



# Smart Solar Marketing Strategies

## CLEAN ENERGY STATE PROGRAM GUIDE

Prepared by  
Clean Energy Group and SmartPower

AUGUST 2009

## **Acknowledgments**

Many people have been helpful in the development of this report, including Lew Milford and Maria Blais of Clean Energy Group; Warren Leon, formerly of the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust; Roger Clark from Pennsylvania's TRF Sustainable Development Fund; Adele Ferranti, Dave Friello and Judy Jarnefeld of NYSERDA; Lizzie Guiles Rubado and Betsy Kauffman of Energy Trust of Oregon; Eran Mahrer and Rex Stepp of Arizona Public Service; Molly Sterkel of California CPUC; Sandy Miller and Amy Morgan of the California New Solar Homes Partnership; Ryan Helton and Jane Tabor of New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department; Tom Plant and Jeff Lyng from Colorado's Governor's Energy Office; Ann Marie McShea and Scott Hunter from the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities; Sam Nutter of Massachusetts' Commonwealth Solar Initiative; and Lise Dondy and Dale Hedman of the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund.

The opinions presented in this report are those of Clean Energy Group and SmartPower and are not intended to represent the position of Clean Energy States Alliance or any of its individual members, or the U.S. Department of Energy.

## **Financial Support**

Support for this report was generously provided by Clean Energy States Alliance and the Department of Energy's Solar Energy Technologies Program.

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## Executive Summary

This report showcases smart marketing strategies from clean energy programs and solar marketers from across the country that address how to overcome the barriers faced by solar technology markets and serves as a guide for states in pursuing their own market planning process.

While there has been a major increase in solar photovoltaic (PV) installations in recent years, the total amount of solar power installed nonetheless represents less than 0.1% of U.S. energy production. In order for solar energy to make a sizeable contribution to jobs, a green economy, and greenhouse gas reductions, more solar technology deployment will be required. However, installing solar technologies is no simple task. The reality is that in order to drive more solar power installations, solar programs must address the key barriers to its market growth.

Although state solar programs report limited marketing initiatives of their own, this perspective reflects a narrow definition of marketing – one that primarily focuses on communications-centered initiatives, such as website strategies, public relations activities, and education of stakeholders. These marketing resources are important. However, marketing in the broader sense should play an important role to expand the growth of solar, and state solar programs play a critical role in creating and supporting effective marketing initiatives that can address the major market barriers. The American Marketing Association defines marketing as “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.” Effective marketing guides *how*, *when*, and *where* product information is presented to consumers, with the ultimate goal of persuading consumers to purchase a particular brand or product. Therefore, state solar program managers must see themselves as a critical part of the solar sales process.

For marketing to be successful, it must create a *desire* for a product. A marketer, therefore, needs to understand: a) current consumer perceptions of the product and what must be overcome to improve those perceptions, b) what price/value equation will have the most appeal, c) who do consumers believe to be credible sources of product information, and d) where to place this key information in the form of promotion, advertising, etc., so that it will reach the right consumer target. When all of these elements are successfully integrated, marketing connects with the consumer and builds desire for the product, resulting in a sale.

Consumers consistently report a preference for energy produced from renewable energy sources but invariably fail to purchase renewable energy in sizeable numbers. Research conducted by SmartPower and detailed in this report was designed to identify the barriers to solar purchases, address consumer concerns, and provide state solar programs with guidelines that should be integrated into their overall marketing approach. SmartPower's findings concluded that there are four primary barriers to solar market growth, and ALL four must be addressed to expand the market. Those barriers include:

1. **Cost.** Consumers report high up-front and out-of-pocket costs and long payback periods deter them from installing solar energy technology.
2. **Reliability.** The absence of solar technologies in the public's eye and confusion about its performance and capabilities create concerns about the reliability of solar technology; it is not perceived as up to the task of powering our energy needs.
3. **Complexity.** The time consuming and complex nature of purchasing and installing solar energy systems discourages potential customers.
4. **Inertia.** The lengthy decision-making process and financial complexity of the solar sale often result in consumer inertia.

SmartPower also learned from over seven years of message research in the area of renewable energy and energy efficiency that the "environmental" message is not the answer to motivate consumers to purchase renewable energy technologies. Consumers already understand the environmental benefits of solar power, but those benefits have not been persuasive enough to broaden market adoption. Therefore, in addition to addressing these barriers, solar programs also must create a connection with customers through marketing messages that are likely to enhance interest and lead to further inquiry. Messages that connect on a **financial** or **value** level are most likely to succeed.

The need to understand consumer attitudes and develop programs and communication approaches that address those barriers ultimately means that state solar programs must **THINK** and **ACT LIKE RETAILERS**. A retailer knows how essential it is to:

- let the public know what it offers
- create pricing that appeals to the public
- demonstrate and stand by the quality of the product
- make it as easy as possible to make the purchase
- create a buzz about the product that generates interest and action

For retailers, success is easy to measure: it's the ringing of the cash register. A state solar program's marketing activities, to be effective, also must lead to an action: an application for a solar program's financial incentive to purchase and install a solar energy system. While state solar programs are not directly "selling solar installations" to customers, nevertheless, they measure success in the form of megawatts of solar installed. Therefore, the state marketing approaches and activities must lead the customer to the solar sale. By starting with that end in mind, state programs can focus their limited marketing resources to address the major marketing barriers, overcome consumer resistance and broaden the market.

To achieve state solar megawatt goals, a solar marketing plan must address the technology's value proposition, its perception of unreliability, the complexity of purchasing solar and consumer inertia.

This guide cites many marketing initiatives that are contributing to the growth and interest in solar across the country. However, the guide is not meant to be a clearinghouse of all solar marketing programs, nor an endorsement of any one particular approach. Instead, it is offered to provide solar programs and stakeholders with examples of innovative strategies that can make a difference in solar marketing.

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August 2009

# Introduction

In April 2008, Clean Energy Group (CEG) released a report on state strategies for building a strong solar marketplace entitled *Clean Energy State Program Guide: Mainstreaming Solar Electricity: Strategies for States to Build Local Markets*. The report identified critical state policies and programs necessary to build a successful solar program. The report highlighted best practices from states with robust solar programs, addressing such issues as state renewable portfolio standards, equipment ratings, long-term financing, building codes, installation standards, training, and marketing and education. (See [http://www.cleanelectricity.org/Reports/CEG\\_Mainstreaming-Solar-Electricity\\_Apr2008.pdf](http://www.cleanelectricity.org/Reports/CEG_Mainstreaming-Solar-Electricity_Apr2008.pdf))

This report is designed to complement the findings from CEG's *Mainstreaming Solar Electricity Program Guide* and to provide a similarly helpful tool that focuses on how marketing initiatives can help achieve state solar program goals. By identifying and addressing consumer barriers, state incentive programs can increase the demand for solar power and achieve megawatt goals. This report showcases examples from clean energy programs and solar marketers from across the country that have addressed these barriers, and serves as a guide for states in pursuing their own market planning process.

## Background

The marketplace for solar is exploding as more states increase investment in solar incentive programs. The 2008 solar market was five times the size of the 2007 market, which grew 57% over 2006 levels. However, solar installations totaled only 80,000 in the United States in 2007 and most were concentrated in a few states, with 69% of all installations in California alone.

Now is an important time for states to use focused solar marketing efforts to attract new customers to solar and bring this renewable energy technology into the mainstream. As natural gas and oil prices remain volatile, commercial and residential consumers are beginning to appreciate the price stability that solar power offers.

