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In the Green Room...

What is LEED Certification and how do I get it?

LEED stands for: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. This is a rating system created by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) to help promote the construction and development of sustainable, efficient and high performing green buildings and offices. The rating system takes into account a number of features including: the site itself and surrounding environment, the energy and atmosphere of the building inside and out, the water and energy efficiency and what kind of materials and resources are used during construction and how they are disposed. The system awards credits according to certain accomplishments with regards to the formerly mentioned categories. For the large majority of office tenants the subcategory of the LEED system that they would focus on would be LEED for Commercial Interiors which focuses on spaces within existing office buildings.

In the Commercial Interiors rating system there is a maximum of 57 credits possible. There are four types of certification of which a project can be awarded; 21 credits receives Certification, 27 credits receives Silver Certification, 32 credits receives Gold certification and 42 credits receives Platinum Certification. There are rating systems for New Construction, Existing Buildings, Commercial Interiors, Core and Shell, Homes and Neighborhood Development.

The process of getting your office space LEED Certified starts as soon as you are prepared to discuss your real estate needs. In previous issues, we have suggested beginning your

real estate solution process at least one year prior to your lease expiration. Considering a LEED Certified office space should be discussed with your broker at the onset of your real estate planning. During your search for an exclusive tenant advocate, it would be advantageous to select a broker designated as a LEED Accredited Professional whom can guide you through a discussion to further detail the LEED process. In general, the process entails a registration of the project, meticulous recording of specific data to represent credits that the project is looking to be awarded and then a submittal for review. Once reviewed, the project will be awarded credits earned and if any of the milestones are met it will be certified accordingly. Your LEED AP broker can assist in creating the perfect green team to navigate the LEED Certification process as well as lay the foundation for successful certification. The location of your office will have consequences, some positive and some negative, on your LEED certification and therefore it can be advantageous for there to be a competent broker with LEED accreditation on your real estate team. We'll be talking more about the LEED System in subsequent issues.

The latest and most well known LEED Certified building in San Francisco is the newly built California Academy of Sciences which achieved LEED Platinum when it exceed the 52 point LEED for New Construction Platinum threshold. Details on this achievement can be found on the Academy's website. Obviously, the Academy's endeavor was much more extravagant than the average office tenant could undertake but LEED certified office spaces are being unveiled all over San Francisco more frequently. It is a discussion worth having with your real estate professional. Attempting a LEED project can leave your firm in a higher performing, healthier and more efficient office space in which employees and clients will not only recognize but applaud.

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