

15 Worst Practices: Don't Try This With Your Utility Program

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Don't: Ignore why people buy

- Add water vs. egg
- 2/3-inch holes not drill bits
- Hot showers & cold beer
- Comfort, health, savings



DO: Know your customer



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Don't: Advertise you have lowest rates

- Quit yer bitchin or move!
- Walk-through audits for high bill justification only
- Single-fuel audits that ignore blatant opportunities to save
- Who do you trust?



DO: Be trusted energy advisor



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Don't: Act Like a Monopoly

- Energy Deregulation:
 - “Want Choice!”
 - Don't want to choose!
 - Don't trust you, but know you
- Energy Upgrade California Basic vs. Advanced



DO: Give simple choices



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Don't: Punish Choosers

- Customers must choose between state or utility incentive
- Different contractor standards for single vs. whole house measures
- Create lost opportunities with unstackable incentives



DO: Offer program pathways



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Don't: Expect your partners to defer to your umbrella brand

- Not My Milk?
- Attribution
- I'm with them



Reduce energy use. Save money. Create jobs.



A Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperative



DO: Co-brand with partners



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Don't: Assume Message Acceptance

- Fried chicken in a can
- Life-size CFL cardboard cutouts
- Customers complained when cardboard didn't light



DO: Test your message



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Don't: Rely on Magic

- Service Magic is now Home Advisor
- Magic isn't reliable
- Diet Coke vs. Coke Zero



DO: Be authoritative rather than cute



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Don't: Take Away Someone's Job

- Utility promoted third-party direct install of CFLs and Refrigerators in multifamily buildings
- Property managers who were normally paid to do that work undermined efforts....
- Scheduling a/c tune-ups in winter



DO: Know customer and channel motivation



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Don't: Assume Awareness Equals Action

- If people just knew....
- Scales don't make us thinner
- Audits alone don't save energy



DO: Reward action that results from audit



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Don't: Burn Down Homes

- Insulation installed in homes over knob-and-tube wire burn down homes in Louisiana and Australia
- Can't assume that just because it's code, it's right



DO: Promote and enforce standards



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Don't: Make it about the rebate

- Advertise \$4,000-\$9,000 rebates
- Customers call for free money
- Average spend \$12,000 to earn \$2,500
- Customer Website failed to mention the work wasn't "free"
- Leads referred to contractors expected free audit AND free installs



DO: Make it about the total value



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Don't: Stop and Start Programs

- Rebates gone now; back in January
- Inspires a “wait and see” attitude



DO: Create urgency to act now



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Don't: Incentivize the wrong action

- \$2,000 flat rebates for air sealing
- No air sealing in attics allowed
- Paid rebates on less than 3 ACH change



DO: Tie incentives to performance



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Don't: Over Administer Programs

- Spend more to file liens than is lost in bad debt
- Spend more on damage control afterwards than upfront screening
- Contractors pay customers to not report install or say that incentive is cancelled because too complex



DO: Align risks with costs



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Don't: Etch Guidelines in Stone

- Utility establishes incentives that exceed installed market costs
- 10% of Contractors grab 90% of incentives
- Dreamed not deemed saving
- Contractor sues utility for cancelling program



DO: Track results and plan to be flexible



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