

Case study: N Brown PLC, England

Energy savings under the spotlight

Challenge

To help deliver a project that would reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions of a large online retailer's UK distribution centre.

Solution

Mitsubishi HC Capital UK (formerly Hitachi Capital (UK) PLC) supports vendor Thorlux Lighting to offer N Brown PLC an opportunity to implement its intelligent LED lighting system with no upfront cost.

Result

The energy and carbon savings achieved helped N Brown to offset the cost of the project and meet its sustainability targets, as well as improve operations and reduce maintenance.

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Understanding the needs of the business

**N BROWN****Background**

N Brown is a UK fashion and homeware digital retailer, focusing on the needs of the underserved customer groups – size 20+ and age 50+. Employing over 2,200 colleagues, N Brown is headquartered in Manchester and its main distribution centre is in Oldham.

Business challenges

N Brown is committed to finding more sustainable ways of working and reports its sustainability commitments and targets annually. As one of its largest corporate assets, it wanted to improve energy savings and reduce carbon emissions at its Oldham distribution centre. Lights are permanently switched on inside the four-storey building, as the facility is in constant use. Installing an intelligent LED lighting system, with sensors that would help to reduce usage and software to detect potential issues, would reduce energy demand and carbon emissions, as well as maintenance and manpower requirements.

The solution

N Brown selected Thorlux Lighting because of the quality and sophistication of its products, and its UK manufacturing base. Thorlux Lighting also included a payment option – provided by Mitsubishi HC Capital UK – that allowed N Brown to spread payments for the system across three years. The project was estimated to deliver savings of over 1,500,000kWh and 790 tonnes CO₂ per annum.

N Brown used its projected energy savings to pay for the project and reduce carbon emissions at the same time. Ken Mellis, Head of Workplace, Facilities and Engineering, explains: “Our corporate buildings activities contribute to over half of the emissions associated with our core business operations and we therefore have stretching targets to reduce our emissions across this area. The recent upgrade to the lighting at Lilac Mill was an important project for us to complete, not only providing a better working environment and lowering our ongoing maintenance budget, but essentially it estimated to reduce our Group electricity carbon emissions by up to 16%.”

This project allowed both Mitsubishi HC Capital UK and N Brown to align their sustainability goals in terms of delivering energy and carbon savings for their business and their customers. The solution was structured to allow the online retailer to maximise cashflow and conduct business as usual, while factoring in an agreed retention percentage in the pay out to be released once N Brown was completely satisfied with the project.

The result

The investment in smart LED technology has enabled N Brown to continue its focus on meeting sustainability targets while delivering energy, carbon and cost savings. “We’ve already started to see an improvement in the figures, so the project is

“The project is estimated to reduce our Group electricity carbon emissions by up to 16%.”

Ken Mellis, Head of Workplace, Facilities and Engineering

delivering in terms of the savings on cost, as well as the expected energy savings and the reduction in necessary maintenance,” says Ken. “We will consider implementing the same programme for another distribution centre on the same site.”

Thorlux Lighting has worked closely with Mitsubishi HC Capital UK for two years and their partnership enables the creation of bespoke solutions for customers. James Thorpe, Business Development Director of Thorlux, says: “With Mitsubishi HC Capital UK’s support we can now offer our products and control systems with no upfront capital expenditure using the energy and carbon savings to help offset the cost of the project. We’re pleased to have successfully delivered this project for N Brown together and contributed towards hitting their carbon and energy targets.”

