

# Partnership Offers Solar Panels in Any Shape or Size

Posted by Chris Warner

Future Energy Solutions, a division of Future Electronics dedicated to smart and clean energy, has partnered with Enhanced Solar Power to offer design services as well as shaped solar panels to customers integrating solar into their product design.

Energy harvesting continues to become an ever more important unique selling point as customers seek environmentally friendly products with long lasting battery life. The integration of solar energy harvesting started as the first real energy harvesting in consumer products in 1978 with the advent of the first solar powered calculator. Low power semiconductor chips were created specifically to run off the power generated from solar panels integrated into these calculators. Since then solar panels have been used in construction signs, emergency roadside phones, cross-walk signs, etc., all with the familiar rectangular shaped solar panels. For many designs the add-on look of the solar panel is not an issue, however what about designs that require more aesthetic appeal?

The issue with integrating solar panels into a product in the past was that crystalline panels are of a high enough efficiency to run applications, but are not able to bend. Manufacturers wishing to integrate these panels into their products either had to find ways of designing with a rectangular, flat surface to house the solar panel or use a bracket to hold a solar panel to a pole or the product itself. Today amorphous or "thin film" solar cells have improved efficiency and can be bent or cut into almost any shape, while semiconductors have become very efficient allowing them to function on low power. Combined, these advancements allow designers to create their products with integrated solar panels to extend battery life or power the device completely, while having the freedom to design their product in the shape they wish.

**Source URL (retrieved on 05/28/2015 - 12:07am):**

<http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2011/12/partnership-offers-solar-panels-any-shape-or-size>