

I am honored to be here today. What an amazing Summit to attend – What a great organization to belong to – the Better Buildings Alliance. A place to network, share ideas and opportunities. Find solutions to the challenges we may face.

It's not every day that a director from the Department of Energy, Better Buildings Challenge calls you out of the blue and asks for you to share the story about Shari's Energy Program and my personal journey of the challenges/successes I've encountered.

Today, it still amazes me on what can be done with annual budget of \$100,000, a team of one, and a great relationship with the Director of Finance to help calculate...ROI, Payback, IRR, NPV.

How about over \$5.7 million dollars back to the bottom line? Since 2010.

It all started because **"I got bored one day."**

2008-2010 were tough years for businesses, especially restaurants. I needed to find a way to add value to the company.

A quick overview about Shari's Café & Pies: Shari's started in 1978 in small community called Hermiston, Ore. It's a 24 hour, full-service, family style restaurant, with nearly 100 restaurants in the Pacific NW, where you can get any item on the menu, anytime during the day. Shari's is known for the Pies and our famous Pie Shakes! The majority of the restaurants are around 3900 square feet.

At the time, I was the Cash Management and General Ledger Manager (***long title, I know, and it's not gotten any shorter, even today.***) I had been with the company for over 20 years. My duties were managing cash, the banking relationships, profit & loss statements, budgets, fixed assets, sales and property tax filings, credit card processing, installing new accounting software, general ledger analysis, utility accruals....utility accruals...??? Now this is interesting.

If the footprint is the same at restaurant A as it is at restaurant B, and they are within 5 miles of one another, and the sales volume and guest counts were fairly comparable, why such a huge difference in the total utility expense?

Utilities for Shari's comprise the third highest operating cost behind food and labor. Tools had already been put in place to manage those top two costs, but nothing had been done about utilities. It was just thought of ...well, **"That was an expensive gas month...or Gee my water bill is high, maybe I should do something about the soggy grass out front?"**

You can't manage what you don't know.

Ok...I'm getting to area that is very obvious to you, the audience, but it still wasn't crystal clear to my executive team.

I know...Let's do an energy audit....after a few dozen eye rolls and the new CEO's approval, it was a go!! **Sweet...**

The report came back with 7 low-to-no cost opportunities. From equipment changes to behavioral changes.

My goal at the time was to just get one change implemented. I needed to build credibility...especially since I have never in my life worked in a restaurant...what would I know, right? The numbers...the analytical side! The proof was in the pudding! I also knew that any changes could not affect our guests' dining experience or operations.

I needed just one restaurant to work with me. And the best part...I had one utility company to help with a cash incentive for the project!

I monitored and reported the results. I was so excited to see the gas usage drop by 33 percent in one month due to minor changes to our gas grills! The changes incorporated were both a small equipment change -- and a behavioral change. The equipment change was pretty cut and dry. But **in order to get the behavioral change to occur, we needed to make it tangible to our cooks. "The amount saved by doing this equals XX of burgers sold each week."** They listened. Something was in it for them as well -- recognition and pride -- **they, too, were adding value to the company.**

But the grand slam that I want to share quickly with you is how we reduced BOTH water usage on average by 35 percent and gas usage by 15 percent. A six-month ROI. The problem was as simple as the "dipperwells," a piece of equipment that ice cream scoops and other utensils are placed in with continuously flowing heated water. We had five in each restaurant, each one using 45 gallons of water per day! At the National Restaurant Show, I found the electric Heated Dipperwell, which uses only 6 cups per fill and heats the water to 155 degrees. We could change out the water 3-4 times per day, and I was able to get each restaurant down to using four of the dipperwells because the cooks could live with just one on their line instead of two.

The energy management program would not be in place today -- or be a part of Shari's core values -- if it wasn't for the support of the **executive team and the team members at the restaurants.** We recognize the Top 5 restaurants that have reduced their energy usage. We spotlight employees who have helped contribute to a reduction, all in a bi-monthly newsletter. We've set policies and procedures, checklists and how to prepare for the next season. All new employees watch a training video on energy management and the veteran employees annually take surveys and quizzes to earn a certificate on energy management. Moving that energy reduction needle oh-so-slightly, **but by 100 restaurants.**

I use to think Shari's was a small fish in the big energy pond...but then I realized that it's not the size of the company behind the program, it's the people who believe and support the ideas who will make it as successful as an energy program from a Fortune 500 company.

Oh and BTW, I still do the Cash Management and General Ledger duties as well, but now, I'm the Director of Finance and Energy Sustainability.

Thank you