Paradise Energy Solutions
Save With Every Sunrise®

A BUSINESS' GUIDE TO GOING SOLAR

What businesses of all sizes need to know for a successful solar energy installation.

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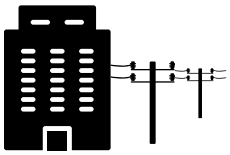
THE BASICS

Solar is a pretty simple process. However, there are a few things you should know about how it can be installed and the regulations surrounding the electricity it generates.

GRID-TIED VS OFF-GRID SOLAR

There are two types of solar systems: those that are connected to the utility grid (grid-tied) and those that are independent (off-grid systems). Both have a time and a place, but nearly all businesses install grid-tied systems.



GRID-TIED

- \+ If your building has access to electric utility hookups, you can install a grid-tied system.
- \+ You'll never be without power as long as the grid is working. You'll pull energy from the grid at night or when the weather isn't favorable for solar.
- \+ You can, but don't have to, install batteries to store electricity.
- × Grid-tied systems won't produce electricity when the grid goes down. You'll need a storage system or a traditional generator.
- × You'll still be a utility customer, meaning you'll still see some (small) customer charges on a bill.

OFF-GRID

- × If your building is remote and without access to grid electricity, you may have to go off-grid.
- × If your system stops producing and you run out of stored electricity, you'll have to go without.
- × You'll spend *a lot* of money for a battery system.
- \+ If the electricity grid goes down in your area, your system will continue to produce electricity and you won't be affected at all.
- \+ You won't be a utility customer, meaning you won't get an electricity bill at all.

THE VERDICT:

Grid-tied systems are better for businesses because installing a solar energy storage system large enough for a commercial building is far too cost-prohibitive. Businesses can still offset 100% of their power needs with a grid-tied system for a fraction of the cost. Click below to learn more about grid-tied and off-grid solar.

LEARN MORE

Read More: Grid-Tied vs Off-Grid Solar

ROOF MOUNTS, GROUND MOUNTS, & CARPORTS

Solar panels can be installed on roofs, as free-standing structures on land, or atop carports. The installation that's best for your business depends mostly on the area you have available, your preference, and your budget.

TYPE	PROS	CONS
ROOF MOUNTS 	• Optimizes unused space • Tends to cost the least • Suitable for most roof styles • Most roofs maintain their warranty • No penetrations are required for ballast-mount & standing seam metal roofs	• May require roof penetration • Could require a new roof before installation • Future roof maintenance would be difficult • Adds weight to your roof
GROUND MOUNTS 	• Installation location is flexible; can be placed where there's a lot of sunshine or is out-of-the-way • May give you more space for a larger system • No roof penetrations needed • Easily accessible for maintenance • Can get ideal orientation and tilt for optimal solar production	• Installation costs may be higher • Takes up space • Easier access for unauthorized visitors • Plants growing underneath will require mowing & maintenance to control grass & plant growth
CARPORTS 	• Optimizes unused space • Shelters cars from the elements • No roof penetrations required • Won't have to give up land • Easily integrated with EV chargers • Can be designed to optimize production	• Installation costs are often highest • Need to install equipment to control rain runoff and prevent snow sheets from falling • May need to install lighting underneath the structure

WORRIED ABOUT YOUR ROOF?

A structural engineer will evaluate the structure before any work is done, and most roofs can maintain their warranty. If you have a flat roof, you may be able to avoid roof penetrations with a ballast mount, which instead uses heavy weights to hold the panels in place.

LEARN MORE

Read More: Roof Mounts vs Ground Mounts

Read More: Flat Roofs

Read More: Carports

NET METERING & AGGREGATE METERING

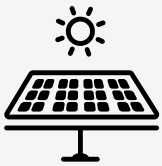
Net metering is, more or less, free energy storage via the utility grid. It's a billing mechanism that's pretty invaluable when it comes to your system's payback. If you have multiple utility meters, aggregate metering is also key.

WHAT IS NET METERING?

Solar panels only produce electricity when the sun is shining, but you need electricity regardless of the weather. So what do you do when your solar system isn't producing? With net metering, you can draw electricity previously generated by your solar system off the grid for free.

Watch Video

1



Your system generates more energy than your business is currently using. The extra electricity goes to the grid.

2

The utility then sells it. In return, they credit your account for each kWh uploaded.

3

When your system isn't producing, you can use those credits to power your business for free.

