He Said, She Said: The Power of Messaging (101)
February 11, 2016
Call Slides and Discussion Summary
Call Attendee Locations
Call Participants – Network Members

- ACEEE
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
- Build It Green
- Building Performance Center Inc.
- California Energy Commission
- Center of Sustainable Energy
- City of Chula Vista, California
- City of Holland, Michigan
- Civic Works
- CLEAResult
- Columbia Water & Light
- Efficiency Maine
- Efficiency Nova Scotia
- Elevate Energy
- Energize NY
- Energy Conservation Works
- Energy Efficiency Specialists, LLC
- greenspaces
- Honeywell
- ICAST
- LEAP
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- OmStout Consulting
- PUSH Buffalo
- Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources
- South Burlington Energy Committee
- The Oberlin Project
- Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation
Call Participants – Non-Members

- 3M
- AJO
- AppleBlossom Energy Inc.
- Ballarat Consulting
- BKi
- BlueGreen Alliance
- BPA
- Brand Cool
- BritePlug
- CB&I
- City of Akron, Ohio
- City of Bloomington, Indiana
- City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County
- Duke University
- Enbridge Gas Distribution
- Energy Commission
- Flathead Electric Coop
- Fruitfull Energy
- Groundswell

- GUEP Local Team
- Impact Marketing
- Local Government Commission
- MN Dept of Commerce
- New Jersey Natural Gas
- Newland Communities
- Nexant
- North Slope Borough
- NorthWestern Energy
- NYSERDA
- Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency
- Plant Vogtle
- PUSH Green
- Rocky Mountain Institute
- Salcido Solutions
- Seattle City Light
- StopWaste
- TRC Energy Services
- V3
- Volunteers of America
Agenda

- Agenda Review, Ground Rules, and Opening Poll
- Brief Residential Network Overview
- Featured Speakers
  - Sabrina Cowden, Senior Project Manager, Milepost Consulting
  - Amy Frykman, Vice President, Resource Media
  - Julie O’Brien, Manager of Behavioral Research, Opower
- Discussion
  - What stories can you tell to capture the benefits of home upgrades?
  - How can you frame your messaging to attract new customers to home performance?
  - What messaging strategies have worked well for your program to improve conversion rates?
  - Has anything not worked well? Please share your lessons learned.
- Closing Poll and Upcoming Call Schedule
Better Buildings Residential Network: Connects energy efficiency programs and partners to share best practices and learn from one another to increase the number of homes that are energy efficient.

Membership: Open to organizations committed to accelerating the pace of home energy upgrades.

Benefits:
- Peer Exchange Calls 4x/month
- Tools, templates, & resources
- Recognition in media, materials
- Speaking opportunities
- Updates on latest trends
- Voluntary member initiatives
- Residential Program Solution Center guided tours

Commitment: Provide DOE with annual number of residential upgrades, and information about associated benefits.

For more information or to join, email bbresidentialnetwork@ee.doe.gov
Explore messaging resources:

- Learn how to frame your marketing and outreach efforts by understanding your local market in the [Marketing & Outreach – Assess the Market](#) handbook.
- Tip: [Adapt messages to your primary target audience’s needs](#)
- [Messaging Quick Link](#) provides 40 curated resources.

While you’re there, see the latest Proven Practices post on [Energy Advisors](#).

The Solution Center is continually updated to support residential energy efficiency programs—[member ideas are wanted](#)!
Marketing & Outreach – Assess the Market

Where Am I?

Description | Step-by-Step | Tips for Success | Examples | Toolbox | Topical Resources

Step-by-Step

By researching who comprises your program’s target audiences, what their needs are, what motivates them to change their behavior, and what prevents them from undertaking home energy upgrades, you will be able to craft relevant messages and delivery approaches that will inspire them to take action.

The following steps can help your program assess the market for home energy upgrades.

