

2012 BECC Conference: Poster Presenter Abstracts

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The National Building Competition: Working Off the Waste with ENERGY STAR®

Modeled after “The Biggest Loser,” the Environmental Protection Agency’s 2010 ENERGY STAR National Building Competition challenged 14 commercial buildings to change energy habits and reduce their energy use. Commercial buildings account for nearly 20% of both the nation’s energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and waste 30% of the energy they use. The team of Colehour+Cohen, Cadmus, PRR and EPA designed the national PR and brand campaign to encourage greater energy efficiency among commercial buildings in the U.S and to raise awareness among consumers about how everyone can help save energy in the places where we work, play and learn. The Competition played off The Biggest Loser cultural phenomenon to put a typically dry subject (energy use in commercial buildings) into a context Americans could easily understand and relate to – losing weight. The team also provided “Bring Your Green to Work” tips to tenants, employees and residents. The team recruited a trusted celebrity spokesperson—Bob Harper—and a national sponsor—JC Penney— to help fund the contest. The competition’s first year goal was to recruit 10 buildings, and 200 applied—in the second year, that number tripled to 600. Driven by an integrated PR campaign that included over \$1.3 million worth of earned media, over a one year period the winner cut their energy use by 35.7% and prevented 733 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. Together, the contestants saved more than \$950,000 and reduced greenhouse gas emissions equal to the annual electricity use of nearly 600 homes.