

DOE Zero Energy Ready Home

Second Innovation Partner Roundtable Meeting Summary

May 2019



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DOE Zero Energy Ready Home
Second Leading Innovation Partner Roundtable Summary

February 20th, 2019
Las Vegas, NV

Prepared for
DOE Zero Energy Ready Home Program

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Introduction

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Zero Energy Ready Home (ZERH) program relies on a series of roundtable meetings with core stakeholders to ensure continuous improvement that responds to partner's needs. This year's Innovation Partner Roundtable was held at the National Association of Home Builders International Builder Show in Las Vegas on February 20th. The objective of the meeting was to engage high-performance product manufacturers and associations to work together on their concomitant interests in zero energy and zero energy ready homes. That's because all of these industry organization benefit from a superior homeowner experience. For example, insulation manufacturers and associations will enjoy much greater homeowner satisfaction with their product when high-performance windows, advanced air sealing, quality-installed comfort systems are also included.

Building on prior meetings, the 2019 meeting was aimed at building on recommendations from a prior 'marketing expert' meeting to initiate a national consumer education campaign that effectively conveys why zero energy and Zero Energy Ready Homes live better. ZERH hopes to engage up to 200 industry organizations to join this campaign promoting a common message on public facing communication including websites, packaging, signage, social media, and advertising. Working together, we have a real opportunity to drive consumer demand for zero, or in other words, get homeowners to act in their best interest and choose zero.

Agenda

Meeting Plan
<p>Invited Innovation Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 30 ZERH Innovation Partners
<p>DOE/ZERH Program Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sam Rashkin, U.S. DOE• Sam Bowles, Newport Partners• Jamie Lyons, Newport Partners• Joe Nebbia, Newport Partners• Marissa Morgan, Energetics
<p>Purpose:</p> <p>High-performance home innovations can truly transform the consumer experience, but their value is barely recognized in the transaction process (e.g., buying, appraising, lending, and insuring homes). The Zero Energy Ready Home Innovation Partnership was created to help diverse organizations work together so the value of high-performance homes, products, and services is more widely recognized. The initial focus has been on promoting consumers to visit the DOE 'Tour of Zero.' In June 2018, a Marketing Expert meeting was held with marketing professional representatives from a subset of the Innovation Partners. This meeting will build on the results and recommendations from that meeting with the goal of launching a national 'zero' consumer awareness campaign by Q4 of 2019.</p>

Desired Outcomes:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key recommendations from Marketing Expert Report • Identify key actions moving forward to launch a national ‘zero’ consumer awareness campaign • Set up a marketing committee to implement actions for national ‘zero’ consumer campaign 		
Agenda:		
Time	What	Who/How
9:00 am	Breakfast coincidental with meeting	Knauf Insulation Host
9:00 – 9:20 am	Welcome & Introductions	Sam Rashkin, Round-the-Room
9:20 – 9:35 am	2018 Innovation Partner Roundtable & Marketing Expert Meeting Report Review	Sam Bowles, DOE
9:35 – 10:30 pm	Key actions moving forward for national ‘zero’ consumer awareness campaign	Cards/Sorting
10:30 – 10:45 am	Next steps for DOE in launching a consumer awareness campaign	Group Ranking
10:45 – 11:00 am	Wrap-Up/Summary	Sam Rashkin, +/-
11:00 am	Adjourn	

2018 Innovation Partner Roundtable & Marketing Expert Meeting Report Review

We began the meeting with a review of what transpired during our First Innovation Roundtable Meeting last January, as well as the “marketing expert” meeting in June that developed as a result. The ZERH Innovation Partners who attended that meeting expressed the need to gather a group of marketing experts from various manufacturers and organizations that have concomitant interests to start to lay out the process of a national campaign. The major outcomes of that first Innovation Partner Roundtable meeting were:

- ✓ Consumer messaging needs to be easy to understand, include useful content, and most importantly, connect at an emotional level.
- ✓ Collaboration among all stakeholders of high performance homes towards developing a clear, consistent message and then committing to promote collectively
- ✓ DOE should convene with marketing experts from partners to plan a communication strategy.