METER AGGREGATION

If you have multiple electric meters, you may be eligible for aggregate metering, or virtual net metering. This lets you offset electricity usage on any meter or building with the power generated from a solar system connected to another meter. However, policies vary by utility and by state.

Watch Video

WHERE IS IT AVAILABLE?

Most states mandate that utilities provide net metering. Elsewhere, solar producers are compensated at the lesser wholesale rate, or by unique compensation methods, similar to New York's VDER Value Stack. Meter aggregation's availability also varies by utility and by state.

LEARN MORE

Read More: How Does Net Metering Work?

Read More: Meter Aggregation

SUN EXPOSURE: DO YOU GET ENOUGH?

Solar panels need sunlight to make power, and the more, the better. But there are some pretty common things that can stand between the sun and your panels, like trees, buildings, and weather.

SOURCES OF SHADE

Trees, buildings, hills, mountains, and even powerlines can reduce how much electricity your system produces. If these items cast a shadow on even just a part of your panel, that panel's output can be reduced by 33% to even 100%.

Before installation, your installer should do a shade assessment analysis with specialized tools to ensure shade won't interfere with your system's energy production.

Read More: Do You Get Enough Sun?

CLOUDS & RAIN

Climate also has an impact on your system's production. If your business is located in a particularly cloudy or rainy area, solar panels will produce less energy.

However, solar has proven itself time and time again in some of the dreariest climates on Earth. The fix for this is to install a few extra panels to make up for lost production. It will have a modest impact on installation costs but can have a huge impact on electricity savings.

Read More: Weather's Impact on Production

Watch Video

Despite Upstate New York's cloudy weather, this business's system reached payback in just 2 years.

Case Study

WHAT ABOUT SNOW?

If snow accumulates on your panels, they will block out sun and reduce production. However, panels warm up quickly, and snow often melts or slides off your panels shortly after a storm.

With our Triple Ten production guarantee, you don't need to worry about snow or clouds. If your system production falls short, we will send you a check for the difference.

PRICING & PAYBACK

Free, clean energy, and a boost to your brand's reputation make solar sound pretty great. But how much is it going to cost?

The pages below will give you an idea. But it's not all about costs. We'll also show you how much money solar can *save* your business.

HOW MUCH DOES SOLAR COST?

Solar is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Your system will be uniquely designed for your needs, goals, and budget. As a result, the cost will be determined by several factors. We can, however, give you a ballpark estimate.

FACTORS THAT IMPACT PRICE

Size
Larger systems cost more, but they can also save you more. The more free electricity the system generates, the faster the system will reach payback.

Equipment
From top-of-the-line to budget brands, there's a wide range of equipment available to suit every project.

Incentives
The federal tax credit and bonus depreciation are two widely available incentives. Some businesses may have access to even more.

System Type
Roof mounts tend to cost less than ground mounts.

ROOF-MOUNTED SOLAR COSTS FOR BUSINESSES

Grab your electric bill, find your monthly average, and use the chart below to find out what a system sized for your business can cost.

Average Monthly Electric Bill	System Size (kW)	Total Cost Before Incentives	Cost After Incentives
$600	50 kW	$147,500	$70,565
$1,200	100 kW	$268,800	$128,595
$2,400	200 kW	$494,400	$236,523

LEARN MORE

Read More: How Much Does Solar Cost a Business?

INCENTIVES & DEPRECIATION

Governments like when businesses install solar. That's why they offer so many cost-saving incentives that make the initial investment easier.

FEDERAL INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT

For systems under 1 MW, the federal investment tax credit is 30%. These projects can also increase to as much as 60–70% if projects qualify for adders. These adders are:

- 10% for a project built in an energy community
- 10% for meeting domestic content requirements
- 10-20% if installed in a low-income area

The 30% commercial solar tax credit is available through 2027, but the easiest path is to safe harbor or start construction by Dec. 31, 2025. Beginning in 2026, new FEOC rules will make qualifying much harder.

Learn more about the tax credit.

BONUS DEPRECIATION

Businesses can now capitalize on 100% bonus depreciation in year one on the federal level, followed by the standard five-year MACRS schedule on the state level.

SRECS

Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECS) are an extra way to earn money with solar. For each 1,000 kWh of energy you produce, you get one credit that can be sold. However, credit prices vary and they're only available in some states.

LOCAL INCENTIVES

Some states and utility companies offer additional incentives to businesses going solar. Check out our State Incentives page to see what your state offers.

