

Energy Efficiency Program Marketing: Methodological Approaches to Quantifying Program Success

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Overview

With the expansion of energy efficiency programs across the country, several states and regions are working towards a one-stop-shop for energy efficiency, including a single overarching brand or marketing effort to promote energy efficiency. The goal is to improve the customer experience and provide one message, one source of information, and one initiative to customers. While the benefits seem obvious, they are difficult to measure. Therefore, this shift in program marketing has significant implications for evaluators and program managers alike.

Two central questions emerge from these integrated marketing campaigns: (1) how effectively do the various components of a unified marketing campaign come together to create a single source of energy efficiency information from the customers' perspective, and (2) how do we measure program performance? Answering these questions is complex, and further complicated by the volume of marketing done on similar issues by other entities (e.g., Energy Star, big box retail stores, nonprofit organizations, and government). This saturation of the market can make it difficult for customers to differentiate between messages and therefore hard to tease out the impact of one effort versus another.

Evaluation Implications

Despite these challenges, jurisdictions around the country have developed and implemented general marketing campaigns to consumers. This poster explores methods used across the country to evaluate integrated energy efficiency marketing campaigns, as well as the benefits and drawbacks of the various approaches. In particular, the poster highlights the use of pre/post tracking studies, structural equation modeling, focus groups, content analysis and channeling analysis to assess the level at which statewide websites and mass-media efforts motivate customers to participate in energy efficiency program efforts. Our research also includes an organizational effectiveness assessment using a detailed model of the organizational structure and relationships in place to implement a statewide campaign. Specifically, we will address methodological approach to answering the following key research questions:

- Did program participants take action after participating in the program?
- What is the net effect of the program?
- Who is the program reaching?
- What type and how much information is the program providing?
- Do customers understand the messages they receive?
- What kind of information do customers want or need? How varied are our customers? What different types of customers are there?
- How effective is the organizational structure in place to implement the coordinated marketing effort?