- Develop a market research plan based on available resources and research techniques
- Conduct audience research to determine who should be the focus of your marketing and outreach
- Categorize your target audiences to narrow the focus of your marketing and outreach efforts

Strategy Development

1. Develop a Business Model
2. Develop Evaluation Plans
3. Develop Implementation Plans
4. Make Design Decisions
5. Make Design Decisions
6. Create a Business Plan
7. Develop Implementation Plans
8. Make Design Decisions
9. Make Design Decisions
10. Develop Implementation Plans
Opening Poll #1

- Which of the following best describes your organization’s experience with the call topic?
  - Some experience/familiarity – 41%
  - Very experienced/familiar – 31%
  - Limited experience/familiarity – 25%
  - No experience/familiarity – 0%
  - Not applicable – 2%
Opening Poll #2

What do you think is the most effective focus of messaging for residential energy efficiency?

- Cost savings (energy bills) – 56%
- Comfort in the home – 29%
- Improving resale value – 4%
- Environmental benefits – 4%
- Other (please chat in your response) – 8%
The Art and Science of Storytelling

EE can learn from David, Goliath and Finding Nemo
EVERYONE HAS A STORY
A Quick Quiz

David & Goliath

Finding Nemo
Energy Efficiency has a Challenge
The Original Flat Screen TV
Tension Makes a Story Stick
A logical path from beginning to end

Aristotle, 384-322 B.C.
And said another way...
We like the drama
• Giant is fighting the tribe; tribe is losing
• No one in the tribe is willing to face the giant
• David, an unlikely candidate – a shepherd, not a soldier, agrees to face Goliath
• David kills Goliath and is the hero to the entire tribe

• Nemo, who has a foreshortened fin, is captured by a diver
• Dad sets out to find and rescue Nemo
• Dad meets Dory, and has lots of close encounters – sharks, jellyfish – during his rescue attempt
• Meanwhile, Nemo is hatching his own escape plans
• Dad and Nemo are reunited
We have lost touch with our inner story teller
Be strategic and creative about telling your story
Be strategic and creative about telling your story.

But how does that work in the real world?
But how does that work in the real world?
EE is a leader in successful project delivery.

EE is a connector across multiple stakeholder groups.
Building overarching memes around our desired outcomes.

Writing supporting features with stories embedded.

Writing supporting features that personalize the subject.

But how does that work in the real world?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Meme</strong></th>
<th><strong>Key Messages</strong></th>
<th><strong>Story Arc</strong></th>
<th><strong>Placement Desired</strong></th>
<th><strong>Preparer</strong></th>
<th><strong>Deliverer</strong></th>
<th><strong>Frequency/Dates of Delivery</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A New Approach to Project Management</strong></td>
<td>Set a target but be flexible in how you get there.</td>
<td>Developed a project plan and set a date. As we worked, issues developed, stuck to our date and made it.</td>
<td>Internal Publication/Upper Management Meeting Callouts</td>
<td>Joe Smith, EE residential team</td>
<td>Sally Smith, Senior Manager for EE residential team</td>
<td>4 weeks prior to desired publish date of April 1. Submit by March 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Define your team</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for every team member and a clear, regular schedule for checkins. Team members changed. Redefined as needed and kept moving.</td>
<td>Internal Publication/Upper Management Meeting Callouts</td>
<td>Tammy Jones, EE residential team</td>
<td>Sally Smith, Senior Manager for EE residential team</td>
<td>4 weeks prior to desired publish date of May 1. Submit by April 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintaining momentum by celebrating the small stuff</strong></td>
<td>Excited at the outset - a new challenge. Soon roadblocks and distractions arose - as we dealt with these, we learned to celebrate even our small successes to keep our enthusiasm and momentum going.</td>
<td>Internal Publication/Upper Management Meeting Callouts</td>
<td>Mary Smith, EE residential team</td>
<td>Sally Smith, Senior Manager for EE residential team</td>
<td>4 weeks prior to desired publish date of June 1. Submit by May 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaningful Collaborations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pilot Partners</strong></td>
<td>LPC came to utility with a challenge, looking for a solution. Utility invited LPC to be an integral part in looking for that solution. Worked in partnership thru design and pilot phases.</td>
<td>Customer Communications and Community Meetings</td>
<td>Harry Jones, EE residential team</td>
<td>Sally Smith, Senior Manager for EE residential team</td>
<td>4 weeks prior to desired publish date of April 1. Submit by March 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talking with Trade Allies</strong></td>
<td>Designed a program and launched a pilot. Not as successful as we hoped - identified trade allies as missing link. Went out and actively sought out trade ally input - drama. Improved the program by listening to their opinions.</td>
<td>Customer Communications and Community Meetings</td>
<td>Manny Smith, communication coordinator for EE residential team</td>
<td>Sally Smith, Senior Manager for EE residential team</td>
<td>4 weeks prior to desired publish date of May 1. Submit by April 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creating Collaboration with Local Power Companies</strong></td>
<td>Scheduled a series of face to face training sessions to introduce new program. Met with some excitement and many reservations. Continued to meet them where they were and work to understand their POV.</td>
<td>Customer Communications and Community Meetings</td>
<td>Suzy Jones, communication coordinator for EE residential team</td>
<td>Sally Smith, Senior Manager for EE residential team</td>
<td>4 weeks prior to desired publish date of June 1. Submit by May 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our BIG Story
Author: Utility
Illustrator: Milepost Consulting