USDA GRANTS

Businesses in rural areas may qualify for the USDA Reap grant. While these are highly competitive, they can cover up to 50% of your costs.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE TAX CREDIT

HOW SRECS WORK

You get an SREC for each 1,000 kWh generated.

You sell those SRECs at market price.

The earnings go right to your pocket.

Learn more about the different cost-saving incentives available to businesses on our blog.

Tax Credit | Depreciation | SRECs | State Incentives | USDA Grants

SOLAR OWNERSHIP VS LEASING

Solar ownership is when you pay for the project through cash or financing. Solar leases are when a second party pays for and installs the system on your land or building. In return, you purchase the electricity the system generates.

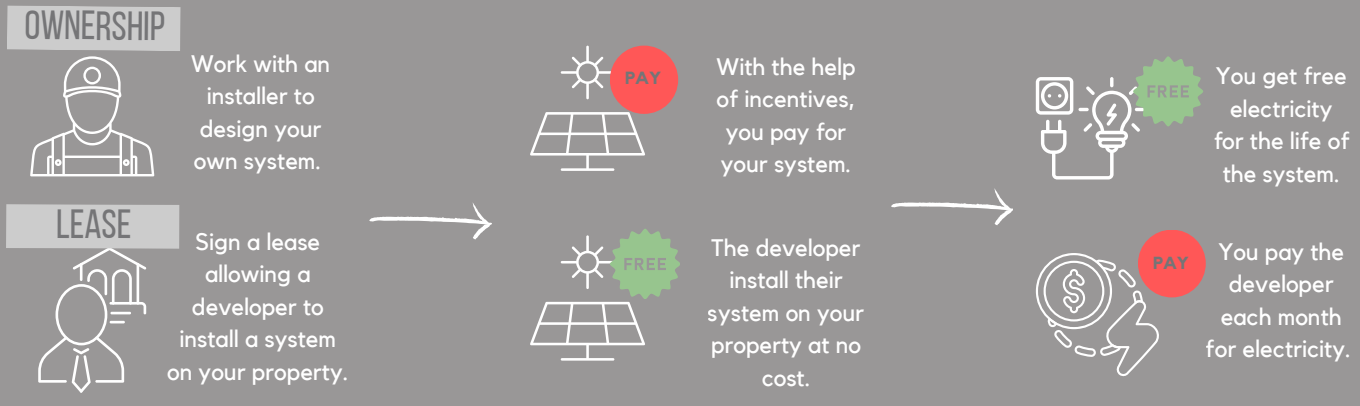
OWNERSHIP

- \+ You'll get all the incentives from going solar, like the 30% tax credit, bonus depreciation, and SRECs.
- \+ The electricity your system generates will be 100% free for you to use.
- \+ Your solar system will increase your property value.
- ✕ You'll have to pay for installation costs.
- ✕ You'll be responsible for maintenance.

LEASE

- ✕ The leasing company gets the tax credits and other incentives.
- ✕ You'll still have to pay a monthly electric bill. Plus, the lease agreement also has escalators that make the payment more expensive over time.
- ✕ Your lease will stay with your property, meaning if you sell, you'll have to find a buyer willing to assume your solar lease.
- \+ You won't have to pay for the initial upfront costs to install the system.
- \+ Your leasing company is responsible for maintenance, not you.

HOW IT WORKS

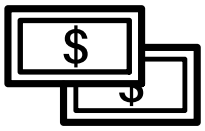


LEARN MORE

Read More: Ownership vs Leasing

SOLAR FINANCING

Solar systems, which can pay for themselves in just a few years, can be a valuable asset for businesses of all sizes. However, they do require a substantial upfront investment. Here are a few common methods of financing.



CASH

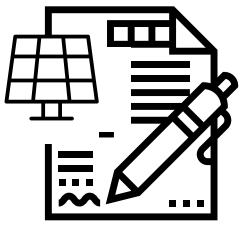
Cash is often the ideal way to pay for a solar system. It positions you as the owner and gives you 100% of the benefits from solar—from the electricity savings to the tax savings, and more—with no interest payments. However, not all businesses have enough available capital to install solar, and that's okay. There are other options.

LOAN

You don't need to have cash on hand to reap the benefits of solar system ownership. Lending institutions recognize the power and stability of an investment in solar, and typically offer loans with great terms.

A similar option is a capital lease, which is different from a "solar lease." They provide the capital, and you'll still receive the benefits of ownership. Once it's paid off, you're the owner. They typically have shorter terms than conventional loans.