With the marching orders in place, the goal of the “marketing expert” meeting was to hone in on this steps necessary to launch this campaign. The ZERH team defined the desired outcomes of this meeting to be:

1. Identify Effective ZERH Power Messages
2. Identify Best Strategies to Communicate Power Messages
3. Develop a Framework for Communication Plan for Power Message Campaign

We began the “marketing expert” meeting in June, by building on these finding from the Innovation Partner Roundtable that there is a need to collaborate amongst all stakeholders of high performance homes to develop messaging for a national campaign that is easy to understand, informative, and will connect with the consumer on an emotional level. The first step was to brainstorm message concepts

for the campaign. Three main concepts, as well some initial ideas for taglines, came about as a result of this exercise. These concepts include:

Total Package	Independence and Freedom	Home of the Future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Going beyond energy efficiency, ZERH offers a better, healthier home experience. •“ZERO...energy bills, comfort problems, water leaks, and health concerns!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •ZERH provides homeowners more peace of mind by enhancing control and reducing worry. •“Take control of your home!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Opportunity to optimize what is often the largest purchase of a lifetime •“Live now in a home designed for the future.”

Moving forward, the next step was to begin outlining what needs to be developed as a part of a communication plan to strategically launch a campaign and have it be as effective as possible. The group collaborated on what content needs to be created and what outreach channels should be leveraged. The framework for a communication strategy was defined by the group and included:

Identify Most Effective Message	Develop Content, Tools, & Resources	Identify Outreach Channels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Define/ Decipher Umbrella Message •Hone Messaging for each Concept Category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Branding Toolkits (Ads, Brochures, Signage, Plaques) •Articles, Blogs, Newsletters, Consumer Educational Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Social Media •Events, Champion/Media, Realtors, Big Box Retailers

Lastly, the group was asked how to best get this communication plan launched. Participants were in agreement that the best approach would be to develop a marketing committee that would be in charge of defining/honing the message, developing content and a marketing/communication plan to reach the target audience, and engage the more industry stakeholders to grow and spread the campaign. The framework for the marketing committee includes:

Messaging and Content	Marketing Plan	Engage Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop umbrella messaging and specific messaging for concept categories •Develop branding toolkits, promotional and informative resources. •Distribute content to Innovation Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop communication plan including identifying appropriate outreach channels and social media strategy •Target major events and media outlets that will help raise awareness •Develop specific action items and deliverables for all Innovation Partners and stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Follow up with current Innovation Partners on action items/deliverables. •Funding for Professional Video & Content •Develop additional partnerships with organizations and manufacturers

Key Actions Moving Forward For National ‘Zero’ Consumer Awareness Campaign

After reviewing the outcomes of both the First Innovation Partner Roundtable Meeting and the ZERH Marketing Meeting, the primary module of the meeting was aimed at identifying priority actions for launching a national consumer awareness campaign. Following up on the outcomes from the ZERH Marketing Meeting, the group identified several areas in which the campaign should focus and shared some ideas for content and strategies for reaching consumers.

Education was a common theme identified by several participants. Not only do we need to inform consumers on the availability and value of high-performance homes, but other industry stakeholders as well. Those involved in the home buying process were one such group that has the opportunity to connect directly with consumers. Realtors, mortgage counselors, appraisers, and home inspectors all have the ability to reach a lot of consumers and need to a focus of education for the campaign. Utilities and State Energy Offices can also have a profound impact through incentives and programs, as well as promoting and distributing educational resources. Getting high-performance building programs such as ZERH into State QAPs and stretch codes is a big opportunity.

All of these groups have the potential to touch a lot of consumers, but much of the discussion also centered on getting content in front of potential consumers by targeting the places where they get their information. Several channels were identified such as having a solid digital/online presence, social media, and print advertising. Educational resources such as webinars/seminars, case studies, and white papers were identified as potential learning tools. Marketing and showcasing the consumer experience through expanding the DOE Tour of Zero and developing a collection of testimonials that can be shared via social media were two ideas on connecting with consumers with a targeting online/social media presence. Others discussed creating a marketing template that can be shared with all manufacturers, associations, and organizations participating in the national campaign would be useful in promoting healthy living and ensure the messaging is consistent.

Specifically related to the message, the entire group agreed that common terminology that connects with the consumer on an emotional level is essential. Creating an umbrella message that is general enough to be relevant to a wide variety of stakeholder groups, but also flexible enough to allow these various groups to put a spin on it that relates more specifically to their target audience is desired. The concept of using simple contrasts to highlight the value of high-performance homes is something the group agreed would be effective. Some examples include; healthy vs. unhealthy, uncomfortable vs. comfortable, and wasting energy vs. producing energy.

