



Evaluation of Consumer Behavior Research

Presented to the NEET Executive Committee
by Teri Duncan
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Workgroup #4 Background



The Assignment

What is the role of marketing in fostering an energy efficient economy?

Can a marketing effort reduce energy use by:

- Enhancing local energy efficiency efforts?
- Motivating consumers to adopt energy efficient behavior?

The Approach

Goal: To make energy efficiency as normal as recycling or not littering.

Process: Gathered & reviewed existing marketing efforts. Shared & surveyed utility research. Discussed implications to the region.

Conclusion: *Coordinated efforts would more effectively and cost-efficiently provide consumers with a clear call to action.*

Recommendations

Create a Marketing Coordinating Council of utilities and other interested organizations.

- Organize under the NEEA umbrella for administration and execution support.
- Establish a regional marketing coordination framework.
- Meet quarterly to discuss and design regionally-coordinated marketing activities in existing energy efficiency marketing efforts.

Recommendations

- Evaluate current research and conduct new research to fill gaps.
- Use that research to develop a regional outreach effort seeking commonality among participants.
- Develop toolkit with messaging & materials to support individual stakeholder efforts.
- Achieve participation by most regional utilities and energy organizations.



Action 5

Conduct secondary research on behavior change initiatives related to consumer energy efficiency.

Host: NEEA

Executive Committee Liaison:

Margie Harris, Energy Trust of Oregon

Workgroup lead: Teri Duncan, PEGI

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Energy for Change 

The Report



The Scope

- Identify & review relevant current research, evaluations and behavior change initiatives.
 - Reviewed over 100 studies & interviewed more than 20 experts
- Catalog & summarize insights and best practices.
- Identify gaps in existing research.
- Provide recommendations for next steps.

Key Findings

- A coordinated regional marketing effort to motivate behavior change can be successful.
- Specific primary research is needed to develop the best approach.
- Best practices examples can be combined to develop a regional marketing strategy.
- Most behavioral programs & pilots haven't been around long enough to study effects after it stops.
- Design marketing efforts to include evaluation methodology so results can be measured.

Best Practices

- Benchmark current energy attitudes and behaviors.
 - Action: create consumer survey to assess prevalent behaviors and prioritize what new behaviors to promote
- Target messaging informed by segmentation and barriers research to maximize their effectiveness.
 - Action: use existing segmentations studies plus baselines to create targeted messages

Best Practices

- Conduct pilots with evaluation included in the design.
 - Action: establish baseline metric & control group
- Deploy a multifaceted approach for a regional marketing effort.
 - Action: Use existing segmentation schemes to identify appropriate channels and messages
- Build credibility through trustworthy messengers and local partnerships.
 - Action: Provide a marketing toolkit for utilities, community groups, other stakeholders

Best Practices by Category

Mass Media

- Use segmentation for targeted, actionable messaging.
- Use multiple channels & maintain good research practices to track efficacy.
- Anti-waste messages rather than “save energy, save money” messages gain more traction with consumers.

Best Practices by Category

Community Based Social Marketing

- Community groups provide credibility.
- Engage churches, sports teams, workplaces to inspire change & align with shared values.
- Focusing on barriers & benefits specific to the community creates more lasting change.
- Individualized marketing approach
 - High touch, lots of personal contact
 - Example: Portland’s Smart Trips program

Best Practices by Category

Feedback

- Providing information alone increases knowledge but doesn't decrease energy use.
 - Immediate & continuous information on impacts of actions & providing most effective savings options can reduce consumption
- Indirect feedback/enhanced billing programs have proven to stimulate behavior change.
 - Persistence is still being measured/debated
- Integrate feedback with other strategies.
 - Commitments, prompts, rewards, recognition

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Best Practices by Category

Competitions

- Social incentives prove more effective than economic incentives to change behavior.
 - Public recognition of winners, community pride
- Community energy challenges leverage & engage multiple resources.
 - Stimulate action & excitement & inspires change
 - Significant savings at low cost

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NW Attitudes & Behaviors

Existing segmentation research

- Seven recent NW segmentation studies available
- Meta-analysis of studies conducted by Energy Trust
- Level of concern for green doesn't correspond with energy use
- Opportunity for significant potential for energy savings among 3 population segments in the region
- Found less regional variation than expected, including urban vs. rural differences
 - “We're all in this together” attitude is prevalent.

Research Recommendations

- Identify current energy efficient behaviors to establish baseline.
 - To target messages & avoid promoting already prevalent behavior
 - To better understand variations such as east/west side
 - To enable measurement of impact & persistence
- Assess existing brands' equity
 - May have enough traction to adapt regionally
- Test messaging prior to deploying.

Research Recommendations

- Analyze effects of multiple strategies.
 - Use experimental design approach to separate & measure impacts
- Track persistence of savings attributable to behavior.
 - Follow up regional efforts in 2-3 years with research to determine long-term effects
- Implement solid evaluation planning in regional marketing efforts.
 - Lack of robust evaluations of energy behavior change programs deters new programs

Recommendations

- Conduct research to develop targeted messaging for motivating energy efficient behaviors.
- Develop a toolkit to support multifaceted marketing efforts & their evaluation.
- NEEA facilitate the activities in close coordination with the Regional Marketing Coordination Council.

Questions?