PPAS & LEASES



If you don't have the finances to own your own system, you can still go solar. Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) and solar leases put solar on your property for no upfront costs. However, you won't be the owner of the system, and you won't get the tax benefits or free electricity. Instead, a leasing company will pay for and own the system. In exchange, you'll purchase the power generated by the system to power your business. It typically starts out at a lower rate than your utility.

WHICH IS BEST FOR YOU?

It all comes down to your cash flow, credit, and tax liability. If you owe enough in taxes to take advantage of the 30% tax credit, and you have the money or credit to pursue ownership, that typically offers the best return. If not, leasing can be a great alternative.

Read More: Learn More About Solar Financing

ROI & PAYBACK

While price matters in any business decision, the payback period and the return on that investment are also important. While these numbers will vary drastically based on your specific system, here's a little of what you can expect.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

ROI is an important indicator of the success of an investment. For solar, the ROI is dependent on how much your system costs vs. how much your system is saving you. The lower your installation costs and the more you pay to power your business, the better your ROI.

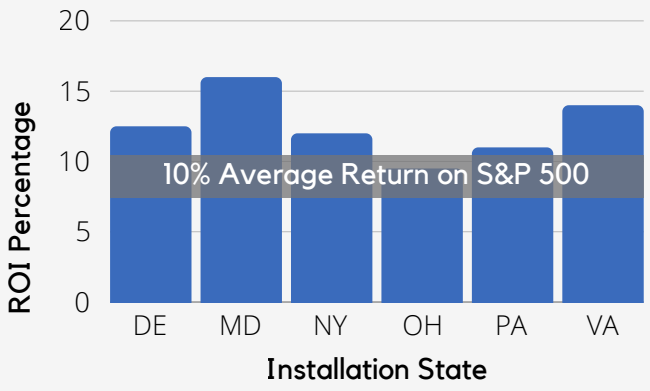
There are a lot of factors that go into this, and the number can vary greatly from business to business. However, it's fairly common for businesses to see ROIs between 10% and 20%. The average return on the S&P 500 is 10%, which suggests solar is a pretty solid investment. It's also much less risky and volatile than the stock market.

PAYBACK PERIOD

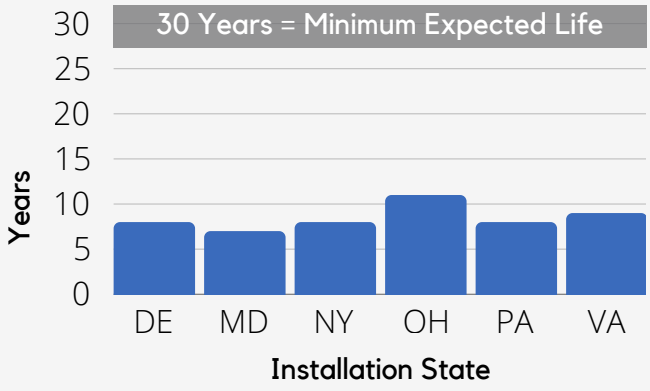
While solar costs money to install, it will eventually pay for itself, and then some. After just a few years of saving on electric bills, most commercial solar systems reach this payback number. That means every kWh produced after that is 100% free energy.

Paybacks will vary with installation costs, electricity rates, and how much your system produces. However, most businesses pay off their system in under ten years. Most solar panels are guaranteed for at least 25 to 30 years, meaning you'll have 15 to 20 years of 100% free power.

AVERAGE ROI



AVERAGE PAYBACK



LEARN MORE

Blog: ROIs & Paybacks

MAINTENANCE

Solar panels are a fairly hands-off investment that requires little regular maintenance. However, there are still some instances where a professional may need to work on the system.

HOW OFTEN WILL THEY NEED MAINTENANCE?

Your solar panels likely won't need regular maintenance or upkeep.

Unless your solar PV system has bad parts, was installed incorrectly, or outside factors damage the system, little maintenance is needed. Leading inverter brands have warranties that cover the first 10 - 25 years. Solar panels from leading brands will be guaranteed for around 25 or 30 years. Even solar batteries come with warranties, though they are often much shorter than panels' and inverters'.

WHAT WILL MAINTENANCE COST?

With the right installer and equipment, little to nothing.

The true cost of a solar system repair can vary widely. But if you buy quality parts covered by warranties and you work with an installer willing to stand behind their work, you won't pay much. Manufacturer warranties cover components, and some installers offer workmanship warranties.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED MAINTENANCE?

Keep an eye on your production monitoring software.