Key Actions Moving Forward	
Category	Comments
Education	Education needs to include various stakeholder groups and that are involved in the home buying process and have a direct impact on consumers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realtors • Architects • Energy Consultants • Mortgage Counselors • Appraisers • Home Inspectors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Energy Offices and Utilities to help spread the word and raise awareness. • Incentives and promoting energy efficiency programs. • Getting ZERH or other high-performance programs included in building and stretch codes
	Educational resources need to be developed such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinars/Seminars • Case Studies • White Papers
Content and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand on the Tour of Zero to include buyer testimonials and share on social media • Collect consumer testimonials to share on social media (as an industry) • Integrate with other tours • Create a marketing template that manufacturers can use to promote healthy living with ZERH
Connecting with Consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand/survey consumers on what they actually buy not only what they want

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to where consumers are getting their information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital ○ Social Media ○ Home Buying Professionals (Mortgage Counselor, Appraisers, Realtor, Home Inspectors)
Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Terminology • Define healthy living and how it correlates to ZERH • Simple Contrasts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unhealthy/healthy ○ Uncomfortable/comfortable ○ Waste energy/produce energy • = Easy Choices • Power message to consumer • Emotional connections in messaging • Scientifically based threshold

Next Steps for DOE in Launching a Consumer Awareness Campaign

To close out the meeting, participants were asked generally what steps should be taken to being the process. The group agreed that the development of a marketing committee, made up of marketing experts and decision makers from manufactures, associations, and organizations in the industry was the first step. This committee would then likely be divided up into sub-committees, each with their own targeted responsibility to the campaign. These responsibilities would include; messaging and content development, funding and stakeholder engagement/recruiting, and monitoring the distribution of the various content pieces from all campaign participants. The group also identified some actionable items for DOE, including creating a Tour of Zero directory of products which would allow manufacturers to link to homes that use their products. These “next steps” for the marketing committee are outlined below.



Appendix A: DOE Actions in Response to First Innovation Partner Roundtable Feedback – 2018

Category	Prioritized Actions for DOE	DOE Actions	Grade
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association consortium of funding Can EEBA be the place to pool our resources? Yes! More companies represented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DOE is constantly searching for more Innovation Partners. DOE is in process of developing a second version of the ZERH consumer video. 	B
Icon/Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Media Develop & distribute PSA Immediate agreement between manufacturers to share ZERH content on social media regularly and each other's posts Commitment from ZERH to post consumer content Embed message in MLS/Realtor community systems & education (life cycle costing) Create social media campaign Create overall brand identity/icon for industry and define criteria to be a part of it Create a message/icon or logo & develop roll out plan Create icon & support with crystal clear message about "the goal" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DOE held an Expert Marketing Meeting to bring together marketing reps from various Innovation Partners to discuss messaging, communication channels, and approach to create a collaborative effort to raise awareness of ZERH. A marketing committee will be developed to craft messaging/content, develop distribution plan, and engage more stakeholders ZERH is currently unable to obtain our own Social Media account but is working in collaboration with a graphics company on developing more shareable content. (Individual Bars handouts) 	B+
Data/Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create goal(s) and metrics Generate messages around goal Test message Revisit first Zero Energy Ready Homes to get data and homeowner info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data from willing participants In addition to data, DOE is collecting testimonials from builder partners and homeowners to share and use in messaging. 	B
Marketing Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize message Marketing committee or roundtable with partners' marketing experts Develop strategy to get campaign to market Simplify a consistent message that all of us can use in our marketing, social media, etc. Develop a network of participating companies to carry communications campaign Consistent, constant messaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert Marketing Meeting was held to help being the conversation around messaging/content, and what is needed going forward. The development of a marketing committee is in process. ZERH is currently exploring a training certification under EEBA which will increase education and training across the country related to ZERH. Developing more shareable social media content 	B+

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring marketing experts into the mix to better understand the consumer mindset and translate technical jargon • Explore 'pull' marketing compared to 'push' marketing • Education via 3rd party • Translate today's value to tomorrow's value and the importance of lifetime value • Innovation partner marketing council to come up with common message • Identify key marketing decision makers for all innovation partners • Update innovation partner status • Do an inventory of website & social media campaign for energy efficiency manufacturers to see who is linked to net zero 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently working to improve website usability • Developing a more comprehensive consumer facing ZERH page 	
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