Many customers with a financial focus are now motivated beyond environmental attributes to look at solar power for the first time. However, with an uncertain economy and financial resources stretched for both commercial and residential customers, the need to market solar effectively is more critical than ever.

# Marketing and the 4 P's

We live in a society that bombards consumers with messages, from pop-ups on computers, to on-line chat room links, to e-newsletters and e-blasts, to advertising in traditional media, all designed to build a “share of mind” for a product, service or social cause. Marketing is at the heart of every successful brand, business, organization, and cause. Marketing is not merely communications. It is the sum presentation to the customer of a value equation that results in a sale or action. Marketing is the process of identifying what the consumer needs, how the product or service can address that need, how to communicate that value in a compelling way, and how to deliver that message in the most efficient and effective manner. When state solar incentive program managers think like marketers, they will sharpen the focus of outreach efforts and improve the effectiveness of their solar program offerings.

The classic elements of marketing – the 4 P's: Product, Price, Place, Promotion – offer a useful matrix to assess state solar programs. Solar program initiatives should address each of the 4 P's. For example, a consumer will not buy a poorly manufactured product or one with a questionable reputation merely because the price is good. Similarly, the best quality product must be affordable to ensure market share. While state solar programs do not produce solar panels, price them, or control the quality of technology or installation, their program success is integrally linked to the success of solar suppliers. Both share the same goal: building a strong customer base for solar

power in their region. Each plays an important part in marketing solar. However, state incentive programs define the 4 P's in a slightly different way than do solar suppliers.

For marketing purposes, state programs can evaluate the **Product** from the perspective of consumers' rational and emotional attitudes towards solar technology. These attitudes affect the desire to purchase. Consumer reaction to solar technology (e.g., price, reliability, quality issues) informs marketing and communications approaches by identifying both the opportunities – the strengths and positive attributes that should be marshaled – and the barriers – the concerns and “issues” that prevent sales.

**Price** is one of the single biggest barriers to growing the solar marketplace; many states are addressing the financing of solar to help overcome consumer price concerns. Today, financing mechanisms are broadening access to solar power and making it available to new customer groups. However, states must ensure that prospective customers are aware of these new financing strategies and aggressively promote the financial “value” of solar products to consumer targets.

The **Place**, or channels through which solar is sold, also is an area where solar programs have an important role through their work with installers, developers, and suppliers. Building a strong supplier network is critical in keeping up with rising demand; ensuring that customers can easily find

an installer is part of this task. States also should look at how complex the solar sales process can be for consumers and how solar programs can minimize and ease the transaction process.

Lastly, **Promotion** of solar should be a primary focus as state programs seek to increase the visibility of solar installations and broaden the appeal of their solar incentive programs. Using communications and promotional strategies to favorably present solar in the marketplace and ensuring that the right messages are presented to the public will help build a stronger market for solar technologies.

As solar incentive programs examine their program offerings through the lens of *Product*, *Price*, *Place* and *Promotion*, they may conclude that they need to better understand their customer through market research, focus their efforts on specific target customer bases (customer segmentation), and address key messages to reach those audiences effectively and efficiently (communications). This evaluation process informs the elements of a solar marketing plan. Whether a marketer's goal is to persuade a customer to visit a store, sample a new

product, purchase an existing product, visit a website, make a donation to a nonprofit organization, or inquire about a solar incentive program, the process is the same. In essence, marketing matches the right customer to the right product, resulting in a sale. As states apply marketing approaches to their solar initiatives, they will become more customer-focused, rather than program-focused, and, as a result, become more effective in achieving solar goals.

If one "starts with the end in mind," a solar marketing plan identifies how a state program will achieve installed megawatt goals through acquisition of residential, commercial and institutional customers. The 4P's ensure that all aspects of the "sale" are covered. Improving the process of purchasing solar will not alone make a difference in overall sales if the price/value equation has not been addressed. If consumers are not confident about the reliability of solar, improved pricing alone will not matter. All elements must work together to motivate the target customer to take action. Therefore, the development of a solar marketing plan must start with the consumer in mind.

# Building a Marketing Plan

The low market penetration of green energy pricing products and solar technology suggests that customers, whether they are residential or commercial, have concerns about solar power that are barriers to market growth. Understanding what consumers believe both rationally and emotionally about solar technology will help shape the direction of a solar marketing plan.

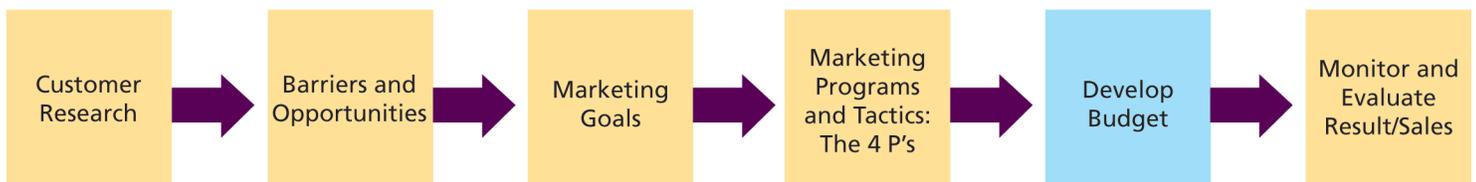
In 2007, SmartPower embarked on consumer research studies in two very diverse states: Arizona and Oregon. Arizona Public Service (APS), the state's largest utility, was interested in improving its existing solar incentive program. The Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO) (manager of the State of Oregon's solar incentive program) could not explain why a growing interest in solar, as seen through rising attendance at monthly educational seminars, was not translating into increased application for its program's solar incentives. In both cases the goal was to better understand

how best to overcome market barriers, address consumer needs and increase solar customers.

The Oregon and Arizona studies looked at both residential solar customers and solar prospects (SmartPower refers to prospective customers as "Inerts" – those who express interest in solar by attending a seminar or requesting information, but have not yet become buyers). Conducting both quantitative and qualitative studies of these customer segments provided valuable insights to help shape the development of smart marketing initiatives. While there is much to learn from these studies, the key findings point to several essential elements for an effective solar marketing plan.

Based on these studies, the remainder of this report will 1) identify major market barriers, 2) detail smart marketing strategies to address each barrier, and 3) recommend action steps to implement a successful marketing plan.

## The Marketing Plan Process



## MARKETING STRATEGY #1

# IMPROVING THE VALUE EQUATION OF SOLAR

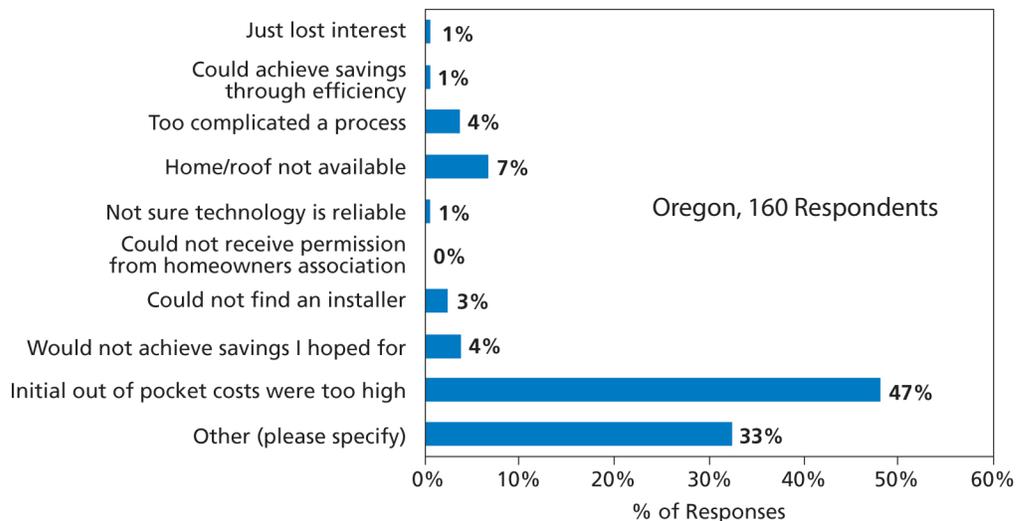
SmartPower’s studies showed that cost is the single biggest barrier to purchasing solar among those customers who attended solar seminars. The value equation (the relationship between the consumer’s expectations of the product’s benefits to the costs) for solar is not strong and high up-front costs are limiting market growth. The Oregon study found that less than 5% of Energy Trust of Oregon’s solar customers used home equity loans or other financing to pay for their solar installation. This indicates that the small number of consumers who are able to afford solar is a major factor in what has kept the market growth for solar technologies so low; most Inerts were clear that the high out-of-pocket costs made solar energy system purchases prohibitive.

