

BELL CENTRE, HOME OF THE MONTREAL CANADIENS



ARENA STATS

Location: Montreal, Quebec

Began Construction: June 22, 1993

Opened: March 16, 1996

Seating Capacity: 21,273 (hockey), 22,114 (basketball)

Owner: Molson Family

Operator: Molson Family

Venue Uses: Ice hockey, basketball, lacrosse, as well as concerts

Construction Cost: \$270 million (in 2012 dollars)

THE CANADIENS' GREENING STORY: MOTIVATIONS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

The Bell Centre is the only professional sports venue in North America to be awarded three independent environmental certifications: LEED Silver for Existing Buildings (EBOM), ISO 14001, and Quebec's ICI ON RECYCLE Level Three (the highest level). On October 13, 2009, the Canadiens became the first NHL team with a LEED-certified home arena and the first to achieve the LEED Silver level. A month later the Canadiens were also awarded the International Organization for Standardization's 14001 certification for implementing an environmental management system (EMS). Three years later, the Canadiens are still expanding their green work, including planned renewal of their LEED EBOM certification in 2014.

WHY GO GREEN?

For the Canadiens, greening started as a top-down initiative. "Our environmental program originated internally in 2007, ahead of the team's 100th anniversary in 2009, as a legacy element we'd be establishing for our current and future generations of fans. In recent years the Molson family has really embraced our objectives and supported our goals to

become one of the leading arenas and sports clubs anywhere in the world in that regard," says Xavier Luydlin, director of building operations for the Canadiens. "It was important for them that we become an impressive and respected corporation regarding sustainability."

From the outset, the Canadiens worked hard to take a system-wide approach to greening while also setting their initiatives apart from those of other major sports venues. "The owners wanted to ensure that we put in place a system that shows the fans and Quebec that we really consider greening a strong priority for our company," says Luydlin. "They pushed really strongly for something that reflects our commitment to greening and sets the Bell Centre apart from all professional sports venues in North America."

The Canadiens' green campaign wasn't about saving money but about a corporate priority to be socially responsible, though Luydlin's team was able to achieve both. "The intention of the ownership was not to put in place a program to save money, but to be green," he explains. "If we could make money at the end of the process, that would be great. We asked first, 'What can we do to be green?' and then said, 'We'll see if we can save money.' Of course we are saving, as our electricity and mechanical systems are much more efficient, but our first goal was to be green."

WHERE TO START?

Greening began at Bell Centre with an organization-wide environmental directive from the owners. "It was such a priority that it was incorporated as a factor for all of the annual staff objectives," says Luydlin. "It was important for some of the top management and the people directly involved in the process."

From the outset, the Canadiens hired a local consulting firm to help guide the environmental certification process and verify their results. "The key staff teams that work on greening are operations and marketing. From the beginning we also involved the SMI Group, a top-notch consulting firm in Canada," says Luydlin. "We hired them to make sure that an independent group could evaluate our process to make

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sure that our numbers are accurate. As you know, in Montreal the Canadiens are similar [in reputation and following] to the Yankees in New York.”

The first step for the Canadiens was measurement, with the help of their consultants. “The SMI Group helped us get a detailed picture of the Bell Centre operations with a full audit of our usage in 2008 in order to set our objectives for 2009,” explains Luydlin. “Water, waste and energy audits were essential for our certifications. We started with the audits and then began benchmarking nine or ten major sport venues in Canada and the U.S.”

During 2008 the Canadiens operations team spent several months collecting data around North America on resource use at other major sports venues and researching the greening efforts of their peers. “We looked at their best practices, but our objective was to make sure we were above the others,” says Luydlin. “Our upper management’s goal was to make sure that we did something different from our peers and developed a more holistic greening program.”

On the basis of their industry research and greening directive, Luydlin’s team decided to pursue the most well-regarded operations-based certifications available. “We realized that the best way to become a good example or a sports greening role model was to get three certifications,” says Luydlin. “The two main certifications were LEED and ISO 14001. By following those certifications in particular, we realized we could bring the Bell Centre to a different level of sustainability.”

From setting their goals to achieving all three certifications, the Canadiens made quick work of these leading environmental standards. “We aimed to do the certifications in a very short time frame. We did the whole process for all three certifications in about a year and a half. That was the intention of our upper management, and we think it was a major achievement,” says Luydlin. “We wanted to put in place a certified greening program that would show all of Canada that we are an example of sustainability.” Luydlin also emphasizes the importance of buy-in from leadership for success: “It is very important to have the top management really commit. If it’s just a dream or a green statement just for the sake of having a statement, it’s impossible to make a project at that scale possible.”

