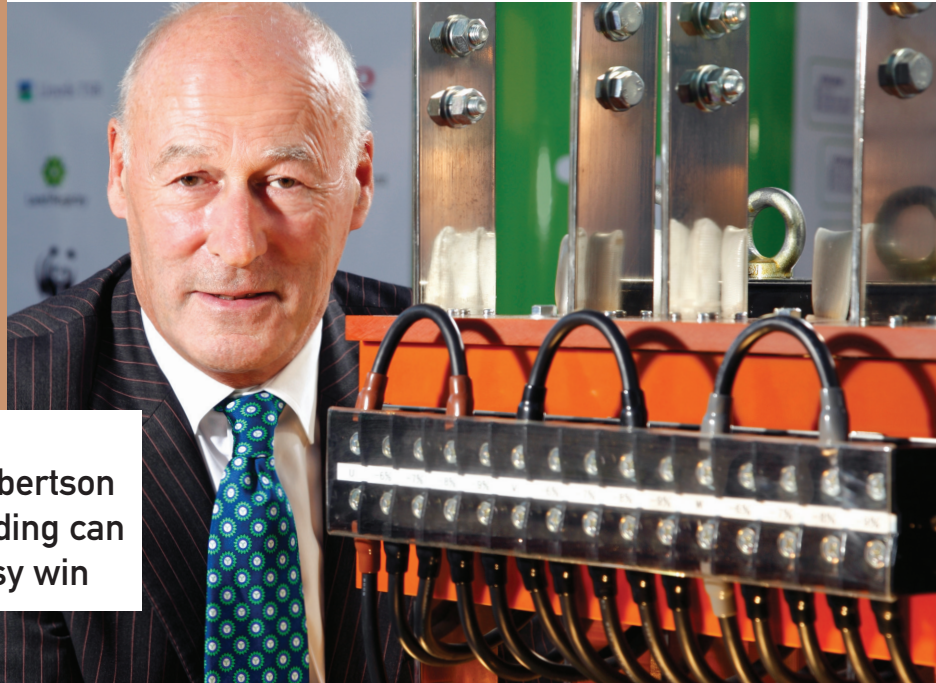


Funding energy savings



Greenbuild talks to voltage optimisation expert Angus Robertson to find out how innovative funding can make energy efficiency an easy win

How did you get involved in energy efficiency?

A friend introduced me to a Japanese technology called voltage power optimisation. I was sure that it had real potential for reducing the energy waste of over voltage. The technology was redesigned for the UK market and introduced into the UK.

It still took a long time for it to really take off, as initially the low cost of energy meant paybacks weren't attractive, but now, because of the increase in the cost of power, most people see a return on investment in two to five years.

Is funding a problem within energy efficiency?

It is the biggest challenge most energy-efficiency companies face, and it has been made more difficult as capital budgets within the public and private sector have contracted in recent years.

Part of the problem is that there has never been a set way of measuring the savings that energy efficiency projects generate, so customers can't have confidence that they'll see value for money. Good measurement and

verification gives confidence in the technology and provides reassurance that the client is getting value for money. We utilise IPMVP by EEVS which means that our savings reports are verifiable, auditable and certain, exactly what energy professionals across the country will be looking to achieve.

What funding support is there?

Traditionally businesses could go to the Carbon Trust in the private sector or to Salix in the public sector. But the government's spending review has meant both organisations undergoing major change. Salix funding is now being released in heavily over-subscribed tranches, whilst the Carbon Trust has joined forces with Siemens to provide energy savings investment.

The good news is, that both the public and private sector organisations can now apply for Carbon Trust funding, however they will now have to pay commercial loan rates. The Carbon Trust interest-free loan, sadly, seems a thing of the past.

What can energy-efficiency businesses do to help consumers?

I think that it requires smarter thinking and a greater intent to make purchasing energy efficiency kit more accessible to more people.

We started 2010 with an ambition to take our technology to our clients for free. We would arrange finance so that clients could install voltage optimisation into their building and the energy savings achieved would cover the cost of the repayments.

The technology was subsequently approved by three lending houses which is testament to its build quality and reliability and we are now seeing companies taking the technology knowing that they can do so without any financial downside. In many cases, the savings are sufficient that our technology is providing a positive cash flow to a business or public sector body at a time when many are struggling.

Angus Robertson is CEO of powerPerfactor

For further information visit powerperfactor.com