There are important lessons for solar marketing from the automobile industry. Car dealers have long understood the value of promoting their product by highlighting affordable monthly installments (whether through leasing arrangements or purchase) rather than through full price sticker

shock. Similarly, when solar incentive programs provide a website calculator that informs the prospective customer of the total cost of installing solar, the message often serves as a deal stopper. By “calculating” the cost of solar installation at \$20,000 or more, the homeowner may hit a mental “delete” signal. Full cost information may be hindering the advancement of a solar sale.

Therefore, while many states are putting financing programs in place to overcome the high cost of solar, they also must ensure that consumers are aware of those financial offerings. Often these programs are available in small pilot programs, or promoted through press releases and on the program website only. This approach may attract the well-informed, already-interested solar prospect waiting to take advantage of these offerings. However, the car dealer does not promote its low monthly pricing options only to its existing customers. It can only succeed if it is able to attract new customers. Likewise, changing the public’s perception about the affordability

## #1 Reason for Not Installing?



of solar power will ultimately make the most difference in building consumer demand.

A primary marketing challenge for states to address is to ensure that the marketplace hears the positive message about the value equation for solar. The recent proliferation of creative solar financing strategies provides the tools to address the Price/Value barrier. While many of these initiatives are relatively new, they reflect the need to give consumers more financing options and reduce the out-of-pocket cost of solar installations to a manageable monthly expense that is more comparable to their electric bill.

As one example, the City of Berkeley, California created a pilot city tax program that allowed home owners to apply solar installation costs to their property taxes. It was sold out within nine minutes, demonstrating the consumer demand for affordable payment approaches. In addition, low interest loans, 3rd party leasing and innovative programs like SMUD's *SolarShare* are making solar available to new customer groups. However, while many programs are providing innovative financing schemes, they are not always as innovative or aggressive at promoting the offerings to consumers. In fact, SmartPower research in Oregon and Arizona found that most solar customers today already held a long-standing interest in solar with the incentive program functioning as more of an enabler than a true incentive and promotion that brings new customers to the program.

Therefore, it is important to realize that these new solar financing mechanisms are tools that can tell new customers that solar is affordable. To that end, states should prominently feature this message of affordability on their solar program websites. Because the affordability of solar is so central

to expanding solar adoption, the value message about how to afford solar should be the most prominent message delivered.

An example of how to use these new financing offerings to create a strong value message can be found on SMUD's website. SMUD promotes its SolarSmart homes program with a value-oriented, investment-focused message:

**Make a SolarSmart choice today and enjoy a new home that is more affordable, comfortable, and environmentally friendly.**

Buy a SolarSmart Home<sup>SM</sup> and reduce your annual electric bill by as much as 60 percent. SolarSmart Homes combine the most cost effective energy efficient features and roof top solar electric generation in a package that makes homeowners money every month.

**SolarSmart Homes are a wise investment that make doing the right thing easy.**

<http://www.smud.org/en/residential/solar-smart/Pages/index.aspx>

Highlighting the specific monthly cost of a solar lease or loan has a much stronger effect than simply promoting "low interest loans." Recent focus groups conducted by SmartPower with home energy audit customers confirmed this. Customers knew about the availability of 0% interest loans, and yet when a \$15,000 / 7 year loan was presented to customers as \$125/month payments, the program had substantially more appeal. As one customer reported, "I knew about the loan offer, but the actual dollar amount makes me take a second look."

A similar effective "value" message is being delivered by SolarCity, a California-based installer that is offering solar leases to residential customers with a very strong affordability promotion on their website:

### SolarLease Example for Typical 3-Bedroom Home

For a home with a monthly electricity bill of \$200, we would recommend installing a 16 panel solar system.

This system will generate enough electricity to offset what you are currently paying to the utility company from \$200 down to \$75 per month. Your monthly SolarLease payment would be \$100, so you could actually save \$25 per month from day one. <http://www.solarcity.com/residential/solar-lease.aspx>

For a homeowner looking to reduce utility bills, this SolarCity solar leasing approach offers immediate financial relief and guarantees, maintenance and other program offerings that create a great value for the consumer. The environmental benefits are important, but savings are of greater value to the homeowner.

Currently, most solar customers learn about incentives from their installer, suggesting that they already had an interest in solar before they knew what incentives were available. Promoting the value story through new messages, outreach activities, and forums will expand the solar marketplace by reaching new customers and creating broader interest in solar power. Incentive programs may want to consider using advertising opportunities such as National Public Radio, cable television,

and the internet to promote these affordable options to the public.

The affordability of solar is not just an issue for residential and commercial customers. Institutional customers, such as state, municipal and county buildings, are also an important source of future solar customers. Realizing this, the Massachusetts' Commonwealth Solar program created solar workshops specifically targeted to municipal leaders to educate them on Power Purchase Agreements to expand solar on public buildings. Every Board of Selectman, Superintendent of Schools and Mayor was invited to attend a workshop to learn about solar energy's value proposition. The workshops were sold out with over 100 people attending in Boston and 130 people in central Massachusetts, well above expectations. Today, municipal leaders are actively seeking strategies to reduce energy costs and environmental impact. Solar has more interest for cities and towns than ever before and high attendance at these workshops is proof of that demand.

In sum, creating and promoting innovative financing mechanisms for customers to install solar are critical to expanding the market. Just as with financing the purchase of a home, an automobile, or a college education, financing options for solar purchases are necessary to overcome high up-front costs. Paying cash for a new car is not possible for most consumers, and neither is paying out-of-pocket for a new solar energy system.

## **Marketing Plan Action Step #1:**

### **IMPROVE THE VALUE EQUATION**

1. **Identify the range of financial options currently available to customers within your market.**
  - Are lease arrangements, PPA's and other monthly financing strategies available?
  - What new approaches, if any, should you offer?
2. **Evaluate how you currently promote financial options to prospective customers.**
  - Are you reaching a broad audience with these options and bringing new customer groups to solar?
  - Can you leverage the resources of strategic partners (such as lending organizations) to create broader awareness?
3. **Develop an outreach plan.**
  - Prominently promote the affordability message in collateral material, public relations and advertising that go beyond the website.
4. **Create a strong "affordability" message.**
  - Use the website to show monthly payment options for solar technology purchases or leases.
5. **Work with installers.**
  - Ensure that they are promoting the financing options that are available to their potential customers.
6. **Focus on "how to pay for solar."**
  - Ensure that workshops and other solar seminars highlight financing as a key component, remembering that this is the biggest barrier to broader adoption.
7. **Host special solar financing events/workshops.**
  - Identify target groups such as business associations, municipal and institutional customers, and developers.
8. **Educate homeowners and commercial customers.**
  - Work with local utilities to promote the value of combining solar with energy efficiency for optimum financial effectiveness.

