

ed+c

environmental design + construction

The Premier Source for Integrated High-Performance Building

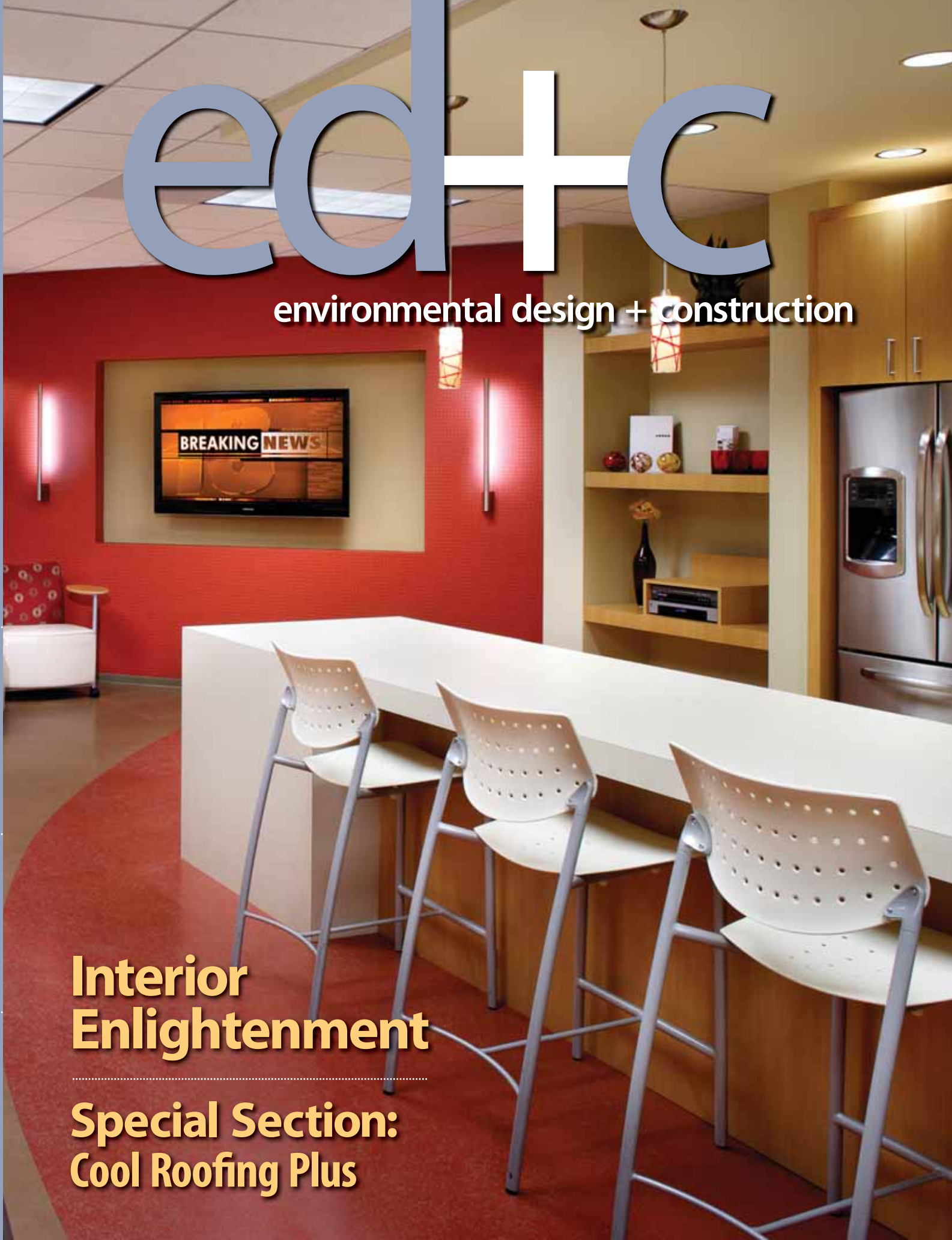
www.EDCmag.com

October 2009

A bnp PUBLICATION

Interior Enlightenment

Special Section:
Cool Roofing Plus



Tenant Improvement

IMPLEMENTING A SHADE OF GREEN IN A CORPORATE INTERIOR.