Most systems will come with an app or website that shows your system's production. If there is a drop in production unrelated to weather, it may be time for a service call. Here at Paradise Energy, we include average maintenance costs in the cash flows that come with our quotes. This will give you a clear picture of the impact maintenance could have on your system's payback.

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR OWN PANELS

Sit back, relax, and pay ridiculously low electric bills.

Cleaning dust and dirt off your panels can, in some instances, be worth it. However, regular rain showers do enough to keep most panels clean. And when it comes to snow, just about everyone in the industry recommends it's not worth clearing it off. Performing either of these tasks with the wrong equipment or approach could damage panels and void their warranty. Reach out to trusted professionals only. Ideally, the improved production should make up for the cost of hiring a professional.

HOW DO I AVOID EXPENSIVE MAINTENANCE BILLS?

Paradise Energy's Triple Ten Guarantee keeps your investment safe.

Going solar with Paradise Energy means your system will be protected by our Triple Ten Guarantee. This is above and beyond your equipment warranty. It guarantees your system's production, comes with expert system monitoring, and protects you against any workmanship issues for ten years.

Triple Ten Guarantee
Every Investment Should Be This Safe!

LEARN MORE

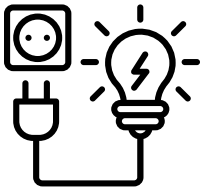
Read More: Learn more about the added security of our Triple Ten Guarantee

DOWN TO BUSINESS

With the basics out of the way, we can get into some of solar's business-specific benefits and considerations, like its impact on your bottom line and the benefits it can bring your brand.

IS SOLAR RIGHT FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

While solar can be a great way to reduce your overhead and tax liability, it simply isn't for every business. Below are four questions that can help guide you to discovering whether or not it's a good move financially.



DOES YOUR BUSINESS USE A LOT OF POWER?

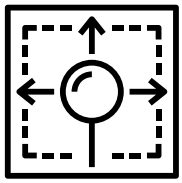
The savings from solar come from offsetting your electric bill from the utility. The more electricity you use, the less you'll pay and the more money you'll save over your solar system's 30+-year lifespan.

ARE YOUR ELECTRIC RATES HIGH?

If you're using a lot of power and your electric rates are high, solar could definitely deliver a huge boost to your business's bottom line. And overall, electricity rates are only going to increase. If you install solar now, you'll be protecting yourself from paying larger bills down the road.

DO YOU HAVE TAX LIABILITY?

One of the best incentives for solar energy in the United States has been the Solar Investment Tax Credit through the federal government. Until 2022, you'll be able to recoup 30% of your solar system's cost through a tax credit. You'll also be able to accelerate 80% of the tax savings on depreciation to year one, front-loading your solar investment.



DO YOU HAVE SPACE AVAILABLE?

Whether a roof mount, ground mount, or carport, solar panels have to go somewhere. Solar panels can be securely installed on a variety of roof types, putting underused space to work for your business. Ground mounts can be optimally positioned to get the most out of your property's available sunlight. Carports can optimize the use of parking lots.

LEARN MORE

Read More: Is Solar Right for Your Business?

GROWING YOUR BOTTOM LINE

An investment decision really boils down to one thing: the impact on the bottom line. Many commercial solar systems can reach payback in just a few years, leaving decades to generate free electricity. How does this help your business?

HOW SOLAR CREATES VALUE

Reduces Overhead

Solar energy reduces a fixed cost—one of the hardest things to control in business. This trickles down to your bottom line, and the savings grow with time. As your competition struggles to keep up with rising utility rates, you'll draw power from the sun, which will cost the same 20 years from now as it does today—nothing.

Saves on Taxes

If you have federal tax liability, you can shave a large chunk of your taxes off the year your solar system is installed. With the Solar Investment Tax Credit and accelerated depreciation, a huge part of the system's cost comes back in year one.

Brand Benefits

Studies show customers are motivated to buy from businesses that have the same values as they do. Studies are also showing consumers of all demographics are becoming more environmentally conscious, and they want to buy from businesses that share this.

Increases Property Value

In addition to the immediate benefits like reducing overhead and saving on taxes, owning a solar system can also increase your property value. It'll be more attractive to potential buyers because it comes with a means of producing free electricity.

MARKETING YOUR SYSTEM

Consumers of all demographics are getting serious about the environment, and their spending habits reflect that. Going solar can help you attract and keep new customers.

YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT

Your business is installing solar, but your solar story isn't just about your business—it's about your customers. People are in search of brands that share their values. Let your customers know that by buying your product or service, they're saving trees and offsetting CO2.

BE TRANSPARENT & MAKE REAL PROGRESS

A recent study by Label Insight found that up to 94% of the consumers were more likely to be loyal to a brand that offers transparency and 73% of those people would be willing to pay more for a product from a transparent company. Make your sustainability goals available to your customers and give them visibility into your progress.

STAY SELECTIVE & AUTHENTIC

It's good to let people know you've gone solar, but don't overdo it. Having it on your website is a great way to help you distinguish yourself from your competitors. A well-placed sign in front of your business that shares you're powered by the sun draws attention and creates brand awareness. Work your green goals onto your packaging.

YOUR EMPLOYEES = BRAND ADVOCATES

Let your team in on why you went solar and prove to them its effectiveness. Keep them interested with updates on the system's energy production and the financial impact. Set up solar system monitoring equipment in your lunchroom. Give quarterly or yearly updates. Your team members are your biggest advocates. Give them the tools, and they'll all be authentic word-of-mouth marketers.

LEARN MORE

Read More: Marketing Your Solar System

THE INSTALL PROCESS

Installing a solar system should be a fairly hands-off and easy process. Your installer will take care of all the heavy lifting.

Here's more on what to expect, how to find the right team to work with, and how to evaluate your proposals.

6 STEPS TO FREE ENERGY

No business owner or facility manager needs another complex task added to their day-to-day schedule. Thankfully, installing a solar system is relatively hands-off and can be completed in six simple steps.

1

Custom Evaluation
You'll meet with a consultant to discuss your questions and energy goals.

2

Detailed Quote
After 2-3 days, you'll receive a quote detailing costs, ROI, & payback.

3

Signed Contract
If you decide to move forward, you'll sign a contract & discuss the nuts & bolts, preparing for construction.

4

Paperwork & Permits
We'll finalize the details & take care of all the paperwork, permits, & materials.

5

Construction Begins
The project will proceed with little to no disruptions to your business, & we'll keep you updated on everything.

6

Free Electricity
Once your project is completed in a few days or weeks (depending on size) you'll start generating free electricity!

LEARN MORE

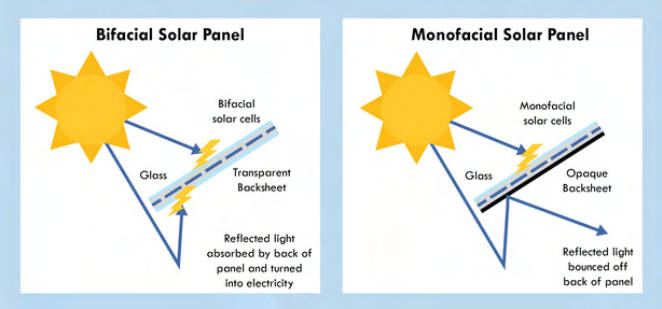
Watch: Sizing a Solar System

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PANELS

Like inverters, there are a few different options when it comes to solar panels. Some of these options are strictly aesthetic, and some will determine performance.

MONOFACIAL VS BIFACIAL PANELS

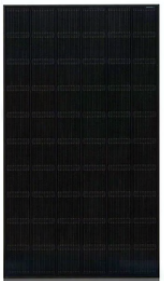
These are the two main types of solar panels. Monofacial panels produce from the top side of the panel only. These are great for roof mounts or on a surface with low albedo. Bifacial solar panels have energy-producing solar cells on both sides of the panel. These are great for ground mounts or tilted roof mounts with a reflective surface underneath.



BACKSHEET & FRAME COLOR

Most panels come with a white backsheet and silver frame. However, some brands offer models with black backsheets and black frames. The latter option tends to be more expensive but can blend into dark roofs more easily, giving it an aesthetic edge.

White Backsheet



Black Backsheet

PANEL SIZE

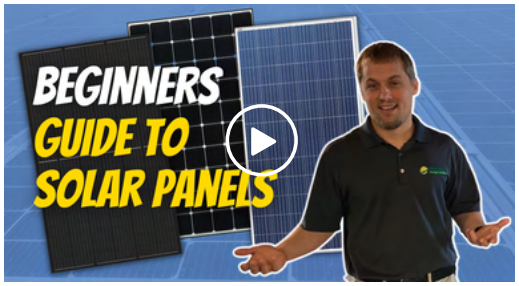
Solar panels come in two different sizes: 60-cell and 72-cell. Overall, 72-cells tend to be more economical, as they'll generate more electricity per panel. This makes them the preferred option for many commercial solar systems.