## MARKETING STRATEGY #2

# REINFORCING THE RELIABILITY OF SOLAR TECHNOLOGY

Concern about the reliability of solar is a barrier to market growth; consumers believe they will be “buying” into a simpler lifestyle with solar that they are not ready for. Solar energy systems are not often visible in our every day lives, in our neighborhoods or on our public buildings. We rarely see solar installations as we travel or on TV. The invisibility of solar technologies contributes to a sense that solar energy is not up to the task of powering our modern world.

This was confirmed by SmartPower’s qualitative research when consumers were asked to draw pictures of their vision of a solar world. The images that emerged from this assignment were best represented by one solar customer who drew a simple cottage in the country and entitled it, “Quiet Simplicity.”

Reliability questions also abound, sometimes even among those who have installed a solar product. Questions about billing issues, confusing terms such as net metering, “what happens on a rainy day or in a snow storm?” and even how much power solar customers will save, demonstrate the concerns about reliability and also contribute to a belief that solar power is not a realistic consumer purchase.

However, solar programs can begin to address the issue of reliability by ensuring that solar is as visible as possible in their markets and is presented as a powerful source of energy, one that will help fuel and build a stronger economy.

For most people, solar technology remains an abstract concept or a niche product rather than a mainstream energy source. As a result, most people do not think of solar power as a reliable source of energy for their home. This perception is often reinforced by misleading stories such as those appearing out of Troy, Michigan, where, in the winter of 2009, a model solar home, built at the cost of \$900,000, sat empty due to storm damage. The headline “Celebrated Solar House Left in the Dark” contributes to the concern about solar as not up to the task of meeting the energy demands of homeowners. The house was not “in the dark” due to the solar system’s lack of performance but due to a heater malfunctioning that caused pipes to burst.

Consumer marketers must counter these perceptions with strategies to bolster solar’s attribute of reliability. There are many examples from the annals of consumer marketing that illustrate effective strategies for establishing a product’s quality. For example, when Nike™ wanted to demonstrate the high performance of its basketball shoes, it partnered with Michael Jordan. And a Timex™ watch was dropped from a high rooftop and it kept on ticking.

Consumer marketers have used a number of effective tactics to address consumer concerns and reinforce the strength and reliability of their products, services, or goods, such as:

- “Sampling” the product so that prospective customers are exposed to its quality and benefits.

- Celebrity endorsement – “If a celebrity uses the product, it must be good.”
- Testimonials by customers – “It worked for me, it will work for you.”
- Awareness building, using high traffic locations and advertising – “If I see it, I’m thinking about it.”

In addition, educational seminars, press conferences, and informational materials are all part of building the reliability story. Many states are employing “quality” messages to support their solar programs. While these strategies may not have been deployed specifically to address the reliability issue, they nevertheless do build a strong case about the ability of solar to power our world.

- California’s solar program administrators believe that much of their success is due to the strong political backing and high visibility of their Governor in supporting solar. When Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger launched his Million Solar Roofs campaign in 2004, he essentially became the state’s celebrity endorser for solar power.
- Arizona Public Service has found its celebrity partner in Steve Nash of the Phoenix Suns. Nash is the most popular and likeable sports star in Arizona, and his reputation is unassailable. APS uses Nash in radio advertising and on their website, and extended their partnership by installing solar on the Phoenix Suns’ stadium. Inside the arena, solar signage completes this campaign tie-in. [http://www.aps.com/main/news/releases/release\\_443.html](http://www.aps.com/main/news/releases/release_443.html)
- Installing solar in high visibility locations, such as airports, Governor’s mansions and sports stadiums, are excellent ways to address the reliability issue. These installations increase solar

visibility to the public by not only creating a public relations opportunity, but on-going visibility to a wide range of constituencies that are not typically introduced to solar, such as sports fans and business travelers. For example, Denver, CO installed a large solar array of 9,800 panels, covering seven acres, at the Denver Airport that was visible to delegates coming to the Democratic National Convention in the summer of 2008. <http://cbs4denver.com/local/denver.convention.delegates.2.798582.html>

- Installing solar in highly visible locations and using the attendant public relations opportunities helps build support for solar power. For example, APS teamed up with Habitat for Humanity and with a local radio show whose weekly feature focused on home improvements. The sponsorship allowed APS to highlight the benefits of installing a solar water heater while also promoting its charitable role. [http://www.aps.com/my\\_community/StoryArchive/StoryArchive\\_51.html](http://www.aps.com/my_community/StoryArchive/StoryArchive_51.html)
- An effective way to educate consumers about solar products is by using media to promote its benefits. For example, California’s New Solar Homes Partnership (NSHP) combined a number of promotional elements to help educate consumers about the value of solar while capturing names of prospects. In 2008, NSHP teamed up with Clear Channel Radio to increase awareness of solar during Solar Energy Awareness Month in June. Clear Channel created a 30 second radio spot that directed consumers to a website where they could watch a short video, answer questions, and have a chance to win a hybrid vehicle. The solar quiz and sweepstakes were part of kiosks displayed at state fairs and other high traffic venues across California. <http://>

[www.gosolarcalifornia.org/builders/marketing\\_resources/index.html](http://www.gosolarcalifornia.org/builders/marketing_resources/index.html)

The NSHP also addresses reliability through its theme line, “Solar Is Working, Solar Is Smart, Solar Is Now.” This delivers a strong solar message to both developers and consumers that solar is a smart choice. Over 17,000 people participated in the 2008 contest and it has been repeated in 2009 with “Win a Green Home Makeover” contest where consumers are instructed to watch a video, take a quiz about the reliability and features of solar, and are entered into the sweepstakes. The promotion not only educates customers about the value of solar and the way in which it reduces energy costs, but also, by gathering entries, NSHP creates a database of prospects that can be used to drive visits to new solar homes and solar events. <http://www.gosolarsweepstakes.com>

- “Sampling” is a tried and true way that allows customers to try a new product. The Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCFE) has found a way to allow people to ‘sample’ solar through its educational display at the Connecticut Science Center. By sharing expenses, the state’s energy efficiency fund and CCEF have contributed \$1 million towards “Energy Smart” in which solar panels are part of an exhibition that focuses on efficiency and renewables. The Science Center works in conjunction with the Hartford Public School system and has brought more than 13,000 students to see the exhibit. The high visibility display combined with curriculum support for school children create a strong face for solar. <http://ctsciencecenter.org/exhibits/energy-city/default.aspx>

- The 2008 City Tour for Solar, sponsored by SunEdison and three solar manufacturers, has created an interactive educational exhibit contained in two bio-diesel trucks, which traveled to 50 cities in the western part of the United States, including Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Minnesota, and Colorado. The tour staged exhibits at both the 2008 Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention to increase support among candidates and legislators for solar incentives and federal tax credits. It provided a way for political and business leaders to sample the power of solar in well-organized events. <http://www.smartgrowthadvocates.org/user/SunEdisonPueblo.pdf>
- The most well known of the solar “sampling” programs is the American Solar Energy Society’s National Solar Tour – the largest grassroots solar event in the country. Now in its 13th year, the Tour, which kicks off on the first Saturday in October – National Energy Awareness Month – attracts 150,000 people across 48 states, visiting 5,000 solar homes. The Tour gives customers the opportunity to see solar in action, talk to home owners, and because of the sheer size of the Tour, recognize that solar has gone mainstream. It also creates great opportunities for state solar programs to support the Tour. [http://www.ases.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=549&Itemid=94](http://www.ases.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=549&Itemid=94)
- The PG&E Solar Schools Program in California includes installation of photovoltaic systems in public schools, a solar-based curriculum-training package, workshops for teachers, and “Bright Ideas” grants. Since its inception in

