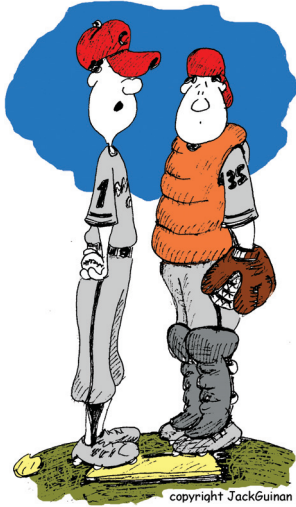


## THE CLOSING BELL BY JACK GUINAN



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"Do you happen to know what the signs are for an economic recovery?"

## BIZ TIP

YOUR FAVORITE COLOR SAYS A LOT ABOUT YOUR PERFECT JOB.

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## RED

**SKILL:** Investing  
**CAREER PATHS:** Finance, Manufacturing

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**SKILL:** Activism  
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# Go Green To Save Green

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND COST EFFICIENCY DON'T HAVE TO BE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE.

THESE DAYS, IT'S HARD TO IGNORE the fact that almost everyone is making efforts to become more eco-friendly, whether it's your next door neighbor's Prius, your favorite restaurant's organic menu or a brand-new museum built with recycled materials. All kinds of businesses can do it, too, while saving money in the long term or through immediate tax benefits. Here, two experts discuss how your business can go green and save green.

The first move is to have a consultant look at what energy you use and how you use it. "An energy audit is just a detailed inventory, a study on how and where and when a building and its systems consume energy," says George Plattenburg, a senior vice president at Servidyne, which provides sustainable building solutions. "From that you can generally come up with a list of recommendations [on how to become more eco-friendly]."

Next, find the right renewable energy technology for you. Smaller businesses can buy green power (from renewable sources like wind or hydro-power) from a local utility, but be forewarned that current renewable technology systems are pricey.

"If they don't have access to federal and state and local subsidies, a lot of people will decide not to do it," says Lee Peterson of the Reznick Group, who serves on the advisory council of the GreenBusiness Works EXPO, which takes place at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta, Sept. 2-3. "But when you factor in tax benefits, all of a sudden projects and initiatives that did not make financial sense in the near term start to make a lot of sense."

A larger business might look into installing its own solar panels or, for non-urban businesses, a small wind turbine. "Solar electric is fairly expensive today," Peterson says. "However, for any place that has a high hot water usage, solar hot water is currently very cost-competitive."

Whether you install your own solar panels or take steps to become more energy-efficient, you can save money in the long run, despite the upfront investment. Says Plattenburg, "Energy can be a significant part of variable costs, and our message is that it's actually controllable."



From top: George Plattenburg, Lee Peterson