72-Cell Panel

60-Cell Panel

OUTPUT RATING & EFFICIENCY

The output rating represents how many watts of electricity the panel can generate. Higher wattages mean more electricity, but this comes at a higher cost. Efficiency is the percentage of electricity it produces with the energy it receives. More efficient panels produce more electricity but are also more expensive.



LEARN MORE

Read More: Picking the Best Solar Panels

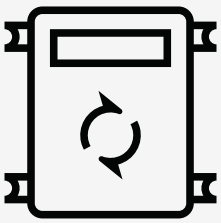
PICKING THE RIGHT INVERTER

The main difference between inverters is the level on which they convert power. Some do so in groups of panels called strings, and others convert power on a panel-by-panel basis. There are pros and cons to all types of inverter.

STRING-LEVEL VS MODULE-LEVEL CONVERSION

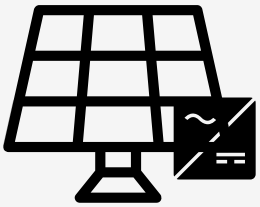
String inverters operate on a string or grouping of several solar panels. Each solar panel in a string can only produce as much electricity as the lowest-producing panel in that string. Microinverters and optimizers, however, work on a module-by-module basis, meaning the output of one panel won't impact the output of another. While these are more efficient, they will cost more.

1



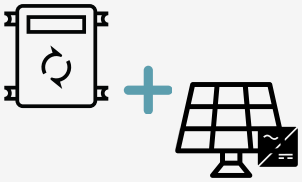
String Inverters
These are often the most common and cost-effective option. However, they're not the most efficient. Each panel will only provide as much electricity as the lowest-producing panel in that string.

2



Microinverters
Microinverters are installed on each solar panel and allow them to produce their maximum amount of electricity, unaffected by others. However, they do tend to be more expensive.

3



String Inverters + Optimizers
This combination gives you the ease of string inverters and module-level optimization. String inverters are installed, but optimizers will be installed on each panel to allow for panel-level optimization.

WHICH IS BEST FOR YOU?

String inverters are typically more economic and are better for projects of scale. However, module-level optimization improves efficiency, especially if your system will be shaded.

Read More: What's the Best Inverter Type?

HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT INSTALLER

Finding the right solar installer is essential. A solar system is a 30+ year investment, and it's important to find a company that will partner with you, stand behind their work, and be around to honor any warranties.

Reviews

You can learn a lot about a company from their customers. Look at reviews on Google and Facebook. Ask the company for references. Look to others for recommendations. This gives you a glimpse at how the company treats customers and handles challenges.

Experience & Longevity

You want to partner with a company that has a history of quality and reliability. Spend time researching past projects. Make sure they're certified by leading solar industry organizations. NABCEP is the leading certifying organization and SEI provides excellent training for solar professionals.

The Team

Ask who would be working on your project. Full-service solar installers have in-house team members that complete every step of the project. Other companies use subcontractors. These people may not have the certifications and experience that a full-service solar installer will have

Company Values

The values and mission statement give you a glimpse into the DNA of a business and offer a gauge of how you'll be treated as a customer. Find a company that has a vision that aligns with your values.

Warranties

Many panels come with 25- or 30-year warranties. Inverters come with warranties that range from 10 - 25 years, depending on the make and manufacturer. Look for an installer that goes above and beyond the manufacturers' warranties to guarantee their work and the energy production of the system. These warranties are important for protecting and providing predictability for your investment.

LEARN MORE

Read More: Choosing the Right Installer

EVALUATING A SOLAR PROPOSAL

Don't let the complexity of solar system estimates overwhelm you. Understanding these 10 items when reviewing and comparing your proposals will help you make the best decision when it comes to your solar installer.

Size & Location
A system's size is based on your energy consumption and the number of panels required to meet your energy demands. It should also be clear where the installer intends to place the system.

Components & Equipment
A list of components should include the quantity, brand, and watts of the solar panels; the quantity, and brand of the inverters; and in some cases, the quantity and brand of the optimizers.

Cost & Incentives
Your proposal should have a cost and incentive summary, including the total cost of the system, savings incentives, and the net cost of the system. You should also see the long-term cash flow.

Environmental Impact
Your proposal should include the expected amount of your energy the system will offset, along with its environmental impact.