By Heidi Hendy, CID, LEED AP, and Denise Irvine Simmons, Assoc. IIDA, LEED AP



Architecture and design firms assisting tenant improvement (TI) clients in today's green culture frequently encounter what is becoming an all-too-familiar dilemma: dealing with a client's misperception and assumption that their office space can earn LEED certification by simply requesting it.

While tenants who lease office space are eligible for LEED certification, LEED for Commercial Interiors (CI) was designed to work hand-in-hand with LEED for Core and Shell (CS) certification. Though the newest LEED system (3.0) launched in 2009 incorporates significant changes, this fact remains. Still, pervasive misconceptions exist, particularly when it comes to how and when to go about achieving LEED CI certification.

Following the site selection and lease negotiation process, it is not uncommon for clients to mention their desire for LEED certification as an afterthought. "Oh, and we want it all LEED certified, too," they'll say at the end of the programming phase or, worse, when construction documentation has already begun. Although well intentioned, clients are typically not well versed in the

THE ENVIRON OFFICE TEAM DID NOT PURSUE FORMAL LEED CERTIFICATION BUT IMPLEMENTED MANY SIMPLE COST-EFFECTIVE SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES. PHOTO © LAWRENCE ANDERSON/ESTO.

importance of site selection, the energy system commissioning process, or the prerequisites and requirements necessary to achieve LEED certification.

Clients interested in occupying a green space have more options to consider if the TI project involves new construction or the leasing of entire buildings. Consider a company that just took over two floors of a multistory “brown” building with outdated energy systems: Is the option for green still on the table? Is “green” only one color, or are there actually “shades of green”?

ENVIRON’s Commitment

This was the case with ENVIRON, an Irvine, Calif.-based global environmental consulting firm that has had a long-standing commitment to environmental sustainability. This commitment is more than just a line item in the company mission statement; it is a reflection of the company’s core values. When ENVIRON learned that the cost to upgrade the outdated building systems was an extra \$150,000, the company decided to forego formal LEED certification and, instead, develop its own green scorecard for its newly leased 21,785-square-foot office space. With a budget of just \$35,000, ENVIRON worked with H. Hendy Associates to identify affordable green products and vendors and implement simple cost-effective green strategies (i.e., the low-hanging fruit) to help the company achieve its goals for sustainability.

The best part was that ENVIRON didn’t have to use any of the \$35,000 it had budgeted to implement green features. The chart to the top right explains some of the sustainable designs and cost-saving measures implemented in the interior.

Successful Tenant Improvements

In an ideal world, the decision to implement sustainability in an office design would always be addressed in the early stages of a project. If your design team is fortunate enough to be involved in the site selection or lease negotiation process, it is much easier to educate a client upfront about green leases and the many LEED certified or certifiable building options that exist in today’s market.

Green office leases, for instance, protect the financial interests of both the owner and tenant of a high-performing building and ensure that the building is properly maintained and operated efficiently over time. Green building owners know that effective operations not only deliver significant cost savings but also an even more valuable social currency in an increasingly environmentally conscious business environment.

At a time when demand for green real estate has reached an all-time high and the economic recession has affected building occupancy rates in every market, owners of “brown” buildings are struggling to remain competitive. As a result, these owners are becoming more open to the idea of honoring client requests for green retrofits and other green amenities.

