

Case Studies Show the Value of Program Evaluation

*Value of Program Evaluation Case Study Series
Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, November 2009*

The U.S. Department of Energy sponsored several small case studies that clearly demonstrate the benefits that evaluation can provide to energy and environmental programs. The result is a set of five “Value of Program Evaluation” Case Studies (each 2-pages in length) documenting the benefits of implementing recommendations from program evaluation studies. Benefits of evaluation captured include reduced program cost or dollars saved, increased productivity, increased product sales, and streamlined processes.

The inspiration for this project draws from a recognition of a common need for federal and state evaluators to raise the profile of program evaluation in their agencies. One way to do this is to fully document the value and usefulness of evaluations in achieving program operational/efficiency improvements and subsequent gains in mission accomplishment. We hope that these case studies will provide program Administrators and Senior Managers convincing case examples of the value program evaluation can provide their organizations.

Of the five case studies included in this collection, four are energy-related. The case studies in this series are:

- ✚ *DOE Hydrogen Program Saved Nearly \$30 Million by Investing in Annual In-Progress Peer Reviews (U.S. DOE, Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy)*
- ✚ *Evaluation Helps Program Increase Sales of Energy Saving Light Bulbs Among Women (ENERGY STAR Products Program, Wisconsin Focus on Energy)*
- ✚ *Evaluation Helps Pesticide Program Finish Project Four Years Sooner Than Expected (Office of Pesticide Programs, U.S. EPA)*
- ✚ *Evaluation Prompts ENERGY STAR Program to Replace Web Tool, Saving 90 percent of Annual Costs (ENERGY STAR Residential Program, U.S. EPA)*
- ✚ *Programs Streamline Process, Add Customers More Quickly After Implementing Evaluation Recommendations (Empower Programs, Hydro-Québec)*

Each case study satisfies three conditions:

- 1) An evaluation study is completed that made specific recommendations.
- 2) The program implemented some (or all) of the recommendations, and this is clearly documented.
- 3) The benefits of implemented program improvements are documented in a follow-up evaluation study (with a report available) or some other documentation.

The third condition goes beyond the criteria applied to typical discussions of the value of evaluation in two important respects -- it requires evidence that recommendations were implemented and documentation of changes to the program after recommendations are implemented.

We hope you will find this “Value of Program Evaluation” Case Study Series helpful in promoting program evaluation in your organization. Please feel free to circulate copies to Program Administrators, Senior Management, and colleagues in your Organization.

Thank you.

Jeff Dowd
Senior Analyst/ PBA Program Evaluation Lead
Office of Planning, Budget and Analysis (PBA)
Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington DC, 20585
Email: Jeff.Dowd@ee.doe.gov

Acknowledgements

DOE extends appreciation to the following people who made valuable contributions to this new series of Information Briefs:

Scott Williams (Research Writer, Wisconsin Public Utility Institute) who researched and authored the Briefs; Cara Lee (Sam) Mahany Braithwait, (Director, Wisconsin Public Utility Institute) and Gretchen Jordan (Principal Member of Technical Staff, Sandia National Laboratories) who provided project oversight and review; and Sara Van de Grift (Residential Programs Director, Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation), Peter Caulkins (Acting Director, Special Review and Reregistration Division, U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs), David Lee (Branch Chief, ENERGY STAR Residential Program, U.S. EPA), and Andrée Lemarier (Marketing Consultant, Hydro-Québec), who provided final review.