, Schneider Electric South Africa encourages them to expect the same of their energy,” Kleynhans adds.

Regardless of the speed at which global warming will have a direct and noticeable effect on individuals, there is no disputing that we are all impacted by rapidly rising energy costs. Not only do individuals want to see their own costs reduced, research indicates they are more likely to favour those businesses that are taking steps to improve their corporate energy consumption. So, as Schneider has discovered with its world-beating headquarters, energy efficiency makes good PR as well as sound financial sense. **BE**

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