

NE Region Holds RCx Summit

The BCA Northeast Regional Chapter's RCx Summit held in Albany, New York in February was a resounding success. Over one hundred commissioning providers, program staff and building owners convened for a day to learn about the retro-commissioning market, process and programs.



Brian Henderson of NYSERDA, the event's platinum sponsor, kicked off the meeting by describing the rapid rise of commissioning in the Northeast. He cited the formation of the BCA's regional chapter as evidence of market maturation. Transfer of technology and services from west to east has enabled owners, utilities and providers in our region to obtain some excellent early results from RCx. One example cited was that positive results from retro-commissioning projects in California lead to the Marriott's investment in a major project at the Marriott Marquis in New York City.

The Business Case for RCx, presented by Aleisha Kahn of PECEI, focused on improving communication between providers and owners. An Owner might say, "I don't need RCx because I have a great operation and maintenance team." RCx providers can recognize the owner's valuable staff while advising that there is further value to be had through the RCx process with a response such as "quality O&M actually supports retro-commissioning, streamlining the process and lowering the cost of improvements."

Paul Banks of B2Q Associates reconnected providers with the technical aspects of service delivery advising that trend logs and data logging reveal numerous opportunities that would otherwise be overlooked.

One of the tremendous benefits of the summit was the interaction between owners and providers. Joe McGee of the Business Council of Fairfield County described the development of a unique collaboration between the Council, its members and the local utility. The Council benchmarked about 10 million square feet of member space and found an average Energy Star Rating around 25. In order to address this, a retro-commissioning program was developed and several businesses participated, obtaining average savings of over 8% annually. According to McGee, owner's like retro-commissioning because it gives them a comprehensive picture of their building operations and the opportunities to improve them. A strong advocate of benchmarking, McGee cautions that Senior Management has to support and understand that benchmarking is a tool for monitoring usage on an annual basis. Otherwise facilities staff may be afraid that a poor rating will reflect badly on them and result in a net negative for the building operations.

Building on the accomplishments of this meeting, the NE chapter will continue to foster dialogue between owners and providers to improve understanding of owner needs and decision making process while supporting the continued growth of the market for RCx.

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