



Going for Gold

In line with the global craze for sustainable interiors, Summertown Interiors is seeking top LEED accreditation

Statistics show that buildings account for approximately 40% of the global consumption of raw materials and energy, and with growing importance being placed on corporate social responsibility, those working in the building and interiors sector are becoming increasingly concerned about the spaces that they themselves inhabit.

As a firm supporter of sustainable principles, Summertown Interiors recently decided to put its own green stamp on the environment. By going for LEED Gold accreditation with the designing of its new offices in the Jebel Ali Free Zone, Summertown hopes to address environmental concerns by reducing its own carbon footprint.

"We are of the opinion that we have a responsibility towards all relevant stakeholders, employees, shareholders,

and the population at large, to develop high-performance sustainable interiors. Environmental conservation is extremely important and we are in this together as organisations, governments, families and individuals, to make sure there is a better tomorrow for future generations," said Marcos Bish, managing director of Summertown Interiors.

"In order to achieve this, we need to take ownership of the issues confronting us today and make an effort to contribute in those areas where we have an opportunity to do so. If Summertown, as an interior design and fit out contractor, is to design and execute green interiors for others, than we ourselves must walk the walk and lead by example."

For Summertown, creating a LEED Gold office took far more time than anticipated. As it was the first time that the

company was designing in accordance with the LEED rating system, it was a steep learning curve, with challenges and obstacles awaiting at every turn.

"The greatest challenge was to design within set LEED and budget parameters while maintaining the functionality of the interiors and without compromising on the look and feel of the office. The second part, working with the interior designers and project team to execute the office interior fit out, was also challenging in terms of finding suppliers and sourcing materials that adhere to the strict LEED specifications. And finally, there was the preparation, compilation, and submission of LEED documentation for final review by the US Green Building Council, prior to the awarding of LEED certification," Bish recounted.

LEED accreditation will bolster the