



Exec. of the Month: Tristan Schwartzman champions energy conservation & innovation at Goldman Copeland

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New York, NY Tristan Schwartzman is setting an extraordinary pace for energy conservation and innovation at a time when it is vital for the nation. His leadership involves conducting energy audits and retro-commissioning reports for commercial office buildings, medical facilities, and universities, while championing geothermal ground source energy and creating online geothermal screening tools that are models for the nation.

Schwartzman is principal and director of energy services at NYC-based consulting engineering firm Goldman Copeland, long a pioneer in energy innovations. There he works closely with Charles Copeland, widely recognized as a leader in advancing alternative energy and energy efficiency since the 1970s when Charlie Copeland worked on an early rooftop solar thermal system that helped set the stage for enactment in 1978 of the U.S. Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act

(PURPA), a crucial event for alternative energy.

Tristan Schwartzman reviews a blueprint with a colleague,
energy engineer Kristen Baker
(Photo credit: Goldman Copeland)

Under Schwartzman's leadership, the Energy Services Department at Goldman Copeland has completed energy audits and retro-commissioning projects for more than 50 million s/f of commercial properties. It has certified more Energy Star buildings in the greater NYC/Tri-State area than any other firm.

Through energy audits and retro-commissioning projects, Schwartzman has optimized energy systems for many of the city's largest commercial property owners. He has led their buildings through design and implementation of annual, multi-million-dollar, capital improvement projects based on the audits' findings, generating both energy and financial savings for property owners. He has completed energy audits and provided implementation assistance and design services in support of energy upgrades at buildings throughout the portfolios of Vornado and SL Green, the two biggest landlords in the city. He has also conducted extensive audit and retro-commissioning work for Morgan Stanley, Hines, and other major landlords.

Through a PSE&G initiative in New Jersey, Schwartzman has conducted energy audits and/or engineered energy-efficiency improvements for many of the state's leading healthcare systems, including Hackensack Meridian Health, RWJ Barnabas Health, and Atlantic Health System. The initiative's success caused it to expand to include college and university campuses, and he is now working on projects at both Stevens Institute of Technology and the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

That pace is setting a high standard, as is Goldman Copeland's championing of geothermal ground source energy, a crucial and under-appreciated renewable energy source. Here, too, Schwartzman has become a leader through his pivotal work with Charlie Copeland in creating the first online geothermal screening tool—for the City of New York—and then working with Westchester County to replicate it for a suburban setting. In doing so, he has provided essential tools for the nation to benefit more broadly and effectively from this under-utilized energy source.

A geothermal ground source system conveys thermal energy stored in the subsurface ground. That energy can be accessed from larger lot areas, of which most cities and counties have many, to provide efficient heating and cooling for nearby buildings. In individual settings, a geothermal ground source system works this way: A series of pipes called a heat exchanger is buried in shallow or deeper ground near a building; the pipes circulate fluid to the building's heat pump system, which provides heated or cooled air for the building. In winter, the heat pump extracts heat from the subsurface. In summer, the reverse occurs: The pump moves heat from the building into the ground.

Tristan Schwartzman consults with Goldman Copeland president & CEO Charles Copeland at a project site.
(Photo credit: Goldman Copeland)

In 2018, Schwartzman was central to Goldman Copeland's pioneering creation of an online Geothermal Ground Source Screening Tool for the City of New York – developed for the Mayor's Office of Sustainability and the New York City Department of Design and Construction. The tool enables users to simply assess the feasibility of ground source heating and cooling for every lot in all five boroughs – almost 900,000 lots. The availability of this tool, its application to the largest city in the U.S., and its potential for replication are all pivotal to the further expansion of use of geothermal ground source energy in America and beyond.

Schwartzman then took the next step by helping replicate the tool for Westchester County. In July 2021, Westchester County unveiled "Westchester GeoPossibilities," a free user-friendly tool that lets property owners easily assess the feasibility of geothermal heating and cooling for any building or property in the county. The Westchester tool was funded by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and is being promoted by county executive George Latimer, Sustainable Westchester, and the Westchester County Association.

These two geothermal screening tools represent landmark developments for Greater New York and the nation. The NYC model was the first of its kind. The Westchester version may have even broader impact, as it demonstrates its applicability to suburban counties nationwide.

In championing energy efficiency through engineering, Schwartzman serves on ACEC New York's Energy Committee, where he reviews draft laws and rule adjustments. This is especially significant, given the active role of recent legislation and subsequent rulemaking in the city in the effort to combat carbon emissions. While legislators and other government officials have a clear understanding of the direction in which they want to move, they often do not have in-depth, relevant, engineering experience. Schwartzman has, therefore, helped bring technical expertise to the discussion, enabling policymakers to factor that knowledge and perspective into shaping policy.

Schwartzman also advises the New York Energy Consumers Council on energy and sustainability issues. Here, too, his active participation enables technical expertise to augment discussion of proposed policy initiatives. He has also been asked to provide advice to the Mayor's Office of Sustainability.

Schwartzman shares his experience with others in the industry by presenting on retro-commissioning practices at ACEC New York, ASHRAE, ASHRAE NY, and Buildings NY. He helps promote energy sustainability further by serving as a judge for BOMA NY's Pinnacle Award for Energy Sustainability, which recognizes building owners and operators for energy efficiency.

Schwartzman is championing energy conservation and innovation in practice, in the creation of new

energy tools, and in advocacy. In doing so, he is extending Goldman Copeland's historic legacy, and providing new models to sustainably empower the world.

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