The Canadiens pursued the certifications one by one, beginning with the local waste-based standard called ICI ON RECYCLE (“here we recycle”), which is a Quebec government program that recognizes companies with excellent waste diversion rates. “We started with ICI ON RECYCLE as we realized that we were not being very efficient with our compost and recycling. We also recognized that it was a major impact on the environment,” explains Luydlin. “Because ICI ON RECYCLE requires us to recycle or compost 80 percent of all of our waste, and LEED asks only for 70 percent diversion of waste, we were juggling for many months about pursuing the local certification as well,” he recalls. “In the beginning we thought that trying to get ICI would be crazy. But in the end, we were able to do it.”

The Canadiens worked for more than half a year to increase their landfill diversion rate, first and foremost by

STANDOUT GREENING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ★ In 2009 the Bell Centre was 35 percent more efficient in energy savings than any other venue of the same type in North America.
- ★ 258 washrooms were changed to reduce water use, which led to a reduction of approximately 20 percent in overall water consumption.
- ★ The organization decreased greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) by 28 percent by reducing natural gas consumption.
- ★ Environmentally conscious purchasing policies were introduced, and 80 percent of purchases now include products that are locally made and/or composed of reused or recycled materials.
- ★ The Canadiens eliminated all CFC gas emissions from team equipment.
- ★ A purchasing policy requires that the organization buy only environmentally friendly cleaning products.
- ★ All electrical products meet EnergyStar efficiency requirements.
- ★ Reserved and priority parking is provided for hybrid cars.

making recycling more readily available. “Our initial approach was to install 945 new three-tier recycling and garbage bins around the building to make sure that people put the right waste in the right bins. Another important component for increasing our diversion was to install a Green Squad of nine staff members who were responsible for managing waste during events and tracking our waste flow,” explains Luydlin. “We also have a sorting team of 10 people who open all of the garbage at the end of an event to make sure that the fans threw their products in the correct bin. It’s a very time-consuming process, but we learned that it’s the only way to get the 80 percent diversion rate that we needed for certification.” Luydlin’s team finally succeeded in diverting more than 80 percent of their waste, and the Bell Centre was awarded Level 3 ICI ON RECYCLE certification, the highest level, on May 28, 2009.

After receiving ICI certification, the Canadiens immediately began the process of getting the LEED EBOM certification, registering the Bell Centre in June 2009. “The next step was to look at the LEED certification for an existing building,” says Luydlin. “The first thing we did was look at all of our processes to determine how we could maximize our main systems. Just by changing our schedules—turning off the lights every hour automatically or shutting down toilets and water, for example—we decreased our consumption dramatically. And we reduced water use by 20 percent just by installing low-flow fixtures.”

The Canadiens' centralized operating system was a crucial component in optimizing their operations efficiency. "To become LEED Silver-Certified we needed to have a system in place that controls electricity and water consumption," says Luydlin. "SMI Group went through all of our processes to make sure that we put in place the best practices. Now all of our operations in the Bell Centre are controlled from a central source, which really helps improve efficiency."

"It was pretty time-consuming, but all of the employees were involved in the process within a few weeks and were really committed to change," says Luydlin. He believes the Canadiens successfully engaged staff by integrating environmental objectives into the metrics for annual employee objectives. "The key to achieve that collaboration and strong involvement is to make sure there is financial incentive for the middle management." When environmental factors are integrated into a company's fiscal decisions, all staff departments will respond, and quickly, Luydlin emphasizes.

The Canadiens were awarded the LEED Silver certification on October 13, 2009, and just a month later received ISO 14001 certification (on November 16). Thanks to the improved centralized system and the many upgrades the Canadiens completed for LEED, Luydlin's team was able to quickly comply with the environmental management system (EMS) requirements of the ISO 14001 standard.

CHALLENGES: OVERCOME AND ONGOING

Though the Canadiens took the time to investigate their peers' green projects, they found few system-wide greening models to follow back in 2008. "We realized that some of the buildings we looked at across North America during 2008 were choosing projects to get good publicity right away," says Luydlin. "When you are talking about sustainability, you need to have a holistic approach. Every practice needs to be directed toward sustainability. Some venues had good ideas and good programs, but each program was just in one direction, not a complete cycle of sustainability."

The Canadiens sought to fill that gap by implementing a comprehensive greening approach and by seeking multiple verifications through third-party certifications. "Our approach here at the Bell Centre is not to make greening changes for financial or aesthetic reasons, but to make our practices really green. We are convinced here in Montreal that we need to look at the life cycle of a product. That's why we realized that the best way to become green was to become LEED and ISO 14001 certified."

For the Canadiens, the business case for greening doesn't rely solely on direct cost savings from improved resource efficiency. The organization's green efforts have attracted many thousands of dollars in corporate funding, strengthening its sponsor relations, its green brand and its role in the Montreal community. "Though there are a few things that make our sustainability projects very costly up front, we are lucky in Montreal because we have many corporations that want to partner with us on greening, and most of our initiatives have been paid for by private

WASTE SUCCESSES TO DATE

To date, the Bell Centre's average recycling and composting rate exceeds 80 percent of materials discarded.