Payment Terms
The payment terms should be clearly defined in the proposal.

Warranties & Guarantees
Most solar proposals will include two types of warranties: manufacturer warranties for equipment, and warranties from the installer.

Project's Scope
The proposal should detail what is included and what isn't, as well as provisions for any unforeseen costs.

Project's Schedule
Make sure the proposal includes a schedule that details the process, with dates, from the time you sign to the time the system is energized.

Electric Rate Inflation
Most solar proposals will show you your electric savings. The challenge, however, is predicting the cost of electricity in the future. Many installers include an escalator reflecting energy cost inflation.

Investment Analysis
You should see a long-term, cumulative cash flow analysis. Unlike other investments, solar has a rapid return in the early on and tailors off at the end of the payback period, making it an attractive investment.

LEARN MORE

Read More: Evaluating a Solar Proposal

QUICK SOLAR REFERENCES

In today's business world, sometimes we need only the vital information, and we need it fast.

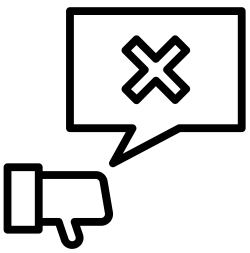
This section distills essential solar information down to just two pages.

THE PROS & CONS OF SOLAR

There's good and bad to just about everything. Before making a decision, it's important to be aware of both sides. That way, you can be sure you're doing what's right for your business today and well into the future.

PROS

- Reduces your overhead by eliminating your monthly energy expenses.
- Protects your finances against rising electricity rates.
- Saves you money on taxes and allows your to recover a large portion of installation costs in the first year.
- The money you save with solar goes right to your bottom line, unlike extra income from revenue growth.
- Your business is going green by switching to an emissions-free energy source.
- There's little to no regular maintenance needed, meaning you can sit back and enjoy the savings.



CONS

- Unless you invest in energy storage, you will loose power along with other utility customers when the grid goes down.
- Installing a solar system requires upfront capital or access to financing in order to save money long-term.
- Your system won't produce electricity unless the sun is shining. You'll need to use net metering credits or purchase energy from the grid when this happens.
- You need space on your roof, land, or parking lot to house the panels.
- Depending on the placement and the aesthetics of your business, solar panels may stand out visually or be unattractive to some.

LEARN MORE

Read More: Solar's Pros & Cons

8 SOLAR TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Throughout your research, you may come across a few unfamiliar terms. The following pages have easy-to-understand definitions of some common jargon to help you along your way.

SOLAR MODULE

The more common name for a solar module is "solar panel." When solar panels are connected to a roof, this creates a solar array, more commonly called a solar system.

PHOTOVOLTAICS

You may hear the word photovoltaic or PV when someone is discussing solar energy. Photovoltaics translates to 'light electricity' and is the method of creating electricity from solar (sun) radiation through the use of solar modules.

INVERTER

Solar panels generate direct current (DC) electricity with energy from the sun. However, our devices and equipment mostly use alternating current (AC) electricity. Inverters take the DC electricity generated from the panels and turn it into AC electricity.

NET METERING

Net metering is the agreement between a utility and a solar-producing consumer that allows the consumer to buy and sell electrical credits as needed. If the solar system produces more than the house is using, the energy is transferred to the utility by means of an electrical credit. If it is not producing, electricity can be drawn from the grid by spending a credit.

KILOWATT (KW)

This is the rate at which power is used or produced. Solar arrays are rated in kilowatts, which is the amount of electrical power that would be produced at any specific point in time at standard test conditions (STC).

KILOWATT-HOUR (KWH)

The volume of power that is used or produced. One kWh is the amount of energy a 1,000 W item would use (or produce) if it ran for 1 hour continuously.

INTERCONNECTION

The interconnection is the physical connection between the electrical grid and your solar array. It's most often achieved with wires that nearly attach to your system and run underground to the utility connection.

SOLAR MODULE DEGRADATION

Over many years, the performance of solar panels begins to degrade, causing them to be less efficient. This degradation is caused by exposure to the elements and normal wear on the solar panel. Panel degradation is to be expected with solar modules. Each manufacturer specifies the expected degradation and warranties of the panels based on these degradation expectations.

WANT TO REDUCE OVERHEAD, SAVE ON TAXES, AND GO GREEN?

Stop overpaying for your energy and start powering your business with cost-free and emission-free electricity. Request your free custom solar quote to learn exactly how a solar energy investment will boost your business and its bottom line.

Request your free custom quote



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