2004, PG&E's Solar Schools Program has installed solar on more than 125 schools, trained more than 3,000 teachers, and benefited almost 200,000 students. <http://www.pge.com/solarschools/>

- An increasingly important customer segment in advancing solar sales is the real estate industry. Education is the key. Realtors are critical to the success of selling solar in new home purchases. A realtor who cannot effectively talk about the value of solar on a home may re-direct a prospective buyer to a less expensive home, focusing solely on purchase price, rather than factoring in energy costs. Many state solar programs, including those in California and Oregon, are now working with realty organizations to provide solar information seminars that help realtors speak more comfortably about the quality and value of solar power. [http://www.solaroregon.org/realtors\\_appraisers](http://www.solaroregon.org/realtors_appraisers) and <http://www.energy.ca.gov/2009publications/CEC-180-2009-006/CEC-180-2009-006.PDF>
- Solar Electric Power Association (SEPA), recognizing the growing importance of utility companies in solar growth, hosted executives from 23 U.S.-based energy organizations to attend a fact-finding trip to Germany in 2008. Executives had the opportunity to speak with their European counterparts regarding utility-focused concerns, including solar grid reliability. This was an excellent hands-on educational opportunity for U.S. utility executives, who came away with a much stronger appreciation for solar power and the role it plays as an important energy source. In 2009, SEPA hosted a similar trip to Spain and has now instituted a Utility Peer Match program that allows utilities to be matched with similar utilities to share best practices. State clean energy programs can host similar educational “fact finding” trips within their states for key solar stakeholders. <http://www.solarelectricpower.org/peer/index.php>

## **Marketing Plan Action Step #2:**

### **REINFORCE THE RELIABILITY OF SOLAR**

1. **Evaluate customer concerns about solar reliability in your market.**
2. **Find opportunities to increase visibility of solar installations in high traffic locations.**
3. **Identify strategic partnerships with sports teams, local celebrities and media to create positive solar images and increase presence of solar installations in the public eye and in the marketplace.**
4. **Offer educational seminars for specific targeted segments (chambers of commerce, solar seminars for homeowners, workshops for municipalities) to build confidence in solar technologies.**
5. **Create campaigns built around positive testimonials from corporations, businesses, and institutions who have installed solar power.**
6. **Participate in or increase awareness of annual solar home tours to broaden attendance. Create special VIP tours for target groups.**
7. **Create a speakers' bureau of homeowners and business leaders who will speak about the effectiveness of solar power to meet their energy and financial needs.**

### MARKETING STRATEGY #3

## REDUCING THE COMPLEXITY OF SOLAR

The decision-making process for installing solar can be more lengthy and complex than expected, and consumers often feel overwhelmed by the process. Solar technology is not viewed as a product that is easy for consumers to purchase and install. There aren't currently any iconic brands for solar products, leaving consumers to rely on installers for much of the information that they receive. This is much like asking a customer to buy an unknown brand of automobile, while relying on the car dealer as the sole source of information about the product's performance, reliability and price.

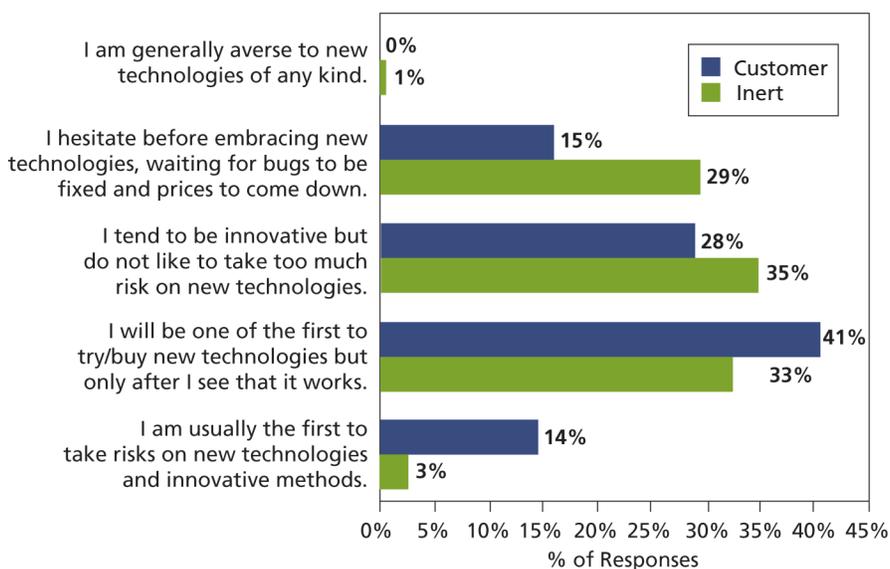
SmartPower research participants reported that they often encountered difficulty getting estimates from solar installers as part of their decision-making process. If they were not ready to install a system, then installers were not ready to invest in a

site visit to their home, creating a Catch-22 situation. Without an estimate, the customer can not proceed with decision-making and becomes increasingly frustrated.

Research also indicates that solar customers are much more comfortable with technology than "Inerts" – those simply thinking about solar. As early adopters, existing solar customers are more at ease researching manufacturer and installer options than those who are more conservative about new technology.

The solar purchase process is often complex and more time consuming than most people expect. SmartPower's research in both Arizona and Oregon found that, for most people who had installed solar PV, the decision-making process

### Visionary by Segment



Oregon, 223 respondents

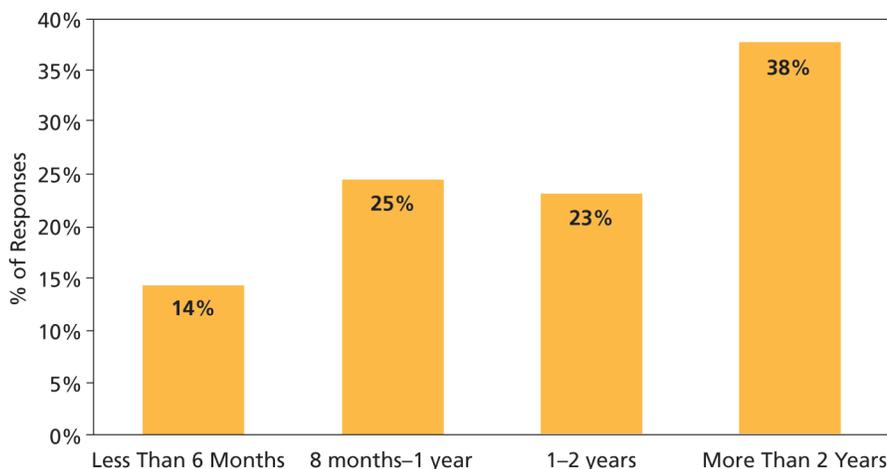
took more than one year, often more than two years. This lengthy decision-making process provided the answer to Oregon’s question regarding why those attending solar seminars had not yet installed a system. SmartPower’s survey showed that in many cases these customers simply had not installed YET.

Inerts reported how complex the process is. They often felt lost in the process of researching all the options available. Their lack of confidence with technology contributed to a feeling of being overwhelmed at times. As one focus group panelist said about installing solar, “It feels like a full time job.”