Let’s try something different ... will it work?

EE wants a new reputation

Successful new program launches
EE conducts focus groups and direct outreach with Trade Allies, collects feedback ... what happens next?

Trade Allies are not participating as expected

EE launches a pilot program

Individual Trade Ally Narrative
Author: Utility
Illustrator: Milepost Consulting

EE tweaks program based on Trade Ally feedback

Trade Ally participation grows
But how does that work in the real world?
Do you remember mine?
Sabrina Cowden, Senior Project Manager
Storytelling is natural in personal communication, but many of us don’t do it in business communications.

Basic elements of storytelling – a beginning, middle, and end – are the same whether you are developing mass outreach materials or having one-on-one conversations.

To promote energy efficiency, leverage storytelling. Ensure that data are accompanied by the narrative you want people to absorb.

Peer pressure is good marketing: use stories to show homeowners that their neighbors are doing home efficiency upgrades.
Best Practices: Resource Media
Audience-Driven Communications
Telling the Energy Efficiency Story
About Resource Media

- Communications Strategy
- Execution + Outreach
- Digital + Social Media
- Environmental + Health + Justice Focus
Agenda

- What the research tells us: polling, focus groups and image testing
- Recommendations
Audience Research

- 8 focus groups, 2 each in the Midwest, South, Northeast and West. By FM3 and POS, summer 2014
- 1000-person poll conducted by FM3 and POS in April 2015.
- Online focus groups in the Midwest & PNW in fall 2014 to test images
Focus Groups & Polling

- Very positive associations with EE
- EE a much lower priority than other energy sources.
- EE not seen as a “resource,” or as something that replaces power plants and solves big picture energy needs.
- Poor conception of the bigger picture—i.e. commercial energy use & the huge gains that could be made.
- Best framing = being smart and in control, and optimizing energy use.
Positive feelings about energy efficiency

“Responsible”

“Fulfilling”

“Right thing to do”

“Smart”

“Conscientious”
## Messengers: Homeowners/small business owners who have saved energy and money

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Messenger</th>
<th>Total Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home owners who have made their homes more energy efficient and saved money on their electricity bills</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small businesses which have made their operations more energy efficient and saved money on their electricity bills</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American Lung Association</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University researchers who study ways to use energy smarter</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, here is a list of people and organizations that take positions on issues relating to energy efficiency. Please tell me if you would generally trust each person or organization's opinion, or if you would be suspicious of it.
Less credible: environmental organizations, EE biz, utilities

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Messenger</th>
<th>Total Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Businesses which manufacture or sell energy efficient products such as windows, heat pumps, appliances and smart thermostats</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs who have created innovative, energy-saving technology</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your electric utility</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental organizations</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, here is a list of people and organizations that take positions on issues relating to energy efficiency. Please tell me if you would generally trust each person or organization's opinion, or if you would be suspicious of it.
“Require” provokes a strong response for some, particularly more conservative.

