

ABC...ALWAYS BE CLOSING. You have heard that term in reference to sales, but it can also be used when thinking about energy efficiency and window fashions. Always Be Closing those shades, blinds, shutters and draperies to save energy and money.

We are just coming out of another frigid Northeast winter. Temperatures were below freezing most evenings. Regardless of the fuel source, heat is escaping through every nook and cranny in the home. Heat naturally seeks colder air through a process called convection. This is why you lose heat from your home in the winter and the hot air in the summer finds its way inside. Windows are the least insulated building material used in construction. No matter how great the windows, they are not constructed of a combination of sheetrock, fiberglass insulation, plywood and exterior siding. Most heat loss in a home is through the roof and windows. Therefore, the best way to go green – to save energy and fuel – is to insulate your windows. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, properly insulated windows can save homeowners 15% on energy costs annually.

Do the math on that....the owner of your average McMansion can easily spend \$10,000 per year on heating and cooling costs. So \$1500 per year savings....every year...over 20 years...equals \$30,000. When your client gasps at your \$25,000 budget for shades and blinds, let them know you are SAVING them money. In the trade, we refer to 'hard' and 'soft' treatments when referring to shades, blinds, shutters and draperies, respectively. I also like the terms 'privacy layer' and 'design layer.' The most energy efficient 'hard' or 'privacy' window fashions are shutters and honeycomb shades. Shutters come in natural hardwood, composite and vinyl. They are all excellent energy efficient products because they completely frame the window to allow minimal space for air to escape.

ABC'S OF ENERGY EFFICIENT WINDOW FASHIONS

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Single-layer honeycomb shades are affordable and create a blanket effect over the window, capturing and holding air like a quilt. Double honeycomb shades have the same effect but with double the insulation. Both products come in a wide variety of fabric textures and colors.

Back to the A, B, C's. These products work great to keep the heat from escaping...when they are CLOSED! Actually, it is not that simple. You want your shades and blinds open when the sun is in direct contact with the windows – let the sun's rays heat your home. But, when the sun has moved and direct sunlight is no longer shining inside, close the privacy layer to keep the heat inside.

By now, you are thinking...this is complicated! You picture your client running around the house opening and closing shades all day. That is why there are products available from your Industry Partners to automate this process to maximize energy efficiency.

Finally, don't forget the design layer. A home is not complete without draperies. They add not only literal warmth, but a visceral warmth too. It is like wrapping your home and family in a big warm blanket. Custom draperies made with proper lining and interlining, add style and insulation to any home. Combining both the privacy and design layers will make a beautiful and energy efficient home for your happy client.

Left: Hunter Douglas Applause Honeycomb Shades featuring Top/Down Bottom/Up Lift System and Powerview Motorization.