However, solar programs have the opportunity to take on the important role of trusted advisor and to guide prospective customers through the long process of installation. There are many ways that state programs can help make the solar installation process less onerous for consumers. Examples from programs across the country include:

- From focus groups, Energy Trust of Oregon heard that customers were frustrated by the difficulty of getting installers to make a site visit in order to provide an estimate of the cost of installation. ETO responded by offering those who attend solar seminars and signed up on the spot, a free on-site estimate. This program, which was launched as a pilot, was extremely well received by participants. ETO utilized home energy auditors from the State Energy Efficiency Department to provide the estimates. These energy professionals offered the added benefit of serving as a trusted advisor – someone who offered advice to customers without any “sell.” Consumers reported that they then felt more comfortable moving forward with their solar installation. [http://www.energytrust.org/forms/SLE\\_FS\\_ResSolar-Now.pdf](http://www.energytrust.org/forms/SLE_FS_ResSolar-Now.pdf)

## How Long Before Installation?



Oregon, 63 respondents

- Madison, Wisconsin, a Solar America Cities designee, created an Energy Advocate program that allows interested solar prospects access to an unbiased, credible source of information to help them navigate the complexity of energy solutions customized for their home. The Energy Advocate performs a high quality home energy audit, in conjunction with a solar estimate, that helps reduce the decision-making time and gives the homeowner more confidence about moving forward. <http://www.solaramericacities.energy.gov/Cities.aspx?City=Madison>
- Berkeley, California is using its Solar America Cities designation to create SmartSolar, a program to provide technical assistance and an online mapping tool (Berkeley Solar Map) to

assess solar potential for any roof in the city. This resource helps identify the best solar energy options and provides information on project planning, permitting and financing options. <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=38064>

- Oregon's Solar Ambassador Program matches existing solar customers, who have gone through the process of installation, with prospects who are thinking about solar. Pairing experienced solar advocates with those going through the process provides the uninitiated with free advice and counsel and gives new customers the confidence to move forward with their decision to install. <http://www.solaroregon.org/get-involved/solar-ambassadors-program>

## Marketing Plan Action Step #3:

### REDUCE THE COMPLEXITY

1. **Work with installers to reduce time delays in the process of providing estimates to solar prospects.**
2. **Evaluate opportunities to create a solar ambassador program that connects existing solar customers with prospective customers to provide information during the complex decision-making process.**
3. **Consider offering free estimates and/or an energy advisor program to guide prospects through the solar incentive application process.**

## MARKETING STRATEGY #4

# OVERCOMING CUSTOMER INERTIA

A complex product like solar technology, with a two-year decision-making cycle that requires research, financing, permitting, and lengthy application forms, will inevitably lead to consumer inertia and fall out. All marketers compete not only with other products within the same category, but also with competition for free time. With today's fast-paced, overbooked lifestyle, consumers often are hard-pressed to find the time to make solar product choices, which can compete with time spent at work, with family, or at play. It often is easier to do nothing and place decisions on the perpetual "back burner." Therefore, state solar incentive programs should encourage prospective customers to continue to move forward and reduce the lengthy decision-making process.

While solar incentive programs are not specifically selling solar, they are a significant part of the sales process. Employing the retail mindset will help solar programs address what all retailers compete with – share of mind and share of action.

The over-burdened consumer is the retailer's enemy. Therefore, marketers use promotional techniques to motivate consumers to 1) learn about a product, 2) sample a product, 3) make a visit to a store, and 4) make a purchase. Techniques such as the "Buy One, Get One Free" coupon are simply a device to motivate a store visit. The "no interest for one year" promotion is designed to promote value and encourage a purchase NOW. Even surveys on the Internet are crafted to deliver users to websites. State clean energy programs and solar marketers should use a variety of similar innovative sales promotions to encourage consumers to overcome this inertia and move towards a solar "sale."

It is important to realize that state solar programs have an important role in the retail process and, as such, must deal with consumer inertia. One of the most significant strategies to prompt action is the use of a declining incentive program. Each year the solar incentive program provides fewer dollars to the customers to reflect a corresponding drop in the costs of installation. In doing so, the program encourages early installations to maximize the incentive's contribution to total costs. Examples of other "retail" approaches being used by states today include the following:

- Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO) addressed customer inertia through an aggressive marketing communications approach. Focus groups revealed that many solar seminar attendees felt that, as one participant claimed, "attending a workshop is not doing nothing." The social pressure to engage in the solar process was satisfied by just researching and attending seminars, not necessarily installing solar. To encourage forward momentum, therefore, ETO changed its communications strategy. Now, immediately following participation in a seminar, attendees receive a letter, signed by the Governor, with the directive, "Time to Take the Next Step." This "retail" approach, with a strong call to action, is an excellent example of how to integrate consumer insights into an effective strategic direction designed to build incremental solar sales.
- *Free Solar on New Home*. In marketing, nothing is more important than "FREE" and no position is better than "first to market."

Shea Homes, national developer of new homes, utilized its higher-end Trilogy Green Homes to be the first builder to roll out a national solar offering. Trilogy Homes offered a **free** 3 kW solar system on homes sold in Arizona, California, Florida and Washington during the month of August, 2008. Shea received great publicity for creating the offer, which allowed them to showcase the features of their high-end homes. The short-term promotion was designed to drive traffic. Follow-

ing the promotional period, solar is offered on Trilogy Homes as an upgrade feature.

- The Energy Advisor and Solar Ambassador programs (referred to in the previous section) also are excellent strategies for overcoming inertia. These programs connect trusted advisors with solar prospects and serve to give consumers the confidence to move forward in their decision-making and shorten the installation process.

## **Marketing Plan Action Step #4:**

### **HELP CUSTOMERS OVERCOME INERTIA**

1. **Create a database of interested solar prospects and develop a communications strategy that continues to engage these prospective customers during the long decision-making process.**
2. **Use promotional incentives and prospect mailings to encourage forward progress and sales.**
3. **Raise the level of visibility of solar in the marketplace to keep solar in mind.**
4. **Consider implementing a declining incentive program that encourages customers to act now.**

## MARKETING STRATEGY #5

# FINDING THE RIGHT MESSAGE

Solar programs that address the first four barriers: *Cost, Reliability, Complexity, and Inertia* with customer-focused initiatives will find that they are building a stronger demand for solar across their market. However, programs also must try to change long-held perceptions about solar power. Consumers need a fresh and powerful message that will put solar on their radar screens and bring new customers to the technology. This requires rethinking how solar programs talk about and *promote* solar power. SmartPower's research has found that the environmental message does not always resonate with prospective solar customers.

Many people who install solar on their homes and businesses are motivated by the environmental benefits that solar offers, but it may not be the only or primary benefit for most customers. It certainly may not be the most compelling message to which prospective customers respond. In developing a branding campaign for clean energy in 2003, SmartPower showed focus groups across the country over 25 images that ranged from strong environmental images to the American flag, to images of solar and wind power installations. Not one of the focus group members responded to the environmental images as what they associated with their vision of a solar world.

SmartPower research in 2007 and 2008 found that in markets such as Arizona, where a large surge in population growth had created an unprecedented need for energy, the primary motivation for interest in solar was financial stability over time. These customers understood that the price of energy was likely to increase in the future and believed

solar power could be part of the solution to manage increasing costs.

At the same time, in markets where there is a strong environmental movement, like Oregon, there is a predisposition to consider solar for environmental reasons. That is, motivations may differ in different regions of the country, and every market must determine for itself what factors influence its customers.