“Don’t force me to do it. That makes me mad.”
- Birmingham AL woman
Core Challenge

How do we bridge from the positive associations people have with energy efficiency personally to the bigger picture policy initiatives needed to advance energy efficiency at the scale required?
Online focus groups: Day 1
Online focus groups: Day 2
Online focus groups: Day 3
Observations

• Mostly non-politicized
• People draw on personal experiences
• People get excited when talking about things they have done/could do to their homes to save energy
Perceptions of energy efficiency

- Positive and personal
- Why? Save money, stop waste & do the right thing
- People see it as a question of personal responsibility, not government mandates or utility programs

*Energy efficiency is great, but don’t tell me what to do, and I won’t tell you what to do either.*
People easily relate and engage
Top Findings

• The role of government/utilities is our vulnerability

• EE = virtuous self-interest: save money while stopping waste and doing the right thing

• Images make EE personal for people

• We don’t use imagery enough; what is out there is abstract and technical

• Images help normalize EE as something everyone is doing and should do
Core Recommendation

Lead with real people and businesses embracing energy efficiency as a way to introduce programs and policies that drive energy efficiency improvements.
Building the Message

- Point to real money savings and tangible benefits from existing EE programs.
- Pivot to the opportunity to expand the program or programs like it.
- Finish with a call to action.
Kansans save hundreds of dollars a year on average thanks to energy efficiency programs. One such program enabled Topeka resident Jane Smith and her family to install a programmable thermostat and add more insulation in the attic. Today, just a couple months later, the Smith’s monthly utility bills are lower, and their home is warmer in the winter, and cooler in the summer. They rarely needs to turn on the heater or air-conditioner.
Sample Message: Part 2

Kansas now has an opportunity to expand programs like these, helping more families save money and energy, by making energy efficiency a core strategy of the Kansas Clean Power Plan. By prioritizing energy efficiency, the State of Kansas can help residents save an average of XX dollars annually on energy bills, while significantly lowering energy use, resulting in cleaner air and water for everyone.
Sample Message: Part 3

Please contact [insert decision-maker] and tell them to make energy efficiency the #1 priority in the Kansas Clean Power Plan.
Go to our website for:

- Report
- Research summary
- Tip-sheet
- New research

www.resource-media.org/visual-story-lab/energy-efficiency-imagery
Thank you!

@Afrykman on Twitter
Low-Income Messaging: Opower
Don’t Show Me the Money: Why *Not* To Choose Financial Messaging to Influence Your Low-Income Customers
For low-income households, money talks
If you ask, people will tell you money is a key motivator

Self-Reported Importance of Factors Determining Participation Decision

- The potential to save money long-term
- Whether I had to make an initial payment
- Any continuing costs
- The effort required to set up installation
- Whether the programme is offered through the government
- The impact on my comfort or the comfort of others in my home
- The amount of time it would take to see if I qualify
- The convenience of enrolling in the boiler upgrade programme
- The amount of personal information I would have to provide

#1: Cost
Scarcity brings focus . . . sometimes to a fault
We tested the influence of financial vs. non-financial calls to action on cognitive resources

Online experiment

**Financial condition:**
Weatherize your home.
Minimize your bills.

**Non-financial condition:**
Weatherize your home.
Maximize your comfort.
Financial messaging seizes cognitive resources, but only from low-income participants

**Product Study**

**Fluid Intelligence Task Performance**

- **Average # of Raven's Matrices Answered Correctly**
  - **Financial messaging**:
    - Non-low-income participants: 1.22
    - Low income participants: 1.04 (marked with *)
  - **Non-financial messaging**:
    - Non-low-income participants: 1.14
    - Low income participants: 1.13

**Client Survey**

**Financial Stress Items**

- **Agreement on 6-point Likert Scale**
  - **Bargain Hunting is Appealing**:
    - Assistance Unqualified: 4.6
    - Assistance Qualified: 4.4 (marked with *)
  - **Money is Stressful**:
    - Assistance Unqualified: 4.4
    - Assistance Qualified: 4.5 (marked with *)
Sometimes, **urgent focus may spur immediate action** in a low-income household.
But *scarcity effects may impede planning, navigating, and completion* of multi-step processes.
Presentation Highlights: Opower Low-Income Messaging

- **Be direct** in messaging to customers, asking “What really matters to you?”
- **Most important things** to understand about your audience are income group and geographic location.
- **Money=stress** for low-income customers. Bargain-hunting is a negative experience.
- **Simplicity is key** for money-based messaging. Complicated processes cause people to drop off, but a simple click-through message works.
- **Program design changes** may be warranted if customers are stymied by the complexity of enrollment.
- **Multifamily building owners** respond to messaging about their peers in similar buildings.
Discussion Questions