Negotiable lease terms might include replacing standard building finishes with sustainable,

FURNITURE SELECTION	ENVIRON opted to purchase and reuse office furnishings and artwork from a previous tenant’s space. Furnishing the office with repurposed furniture helped the company cut costs, conserve energy, and reduce waste and pollution.
FLOOR PLAN	The company chose an open space plan that allowed for natural daylight to penetrate deeper into the office space.
CONSTRUCTION	ENVIRON incorporated ways to recycle construction waste in order to minimize disposal in landfills or other waste disposal facilities. Storage and collection spaces were also provided onsite for the collection of future recyclables.
MATERIALS	Material specifications included FSC-certified wood and low-VOC (volatile organic compound) emitting carpets, wall and ceiling insulation, paints, adhesives and sealants.
LIGHTING SCHEME	ENVIRON installed energy-efficient lighting, including dimmers and automated occupant sensors, in every room. Individual workstations were lit using direct task lighting, not costly overhead lighting.
FINISHES	Sustainability efforts were supported by the use of renewable surface finishes such as bamboo and cork flooring.
EXTRA FEATURES	To encourage employees to ride bicycles to work, the company installed showers in the restrooms.



ENVIRON DEVELOPED ITS OWN GREEN SCORECARD FOR ITS NEWLY LEASED 21,785-SQUARE-FOOT OFFICE SPACE. PHOTO ©LAWRENCE ANDERSON/ESTO.

renewable or low-VOC-emitting finishes and carpeting; providing storage and collection of recyclables and e-waste such as computers and monitors; installing high-efficiency plumbing equipment, valves and fixtures in common restrooms; replacing office lighting with energy-efficient systems; installing non-toxic, low-mercury lamping in fixtures, and installing submetering for each tenant’s energy systems. Other simple green measures might include having the building owner contract with a green cleaning company, establish a no-smoking policy and install permanent entry mats to reduce indoor pollution.

Of course, not all building owners are in a position to upgrade major systems to ones that are more energy efficient. However, the smaller green amenities — the “shades of green” options — are often a smart way to help clients achieve their goals for sustainability.

The success of a tenant improvement project with LEED intent is entirely dependent on a designer’s ability to clearly educate the client upfront about the process and requirements necessary to obtain certification. New requirements under LEED 2009, for example, may drastically affect a client’s site selection process and project timetable. A new category called Regional Priority, for instance, provides incentives

to address geographically specific environmental issues. Other prerequisites like the Minimum Program Requirements category may affect the site, building or city in which the client chooses to relocate. In order to apply for LEED certification, a building:

- Must comply with environmental laws;
- Must be a permanent building;
- Must be a reasonable site boundary;
- Must comply with minimum FTE and floor area requirements;
- Must comply with minimum occupancy rates;
- Registration and certification activity must comply with reasonable timetables and rating system sunset dates;
- Must allow USGBC access to whole-building energy- and water-usage data;
- Must comply with minimum building-area to site-area ratio.

Other aspects of LEED 2009 that will change include creating a unified and consistent point scale across all rating systems of 1-100, with identical points needed to earn the various levels of LEED (certified, silver, gold, platinum). Additionally, the new requirements change the allocation of points between credits. The new distribution is based upon potential environmental impacts, human benefits of each credit, and it considers such global issues as the overall reduction of CO₂ emissions.

As interest in sustainable corporate interior design increases, it has become more important than ever for designers to familiarize themselves with the LEED rating system and requirements. Regardless of whether your client opts for formal LEED certification or for “shades of green,” there are always ways to help your client come to a viable solution. **ED+C**

HEIDI HENDY, CID, LEED AP, IS PRESIDENT AND FOUNDING PRINCIPAL OF NEWPORT BEACH, CALIF.-BASED H. HENDY ASSOCIATES, A CORPORATE INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN FIRM THAT HAS PROVIDED SMART INTERIOR SOLUTIONS, INCLUDING ECO-FRIENDLY DESIGN, TO COMPANIES THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FOR THE PAST 29 YEARS. CO-AUTHOR DENISE IRVINE SIMMONS, ASSOC. IIDA, LEED AP, IS A DESIGN ASSOCIATE AT H. HENDY ASSOCIATES. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.HHENDY.COM.