### **Solar Marketing Research Findings.**

SmartPower's solar marketing research over the past seven years in markets across the country has generally found that *the environmental message is not the most compelling to the broad public*. The public understands that renewable energy is good for the environment, and to date, that knowledge alone has not led to a market surge. Finding the right message is an important component of success in marketing solar energy. SmartPower tested five positioning statements with over 75 focus group participants in Oregon and Arizona to determine the most compelling solar message, and asked each participant to select the one that they found most motivating.

The selections included:

- a. Solar Makes Energy Sense.
- b. Solar is a Good Investment.
- c. Solar is Good for the Health of Future Generations.
- d. Solar is Good for the Environment.
- e. Solar Creates Energy Independence.

None of the participants from the focus groups selected "Good for the Environment." The

environmental benefits of solar are known to these consumers but are not as motivating as other reasons to purchase. By a significant margin, respondents preferred “Solar Makes Sense,” followed by “Solar is a Good Investment.”

The key elements of these positioning statements that consumers highlighted as important are:

- a. Solar technology helps stabilize energy costs over time.
- b. Solar helps lower monthly utility bills.
- c. Solar technology has come a long way in 20 years.
- d. Solar energy is non-polluting and renewable; we should tap into the power of the sun.
- e. Incentives and rebates can reduce the cost of installing solar by half.

Participants were particularly critical of any phrases that they judged “preachy” and expressed wariness at sentences that sounded political in nature. For example, references to global warming were negatively construed as “sounding like Al Gore and *An Inconvenient Truth*.” In contrast, those

words and phrases that reinforced the economic aspects of installing solar were well received. Some solar customers viewed installation of solar much like investing in a Certificate of Deposit where it increased in value over time.

### Marketing Implications of the Research.

The solar program’s website is a key source of information for solar prospects. Solar customers are usually web savvy and do their research on the Internet. Therefore, solar programs should evaluate their websites from the perspective of the new prospect who is investigating solar power for the first time to ensure the site offers consumer friendly information while communicating the strong value message that “solar makes sense.”

There are a number of solar program websites that offer good branding, useful features and easy access to information. However, most websites can do a stronger job of communicating the economic value of solar. Here are a few noteworthy solar websites:

- The “Go Solar California” site encourages consumers to purchase solar, starting with

## Regional Differences in Customer Motivation

		Arizona	Oregon
	<b>Environmental</b>		
	Global Warming	3%	13%
	Reducing Fossil Fuels	15%	12%
	Good for Environment	17%	36%
	<b>Total Environmental</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>61%</b>
	<b>Financial</b>		
	Saving Money	17%	12%
	Energy Costs Over Time	31%	13%
	<b>Total Financial</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>25%</b>

its website's URL. The site is friendly and easy to navigate for all users. The easy FAQ section makes finding information about solar easy. See [www.gosolarcalifornia.org/csi/faqs.html](http://www.gosolarcalifornia.org/csi/faqs.html).

- Energy Trust of Oregon took the important step of creating one centralized go-to website by partnering with the City of Portland and a local NGO. All three organizations support "Solar Now Oregon." The website embodies the "solar makes sense" messages and highlights free solar seminars. [www.SolarNowOregon.org](http://www.SolarNowOregon.org).

- NYSEDA's website offers a tool that helps consumers to locate loan and installer resources. Consumers merely click on their county and all the banks and installers in that territory are listed regionally. <http://www.nyserda.org/LoanFundLenders/nyserda/pickbanke4.asp>.

A state solar program website is an essential marketing tool to help guide prospective customers through the solar purchasing process. Thinking like a retailer will help solar programs to assess whether their website is user friendly, a helpful tool, and effectively supporting the value equation of solar.

## Marketing Plan Action Step #5

### FIND THE RIGHT MESSAGE

1. **Identify the "right" message for the marketplace and ensure that it is clear, consistent and addressing the value strategy.**
2. **Perform a communications audit on solar marketing materials to assess the effectiveness and consistency of the message.**
3. **Identify what additional materials and outreach strategies are required to communicate the solar value story.**
4. **Review the solar program's website for its consumer-friendly focus and message.**

## MARKETING STRATEGY #6

# REACHING NEW CUSTOMER MARKETS

It is critical to broaden the customer base and open new markets for solar power. Each state and solar program has a prospective customer base that has not yet reached its potential to become new solar customers.

Identifying creative ways to reach these new customers is not just the job of solar installers and suppliers. State clean energy programs also are an important part of this outreach effort. Leveraging marketing resources at these target segments will yield results.

Many solar programs across the country are providing just such outreach. Examples include:

- San Francisco created “The Mayor’s Solar Founder’s Circle” with a goal of encouraging solar on top of the city’s largest buildings. The program targeted installations on 1,500 roof tops in the city and offered financial incentives for those companies who install solar. Mailings from the city along with site visits and technical assistance also are part of this program.
- Energy Trust of Oregon reached out to companies who have already installed solar to enlist their employees as new solar customers. A corporate challenge provides on-site seminars for employees and encourages the companies to offer additional incentives.
- The Connecticut Clean Energy Fund and TRF’s Sustainable Development Fund in Pennsylvania have implemented a Clean Communities Program that promotes clean energy purchases (green choice offerings) by a municipality and its residents and offers a 1 kW solar panel as an incentive. SmartPower managed this program for both organizations and utilized friendly competitions between municipalities to encourage sign-ups. The winning municipalities install their solar panels in prominent municipal locations, and generate support, visibility and great public relations for solar power. Over 80 communities across Connecticut and 20 communities in eastern Pennsylvania have met this challenge and earned the designation of Clean Energy Community.
- One important target customer group for growing solar markets is solar installers. Arizona Public Service determined that additional installers would be needed to keep up with the growing demand being generated in the Phoenix area. APS developed a specific message to target installers by creating “Solar Makes Sense for Installers” and collateral material that was distributed at the APS’ booth at a national solar conference.

# Developing a Marketing Plan - How to Begin

Marketing is a problem-solving activity. Identifying and understanding what problems require solving is the first and most important step in constructing an effective marketing plan. Thinking like a retailer is the key because it will ensure that programs and initiatives, as well as communications and promotions, are designed to create a call to action and move customers towards the sales process.

A marketing plan is a living, breathing document that guides activities over a period of usually no more than one to two years and is focused on achieving quantifiable and measurable goals, such as megawatts of installed solar. Activities within the plan must address core customer segments that are important to the solar program, such as low-income housing, schools and institutions, large commercial customers, and installers. The process of developing an effective plan includes the following steps.

## **Step One: Market Analysis**

Begin by assessing past successes and failures. Identify what has worked and what has not. Which customer bases are responding and which are under-delivering? Are there geographic issues to be addressed within your plan?

## **Step Two: Customer Research**

If there are questions about the motivations and attitudes that core customer groups have about solar power, a customer research project and market analysis will identify the opportunities and barriers that must be addressed in the marketing plan. Solar programs may want to rely on an outside resource such as an advertising agency or marketing consulting group to help with this aspect of the plan.

## **Step Three: Establish Marketing Objectives**

What will the marketing plan accomplish? What are the goals? A marketing objective might include a percentage increase or megawatt goal for specific customer segments, such as commercial and industrial, residential, or institutional solar installations.

## **Step Four: Marketing Strategies**

How will the solar program reach its objectives? This report suggests that *Cost, Reliability, Complexity, Inertia* and *Message* all must be addressed in an effective marketing plan. There may be other strategies relevant to your specific market that should be included or receive priority. A marketing strategy that addresses value, for example, might include offering financial tools that reduce the high out-of-pocket costs for solar installations. A marketing strategy to address reliability may include raising visibility of solar in the marketplace.