- What stories can you tell to capture the benefits of home upgrades?
- How can you frame your messaging to attract new customers to home performance?
- What messaging strategies have worked well for your program to improve conversion rates?
- Has anything not worked well? Please share your lessons learned.
Discussion Highlights

- **Programs don’t need to hide** in the background in their messaging, but do lead with stories about homeowners’ neighbors and peers.
- **Messaging can help people identify with energy efficiency** by encouraging a broader understanding of EE as encompassing simple actions like turning off lights.
- **Gather feedback in low-cost ways** through crowdsourcing websites like CrowdFlower and Amazon Mechanical Turk.
- **Tap into natural competitiveness** of your audience using social media to get people to lower energy use.
- **Emotion**, not just direct information, should be a part of any effective messaging.
Closing Poll

- After today's call, what will you do?
  - Consider implementing one or more of the ideas discussed – 49%
  - Seek out additional information on one or more of the ideas – 47%
  - Make no changes to your current approach – 3%
  - Other (please explain) – 3%
We hold one Peer Exchange call [almost] every Thursday from 1:00-2:30 pm ET

Calls cover a range of topics, including financing & revenue, data & evaluation, business partners, multifamily housing, and marketing & outreach for all stages of program development and implementation

Upcoming calls:

- **March 10:** Addressing Barriers to Upgrade Projects at Affordable Multifamily Properties (201)
- **March 17:** Rainbows and Leprechauns: Finding Gold in Partnerships (101)
- **March 24:** Home Improvement Catalyst: Sequencing Upgrades and Engaging Homeowners over Time (201)
- **April 14:** Training: How to get Results - What Matters, What Doesn’t (201)
- **April 21:** Advances in Integrating Energy Efficiency into the Real Estate Market (301)
- **April 28:** Driving Change in Residential Energy Efficiency: Electric Vehicles (301)

Send call topic ideas to peerexchange@rossstrategic.com
Join us @ ACI National Home Performance 2016

Kick-off with DOE on Monday, April 4!

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Partner Meeting, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
including special breakout sessions:
- Home Energy Score, 1:30 - 2:50 PM
- Home Energy Information Accelerator, 3:00 - 4:20 PM
- Trade-Based Approach – DOE Home Improvement Catalyst, 3:00 - 4:20 PM

Getting Started with HPXML workshop – Monday afternoon

Meet us at many more sessions, April 5-7!

Early registration deadline: March 3.
Meet us at sessions, April 5-7!

**T, 4/5**
- Home Upgrade Program Models for Acquiring Savings in Multiple Climate Zones
- Residential Energy Labels, Why Should You Care & What Do You Do About It?

**W, 4/6**
- Showcasing Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Contractors
- Transforming the Market with HPXML: Strategies and Lessons Learned
- What Building America Learned in 4 Years About Retrofits & Staged Upgrades
- Realizing the Market Value for High Performance Homes: Reports from the Field
- Health & Home Performance: Unlocking New Funding, Marketing, & Data Value
- The Quest for Smarter Performance Measurement
- The Home Energy Data Huddle: Getting together to Build an Information Pipeline

**R, 4/7**
- Home Performance Financing Update & Options to Help Close More Jobs
- Insights from the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program Evaluation
- America’s Building Blocks to High Performance Housing

Download the full [ACI National Home Performance Conference Agenda](http://example.com) for more details.
REGISTER TODAY for the
BETTER BUILDINGS SUMMIT
Washington, DC · May 9-11, 2016
SAVE YOUR SPOT NOW:
HTTPS://WW2.EVENTREBELS.COM/ER/REGISTRATION/StepRegInfo.jsp?Activit
tyID=14611&StepNumber=1

This Summit will bring together Better Buildings partners and stakeholders to exchange best practices and discuss future opportunities for greater energy efficiency in America’s homes and buildings.

There will be time set aside for a specific Residential Network discussion and meet-up!
Thank you!

Please send any follow-up questions or future call topic ideas to: peerexchange@rossstrategic.com