

Making solar energy easy and affordable thanks to one bright idea

By Jackie Trottmann

Sometimes a bright idea can come from a casual conversation. That's what happened when Larry Phillips, an employee at IAPD member Cope Plastics, told management about his church installing a solar energy system.

As people, business owners, organizations and corporations become more environmentally conscious, they are taking action in numerous ways. Solar energy has certainly been an attractive source for alternative, sustainable energy, but it has traditionally been cost prohibitive. When Phillips told management about a small, not-for-profit entity like a church being able to afford a solar energy system, the organization had to find out how they did it.

Cope's "bright idea" was to investigate using solar power to run the recycling side of the business. Since 1994 Cope Plastics has been involved with recycling efforts and was in the process of creating a recycling center. Solar could double the company's commitment to being good stewards of the environment by making the recycling center itself greener. Andy Ferguson, Cope's project manager, was responsible for the recycling center. He contacted the company that helped Phillips' church, Day & Night Solar.

Making solar energy affordable involves securing state and federal grants, financing and calculating the return on investment (ROI). The process can be so overwhelming that companies interested in solar energy don't always know where to start, so they do nothing. Day & Night Solar saw this challenge and came up with a solution: They take a project from start to finish, calculating the ROI, securing the grants, completing the paperwork, arranging for the financing and managing the installation. In the case of Cope Plastics, Day & Night used JF Electric as one of their trusted and experienced electrical partners.



As to how easy the process was, Ferguson said, "There was absolutely no risk on our part. Day & Night handled all of the details and gave us the proposal. We crunched our own numbers and found that it worked. Day & Night helped us reduce the main obstacle to solar power, cost." Now, Cope Plastics has a solar system powering their recycling center and front office. The electricity generated by the solar panels is offsetting the consumption of electricity for the recycling center. This "bright idea" has become a reality.

In the past, solar energy was cost prohibitive and time consuming to implement. Thanks to Day & Night Solar, this process is now turn-key and cost effective.

How can your company benefit by adding solar energy and how do you go about the process? Bob Eaton, managing partner of Day & Night Solar answers these questions:

Long-term cost savings: Solar projects are as unique as the companies that have them installed. Solar is also a long-term investment and it's important to find an experienced solar integrator to provide an ROI analysis. Day & Night Solar

provides this service for free. For Cope Plastics, they didn't need to "do their own home work," all they needed to do was "check the homework" Day & Night Solar provided. It was easy for Cope to make a good business decision when all the incentives, i.e., rebates, tax credits, bonus depreciations and SRECs (solar renewable energy credits) were presented to them.



Saving the environment: This is something everyone wants to do, and solar is a great resource. In the Midwest even a small 24 kilowatt system would produce enough electricity to run six to eight homes for a year. That will help the environment by preventing approximately 4,080 lbs. of coal from being burned and 7,200 lbs. of CO₂ from being released into the atmosphere each month.

Be a pioneer and leader: Perhaps one of the greatest benefits a company can receive for choosing to go solar is the opportunity to be a pioneer in their industry and evoke a positive image. Until now, integrating solar was an expensive and tedious process. Solar integrators have cleared those stumbling blocks. With the help of Day & Night Solar, Drury Hotels jumped into the green initiative including the use of solar and are now known as the top hotel chain to go green.

"To start the process, my recommendation for all companies would be to reach out to a solar integrator in their area or contact Day & Night Solar for a referral to an experienced firm in their market," said Eaton.

In their environmental statement, Cope Plastics says that they are committed to making the world a better place. This commitment involves partnering with suppliers, customers and the community to minimize the negative environmental impact while increasing sustainability and green initiatives through innovation, education and social responsibility.

With their recycling initiatives and the addition of harnessing the power of solar energy to go even greener, Cope is fulfilling their commitment. Perhaps going solar is the next "bright idea" that can enhance your business and even help improve our world.

Jackie Trottmann, writing on behalf of Cope Plastics, Inc. is a writer who helps companies tell their stories and get found on the Internet. For further information, contact Cope Plastics, Inc., 4441 Industrial Drive, Alton, IL 62002 USA. (800) 851-5510, www.copeplastics.com. For more information about Day & Night Solar, call (618) 344-4001 or visit dayandnightsolar.com.

The Environmental Session at the IAPD Convention will take place Wednesday, Oct. 24 at 11:15 a.m. Scan this code into your smartphone for the latest convention details and to register for this dynamic association event!

