

# Getting comfortable with energy savings

## £ Loans

When furniture retailer WJ Aldiss found its energy bills had doubled overnight thanks to a dramatic increase in fuel costs, a free carbon survey and business loan from the Carbon Trust provided a solution, enabling the company to update its light fittings and gain annual savings of over £41,000.

## Savings at a glance

- Loan amount: £81,000
- Annual cost savings: £41,000
- Annual CO<sub>2</sub> savings: 181 tonnes

## The business focus

Established in 1892, WJ Aldiss is a furniture, flooring, lighting and homewares retailer with stores in Norwich and Fakenham, Norfolk, which between them have 100,000 square feet of retail space. The stores along with a distribution centre and various administrative departments employ 185 people and have an annual turnover approaching £18 million.

In 2008, following significant and rapid increases in electricity prices, WJ Aldiss found that its £100,000 annual energy bill had doubled to nearer £200,000 almost overnight.

“We knew that our biggest energy costs were from lighting and air conditioning, but we didn’t know how to bring these expenses down,” says Tim Summers, the Company Secretary. “So we had a survey done through the Carbon Trust, which also highlighted that we might be eligible for a business loan for an energy efficient lighting project of this type.”

The company received three business loans totalling £81,000, allowing it to replace the lighting throughout both sites and the distribution centre. The changes cut energy costs by £41,000 a year at 2008/2009 rates, or £20,000 at current energy prices.

## The technical approach

The existing T8 fluorescent light fittings throughout the stores were replaced with T5 high frequency fittings, while other fixtures were converted through the introduction of low voltage downlights. Fittings in the company’s office space and distribution centre have also been altered.

“We have a huge number of fluorescents and spotlights in the displays and on the shop floor; they are essential for showing off our products and we needed to ensure that the necessary levels of brightness were maintained,” explains Tim. “Since the changes, we have had comments that the new lights - particularly in our Fakenham store’s homewares display - direct the light more effectively and highlight the products much better. They’re more focused than the lights we had before, and the light is much whiter.”

The changes have cut WJ Aldiss’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 181 tonnes a year. “And we saw a significant reduction to our bills as soon as they went in,” concludes Tim.

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Accessing the loan was straight forward and quick; the Carbon Trust were almost chasing me for the final certificates to release the funds. ”

**Tim Summers**  
Company Secretary, WJ Aldiss

## Did you know?

The retail sector is responsible for around 21 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year. It is estimated that energy savings of up to 20%, equivalent to more than £560 million, are possible across the sector.

[Visit the savings by sector](#) pages on our website to find out what you can do to reduce your carbon footprint.