On an annual basis, this recycling rate represents:

- ★ 100 tons of bottles
- ★ 100 tons of reused beer casks
- ★ 2 tons of aluminum cans
- ★ 39 tons of food donations (approximately 25,000 meals)
- ★ 250 tons of other plastics, glass and metals
- ★ 106 tons of cardboard
- ★ 25 tons of wood
- ★ 6 tons of furniture
- ★ 235 tons of compostable materials

When added together, it represents more than 860 tons of materials recycled and composted annually.

companies," explains Luydlin. "The private sector wants to be involved in our green approach because it's a great marketing opportunity for them. It's a win-win situation."

Luydlin emphasizes that when it comes to outside funding, all of the Bell Center's green funds have come from the private sector. "We have no government involvement except for their verification of our waste diversion. Otherwise, it's all private. The government's approach is to put in place the law and then we have to take care of implementation," he says. "The government doesn't help us financially or in other ways to achieve that goal, but luckily we have private investors—such as our engineering firm, our waste management company, our eco-cleaning products company and our transit partner—who are all enthusiastic about helping us."

Luydlin's unique experience working toward triple certification allows him to compare the investment breakdown for each one. "In terms of cost and amount of equipment upgrades, LEED was the most challenging certification," he says. "To get recertification in 2014, we predict that we're going to have to invest about \$100,000 as the USGBC has updated and increased its demands. It'll likely be difficult to find a partner to invest that much in the building, but at the same time it's a really great certification and we're committed."

While LEED is the most cost-intensive certification and ICI ON RECYCLE sets some of the highest standards, ISO 14001 requires the most ongoing compliance, Luydlin notes. "ICI ON RECYCLE was difficult because the 80 percent diversion rate was such a high level to reach. To achieve that you must have everybody on board, but financially it wasn't nearly as challenging as LEED," he says. "Pursuing ISO 14001 involved some work, but since it was at the end of our

process it was much easier than the other two certifications. The major factor for ISO 14001 is that every year we have an audit from ISO, which means that we need to be on top of our management practices. But the audits aren't difficult to complete, and though we need to pay for them, compared to LEED it's nothing."

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

STUDY AND LEARN FROM YOUR PEERS' BEST PRACTICES:

During 2008, the Canadiens' operations team spent several months collecting data around North America on resource use at other major sports venues and researching their peers' greening efforts. "We researched our peers' best practices to find out what was happening in the sports greening space to help inform our strategy.... Our ultimate objective was to make sure that we were above the standard," says Luydlin.

USE YOUR GREENING INITIATIVES TO ATTRACT SPONSORS:

The Canadiens' green efforts have attracted many thousands of dollars in corporate funding, strengthening their sponsor relations, their green brand and their role in the Montreal community. "Though there are a few things that make our sustainability projects very costly up front, we are lucky in Montreal because we have many corporations that want to partner with us on greening, and most of our initiatives have been paid for by private companies," explains Luydlin. "The private sector wants to be involved in our green approach because it's a great marketing opportunity for them. It's a win-win situation."

CONSIDER THE ISO 14001 CERTIFICATION AS WELL AS LEED:

Investigate ISO 14001 alongside LEED certifications, and consider any local certifications in your region. "Venues probably don't pursue ISO 14001 because they believe that it will limit their management and control of operations. Though it's demanding and rigorous, once you've implemented the process it's not too bad," says Luydlin. "It's not as difficult as LEED. ISO is much more about procedures and policies, so it is more feasible. For example, ISO doesn't require you to have a 70 percent diversion rate; it just demands that you respect and follow the greening goals that you set for yourself."

USE PLAYERS TO EDUCATE FANS ABOUT YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS:

"We want people to be more environmentally conscious externally, not just our internal operations," says Angelo Ruffolo, coordinator of youth hockey. "We are creating a reforestation program. It will likely be called Break a Stick, Plant a Tree. Every time a player breaks a stick on the ice, we will plant a tree in the Montreal community. We also created a PSA with our players for Earth Hour," he continues. "These are a couple of the ways we're trying to get fans involved and more environmentally aware, particularly by involving our players, because to our fans, our greatest asset is our players."

INTEGRATE REWARDS FOR ACHIEVING ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS INTO STAFF COMPENSATION:

Luydlin attributes the Canadiens' staff engagement success to integrating environmental objectives into the metrics for annual employee objectives and compensation. "The key to achieve collaboration and strong involvement is to make sure there is financial incentive for middle management. Greening was such a priority that it was incorporated as a factor for all of the annual staff objectives," he says.

"WE ARE LUCKY IN MONTREAL BECAUSE WE HAVE MANY CORPORATIONS THAT WANT TO PARTNER WITH US ON GREENING, AND MOST OF OUR INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN PAID FOR BY PRIVATE COMPANIES," says Luydlin.



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