Rheem Manufacturing Sets Aggressive Sustainability Goals for 2025

About two-thirds of residential energy use is for heating and cooling. Rheem is uniquely positioned to drive down the energy required to stay in your comfort zone.

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Sixtyfive percent of the energy that is delivered to the typical home is used for heating the home, cooling the home or heating the water used in the home. The rest is used for appliances, lighting, tools and electronic devices.

We have been reporting on startup companies that are making a difference. But what about the big boys? What are they doing to make a difference with the biggest mega-trend facing the economy? According to Nielsen, consumers are voting with their purchases for sustainably made and packaged products. Rheem Manufacturing Company is the only North American company that has both HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) products as well as water heating products available in the commercial and residential marketplace. We wanted to know how such a large company with such a huge impact on our home energy use was making a difference.

We were fortunate to meet with John Fitzgerald, Rheem's executive vice president of operations. John, who everybody refers to as Fitz, joined up with Rheem specifically because of Rheem's commitment to sustainability. We were impressed

with the comprehensive nature of the Rheem sustainability plan and wanted to know more:

Tell us a little bit about yourself and how you came to be working for Rheem?

When the position of EVP, operations, Rheem® surfaced, I knew it was an opportunity to make an environmental impact at the global level. When I saw a great opportunity to spearhead product innovations for reduced energy consumption and improved application, I knew I had to join Rheem.

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What is the biggest obstacle Rheem faces in terms of executing these energy saving initiatives?

The biggest obstacle in advancing our energy savings initiatives is communicating what we have to offer. We have an impressive product portfolio designed to meet or exceed industry efficiency standards and save customers energy as well as money. External communication of our offerings remains a priority at Rheem.

Can you tell us a little bit about Rheem’s commitment to sustainability?

We know our products have an impact on the planet’s limited resources, and with that comes responsibility. In January, we launched a sustainability initiative A Greater Degree of Good. We put a stake in the ground and publicly committed to aggressive goals by 2025.

Your sustainability initiative is multifaceted. What operations will be affected?

We’re re-imagining our products and our global manufacturing operations to reduce our environmental footprint. And, we’re training 250,000 plumbers and contractors on sustainable products and best practices, which is nearly a third of the industry in the U.S. We’re committed to doing good by our customers and the environment.

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Tell us about your hybrid heat pump/water heater that takes heat out of the air to heat water for later use at peak times?

Rheem’s Prestige® Series Hybrid Electric Water Heater is the most efficient water heating solution in the U.S. By integrating our team’s expertise with our unique water heating experience, users get a product that extracts energy from the very air we breathe and heats the water used in the home.

What are smart controls? How will those reduce our carbon footprint?

Rheem’s EcoNet® Smart Monitoring System offers an unparalleled level of protection, comfort and energy savings for users to monitor system performance while saving money and reducing energy consumption without sacrificing comfort. By integrating AI in the future, Rheem will take high-efficiency HVAC systems and customized controlled comfort to the next level.

Tell us about the Australian Photo-Voltaic Power Storage System.

Rheem launched the system last year under the model name PowerStore®. PowerStore works with a solar power system and a power meter to capture excess solar energy to turn it into hot water, rather than sending it back to the grid. It stores energy like a battery – but more affordably.

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Does Rheem acquire energy efficiency technologies developed by independent entrepreneurs?

Rheem has a near 100-year history in providing highly reliable solutions in HVAC and water heating. We routinely meet with entrepreneurs to understand their products and how we can work together. In the last 90 days, we had two separate teams visiting incubators nationwide to find that next great idea.

Final thoughts.

We love the idea that Rheem is taking its unique position as a hot water and an HVAC producer to develop integrated solutions that use both types of products. Got a great idea for hot water, heating or cooling? Here's a big company that committed to achieving its environmental goals. Have you got the next great idea?

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