

## EMS Lowers Your Energy Bills

An energy management system (EMS) enabled a Wendy's franchise to reduce energy costs by 17%.

by Erin Harris

As President and CEO of Wendium of Florida, Raul Dominguez is responsible for keeping operating costs in check for the six Wendy's franchises he owns. Like most quick serve restaurants, Wendy's HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air conditioning) systems, high-temperature broilers, and lighting systems consume a great deal of energy. Also, as energy costs rose over the last several years, Dominguez watched his franchises' energy bills skyrocket. Indeed, each franchise's energy bill increased \$2,000 in just two years. In order to control costs and conserve energy, Dominguez chose to implement an EMS at each of his locations.

"Wendy's had an issue with both energy costs and consumption," says Dominguez. "For example, managers and employees used to have access to the restaurant's thermostat. Employees work hard in the back, and they are in close proximity to high-temperature broilers. Therefore, they lowered the thermostat to 70 degrees when Wendy's protocol is between 74 and 76 degrees." Not only did lowering the thermostat's temperature cause energy costs to inflate, but it also caused customers sitting in the dining room to become cold. Dominguez put a locked box on the thermostat to thwart temperature adjustments, but employees were able to lower the temperature to their liking anyway.

### Lighting Doesn't Have To Inflate Your Energy Costs

Lighting contributed to Wendy's energy consumption problems, as the company did not have the ability to schedule when the lights were turned on or off. "Our lights were on a timer, and we didn't have the ability to reschedule lighting during nonoperating hours, such as holidays," explains Dominguez. For example, Wendy's is closed on Christmas day, yet the lights in the parking lot, outdoor signage, menu signage, etc. came on and stayed

on until the timer turned them off at the scheduled time at the end of the day.

### Costly Energy Problems You Aren't Aware Of

Each Wendy's has freezers and walk-in refrigerators to store food. An employee was tasked with taking the temperature of his location's freezer and walk-in refrigerator twice a day to ensure the temperatures were stable. Propping open the refrigeration units' doors or a broken part skewed the temperature, causing potential damage to thousands of dollars' worth of food. Yet, checking the temperature twice a day was often not enough to ensure the temperature remained stable.

Dominguez evaluated an EMS from GridPoint, a submetering and EMS provider for a solution. GridPoint EMS includes submetering and lighting control to alleviate the company's energy issues. GridPoint installed its EMS in one Wendy's location to serve as a test for one year. In one year, the EMS saved Dominguez 17% on Wendy's energy bill. GridPoint EMS prevents Wendy's employees from adjusting the thermostat, as Dominguez and two managers are the only people authorized to adjust the system's settings. Wendy's lighting system is now controlled by the EMS, and lights

turn off automatically at 1 a.m. For safety reasons, parking lot lights remain on for an additional hour. The EMS controls the temperature of the freezers and walk-in refrigeration units to maintain the correct temperature for food. If the refrigeration units' temperature is skewed for any reason, Dominguez receives an automatic email alert so he can tend to the issue immediately. Also, the EMS has segment temperature zones allowing the dining area zone to be turned on before or after hours while the kitchen is kept cool for employees. Based on the success of the pilot, Dominguez installed GridPoint EMS in the remaining five locations. ■



GridPoint EMS (energy management system) prevents Wendy's employees from tampering with the thermostat.

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