## **Step Five: Tactics/Implementation**

Tactics are the specific programs and initiatives that address the marketing strategy. The examples cited in this report from solar stakeholders across the country are examples of marketing tactics.

The rest of the marketing plan includes a budget and timeline, as well as an approach to evaluate the success of specific tactics. There may be other resource needs required by the solar program. All key stakeholders across the organization should review the marketing plan while in development to ensure that it is addressing the right issues and to ensure buy-in. It is also critical that implementation challenges be coordinated with appropriate personnel to ensure that adequate resources and timeframes are accounted for.

# Smart Solar Marketing Strategies

## CONCLUSION

Effective marketing guides *how, when, and where* product information is presented to consumers, with the ultimate goal of persuading consumers to purchase solar energy systems. Therefore, state solar program managers must view themselves as a critical part of the solar sales process. Understanding what problems need solving and how best to address them is at the heart of the Solar Marketing Plan. Messages that connect on a **financial** or **value** level are most likely to succeed.

There are examples of effective solar marketing activities all over the country to draw upon. An important source of new programs and initiatives comes from the Department of Energy's Solar America Cities program where 25 cities have become incubators for new solar marketing ideas. Through grants from the DOE, these cities are engaged in active partnerships with solar companies; municipal, county and state agencies; utilities; NGO's and universities to identify and remove market barriers and encourage solar sales to residential and commercial customers. Their approaches may be a useful source of problem-solving initiatives for cities and states looking at their own solar marketing challenges. [www.solaramericacities.energy.gov/](http://www.solaramericacities.energy.gov/)

As solar programs begin to think like marketers, they can assess "how they're doing" by asking a series of questions to determine whether solar marketing efforts are on the right track, including:

- How are new customers learning about solar? Should we do more to help? Where are our best opportunities?
- Are we providing consumers with value-oriented financial offerings that make solar more affordable?
- Are consumers aware of the new financial approaches that we offer? Are we adequately promoting the value and affordability of solar? Is it prominently displayed on our website?
- Are we targeting the right audiences in our market to achieve our objectives? Have we left any core audiences untouched?
- Do we understand the consumer barriers to purchasing solar that are specific to our market? Should we initiate research to advance our understanding and the effectiveness of our activities?
- Have we done an inventory of communications materials to ensure that we are speaking with one voice, promoting one brand, and hitting the right messages?
- Are there NGO's and other stakeholders in our market that we should be aligning with to advance our goals and leverage our investment?
- How do we overcome inertia and help push interested customers to act?
- How do we create more visibility for solar in our market? Are there high visibility locations,

personalities or opportunities that will increase penetration?

- Do we have a sufficient group of installers in place? Will we need more? How can we attract them?
- Do realtors understand the value of solar and know how to speak about it effectively?
- Is there a role for traditional and new media in our marketing mix to build awareness?
- Are there innovative ways to utilize earned media beyond press releases and ribbon cuttings to increase interest in solar?
- Are there other solar partners (utilities, trades, chambers, cities and towns, sports venues, etc) that we should be working with to increase interest in solar power?

- Are we cross promoting energy efficiency and solar energy to maximize interest in both?
- Are we creating a database of consumers and are we using that database effectively?

As states increasingly compete with each other for green jobs and clean economies, being savvy solar marketers becomes more important than ever. By asking these questions, and by creating a plan that provides a comprehensive approach to solar marketing, solar programs will maximize their investment in solar incentives, and expand the customer base for solar energy throughout their markets.



**CLEAN ENERGY. LET'S MAKE MORE.**

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Lyn Rosoff is Deputy Director for SmartPower and has served as Director of Marketing for the past two years, leading SmartPower's consumer research efforts. Lyn has over 25 years of marketing and advertising experience including 18 years at Arnold Worldwide. For 12 years Lyn was President of Second Wind Enterprises, a marketing consultancy practice focusing on nonprofit organizations. Clients included: SmartPower, The John Merck Fund, Catch Neighborhood Housing, The Pew Charitable Trusts, United Way of Mass Bay, Star Island Corporation and World TEAM Sports.

Lyn currently serves as Vice President of the Board of Directors of the United Way of the Greater Seacoast and is past Chair of the Board of The Greater Boston Food Bank.

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Mark Sinclair is Vice President of the Clean Energy Group and has been working on energy and environmental issues in the public interest for two decades. Clean Energy Group (CEG) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the use of clean energy technologies in the U.S. and abroad through creative financing, business partnerships, public policy and advocacy. Mark also is Executive Director of the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA), a multi-state coalition of state-based renewable energy programs working together to advance clean energy markets. Prior to CEG, Mark was senior attorney and vice president with the Conservation Law Foundation of New England. He also has served as general counsel to the State of Vermont's environmental agency.

Mark serves on the Board of the Vermont Public Interest Research Group, the Investment Committee of the Vermont Clean Energy Development Fund, the Board of the National Wind Coordinating Collaborative, and the Board of the U.S. Offshore Wind Collaborative. He also serves on the Waitsfield Development Review Board.



**SmartPower** is a national, nonprofit marketing organization that promotes clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency. SmartPower's award-winning marketing campaigns have created unprecedented demand for wind, solar and hydropower. In 2001, a group of forward-thinking, private foundations and the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund founded SmartPower. These groups believed that renewable energy needed the same consumer marketing techniques that traditional consumer brands use. SmartPower has recently expanded its focus to include energy efficiency and conservation. In addition to helping consumers choose clean renewable energy sources, SmartPower wants to educate consumers about ways they can conserve energy in their day-to-day lives.

SmartPower's goal is for the nation to produce more clean energy while using less energy. SmartPower works on three key fronts to advance this mission.

### **Research**

SmartPower conducts research to identify why consumers do not make choices towards a clean energy and an energy efficient lifestyle. This research is especially important when 80% of consumers say they believe renewable energy is better than energy produced from fossil fuels and they are willing to spend more to have it, but less than 3% actually purchase clean, renewable energy.

### **Marketing**

SmartPower uses its research to construct targeted marketing campaigns to convince consumers to make the switch to clean energy and energy-efficient habits. SmartPower spreads its message through marketing, advertising, promotion, public relations, blogging and social networking.

### **Community Organizing**

SmartPower builds partnerships with utility companies, state agencies, municipalities, clean energy funds and community groups to promote clean energy to consumers at a grassroots level. SmartPower also provides marketing tools to local organizations so they can market clean energy in their communities

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**Clean Energy Group (CEG)** is a nonprofit organization established in 1998 to increase the use of clean energy technologies in the U.S. and internationally through innovative financing, business partnerships, public policy and advocacy.

CEG works with state and nonprofit officials from across the U.S. that are responsible for over \$6 billion in clean energy funds. CEG manages the Clean Energy States Alliance, a nonprofit assisting its member clean energy funds and programs in research, information sharing and multi-state strategies to deploy clean energy technologies. CEG also works with public officials in Europe interested in trans-Atlantic efforts to build clean energy markets.

CEG, including its work through CESA, is supported by the state clean energy funds, and by major foundations including the Annenberg Foundation, The John Merck Fund, New York Community Trust, Jane's Trust, and others.

We invite you to learn more about CEG and its projects at the following websites:

**[www.cleanegroup.org](http://www.cleanegroup.org)**  
**[www.cleanenergystates.org](http://www.cleanenergystates.org)**  
**[www.statesadvancingsolar.org](http://www.statesadvancingsolar.org)**