

# HOW TO: CHOOSE THE BEST ROOFING ON A LIMITED BUDGET

Today's capital budgets are undergoing unprecedented scrutiny and necessary business infrastructural investments are being put off for as long as possible. Business survival often means that to preserve necessary working capital, property owners must reduce expenses wherever possible. Investment in roofing is neglected until there is a roof leak – thus proving that old adage “out-of-sight, out-of-mind.” That means that the major challenge facing property owners today is to be able to properly evaluate their roofs, explore available energy savings options and consider financing that can optimize it all.

Allocating funds to roof maintenance or re-roofing projects for the building's “fifth wall” is difficult to justify under these circumstances. But why should a roof leak create a crisis before action on roofing repairs gets the attention and investment it needs?

Ignoring your roof may increase costs exponentially. For example, a failed roofing component may allow excessive moisture into the building envelope and may necessitate an entire roof tear-off instead of smaller, less costly repairs. In extreme cases, delaying roofing repairs may lead to the possible development of mold and may cause structural decking deterioration that compromises the entire building and its operations.

Today property owners need to explore creative methods to understand the current condition of their buildings, determine the scope of work that has the greatest value - be it repair or re-roofing – and, most importantly, how to fund the project.

As a starting point, property owners need to understand the existing condition of their roofing assets. The cost associated with delaying needed roof-



ing work can prove to be far more expensive in the long run. Additionally, roofing a building that has a serviceable roof life - and needs repair work only - will unnecessarily deplete working capital. Property owners need to understand the service life of the roof and how to extend the roof life.

A Roof Life Extension Program is one option to help building owners. Roofs are inspected and given an overall score that can be used to assist a building owner to help prioritize and budget for roofing services that address critical needs, delay re-roofing until necessary and develop a comprehensive program to help extend the life of the roof.

In order for property owners to make more objective decisions, a Roof Life Extension Index ranking is developed to help prioritize budget allocations. Roof budgets can be developed for multiple years based on a combination of Index scores and the building

owner's actual roofing experiences with various systems and their performance history.

Once an organization has developed a ranking of their roofing assets and understands the attention each roof in the portfolio needs, the next challenge is how to fund the project. Again, creativity and unconventional thinking are key.

For example, consider a new cost-saving “cool” roof with upgraded insulation designed to reduce current energy loads. Add to that a long-term financing option and calculate the roofing investment payback period based on the overall energy savings.

Consider the following energy and cost savings options:

- Daylighting (prismatic skylights and lighting technologies) that can significantly reduce electric demand
- Photovoltaic panels can produce electricity and

offset peak power loads on low-slope roofing areas

- Increased insulation levels throughout the building envelope may reduce heating and cooling loads

- Reflective coatings reduce heat transfer and improve roof-mounted HVAC efficiency

- Garden roofs reduce urban heat island effect, manage stormwater runoff and produce increased levels of oxygen

While the above options are environmentally friendly, they may also save you money. There are many federal and state tax incentives and utility rebates that you may be able to utilize. The actual roofing cost may be a fraction of the overall costs when you consider potential tax and rebate savings and the reduction of overall total energy consumption over time. Then consider loan options to help finance the project.

When times are tough, creativity and out-of-the-box solutions are key. Solving roofing problems with long-term planning, energy-efficient technologies and long-term financing will help you weather the financial storms. Actually, you may be on the cutting edge of advanced roofing technologies that change the way you think about your roof and the costs associated with roofing. Think how you can save money through your roof.

*CentiMark Corporation is a full-service roofing contractor with 65 offices in North America. We provide our customers with options for Roof Life Extension Programs, energy-saving roofing solutions and financing options to help with cash flow. Please visit our web site at [www.CentiMark.com](http://www.CentiMark.com) or call us at 724-514-8700 or 800-558-4100.*

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Phyllis Barber, Sustainability Coordinator, Highmark, Inc. 5/28/09

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