NYSERDA’s Competition Based Pilot for Residential Customers

BECC Conference
November 30, 2011
Cameron Bard & Scott Kessler, NYSERDA
• Intro to Reduce the Use in District 39
• How we began
• What other groups were involved
• How participants were engaged
• What were the results
• What did we learn
• What are our next steps
First Look at Results

- Completed competition-based behavioral pilot in New York
- Increased confidence of regulator and administrator
  - Approval for $500k/year program
- Saw encouraging customer awareness/engagement
- Learned pitfalls of behavioral programs
- Savings of 4%! (sort of)
Pre-Pilot Competition

- **Goals**
  - Evaluate staff time/resources needed to run competition
  - Get preliminary feedback on NYC resident interest

- **Results**
  - 40 participating households
  - Approximately 6% reduction in usage
Pilot Competition Development

- Engaged Con Edison and NYC Councilmember Brad Lander as official partners
  - Increased outreach
  - Enhanced credibility
  - Local presence

- Official launch August 1, 2010 with 161 participants
How Were Participants Engaged

Direct Communication and Incentives

- Competition driven by normative comparison
- Category prizes for “smallest footprint” and “greatest reduction”
- Received Monthly Update and Newsletter
- Provided tips and information based on household characteristics
How Were Participants Engaged

Monthly Communication

**REDUCE THE USE IN DISTRICT 39**

*Competition Newsletter*

Join the [Facebook](#) group to share your tips... Read about how others are doing... And, stay informed about upcoming chances to win!

**Inside this issue**

- **Brad's Blog**: Reducing my energy use. #6: Con Ed Home Energy Survey
- **Did you know...** November 2nd, California Voted “NO” on Proposition 23.
- **Around NYC**: Find out about some great events happening around the city.
- **Volunteer BKLYN**: This month’s featured organization is the Wildlife Conservation Society.
- **The “Greenest” Neighborhood**: Find out how your neighborhood is doing.
- **“Green” News and Other Links**: Con Edison launches new appliance recycling program and the IRS touts Two Home Energy Tax Credits.

Feel free to forward any questions, comments, or events to competition@nyserda.org.

**Brad’s Blog**

Reducing my energy use, #6: Con Ed Home Energy Survey

We’ve been doing OK so far (using the mechanical outlet timer I discussed in my last post to address vampire power), and came in 67th out of nearly 200 homes last month. But we agreed to let my daughter get a fish tank -- which is a big energy user -- so I wanted to do something to offset it.

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**Monthly Newsletters**

Neighborhood rankings, local volunteer opportunities, and an ongoing blog written by Brad Lander

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**Monthly Updates**

Individual rankings and season specific energy saving tips

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**First Name** [Last Name],

Your last Con Edison billing period began on October 9th. During the month of October from October 1st to October 31st, you used [Adjusted_Per_Capita_Usage] kWh/person.

Out of 161 participants, your placement is below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Rankings</th>
<th>Rankings for Council Member Brad Lander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smallest Footprint</td>
<td>[Small_Foot]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest Footprint</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biggest Reduction</td>
<td>[Big_Reduc]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biggest Reduction</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you received an “N/A” instead of a ranking, it means that there was something wrong with your data this month. Hopefully this will be corrected next month.
Sponsor Responsibilities

- **Con Edison**
  - Monthly usage
  - Outreach
  - Prizes
- **Brad Lander**
  - Outreach
  - “Brad’s Blog”
  - Hosted Products Library
- **NYSERDA**
  - Data Analysis
  - Updates and Newsletters
  - Official “cat herder”

What do you get when you mix a politician, a public utility, and a state authority?
Baseline Data & Findings

- Partnership with Columbia University
- Adoption of energy practices – affect on household energy use
  1. Installed solar panels
  2. Replaced $\geq 5$ bulbs with CFLs
  3. Installed weather stripping
  4. Installed other air sealant
  5. Installed/increased insulation
What Were the Results

Baseline Energy Use Based on Adoption of Savings Practices

Sample Size – Zero Practices = 91; One Practice = 43; Two Practices = 17; Three Practices = 5; Four Practice = 3; TOTAL = 161
Average Savings and Winners

- Participating households saw an average of 4% in energy use reduction.
- Winner of Smallest Footprint:
  - Park Slope Resident, 213.8 kWh/person
- Winner of Biggest Reduction:
  - Park Slope Resident, 49% reduction in kWh/person usage from previous year
What Were the Results

2010 vs. 2011 Monthly Average Usage

Average Monthly kWh/person Usage

August | September | October | November | December | January | February | March | April | May | June | July

2010 | 2011
What Were the Results

“The competition and its monthly updates made me constantly aware of my energy consumption more so than my monthly electric bills. And I liked seeing my usage relative to Councilmember Brad Lander’s, so that gave me some sort of comparison.”
- **Winner of Biggest Reduction**

“By comparing my usage to my neighbors I could see if I had room for improvements. When electric/gas utilities start sharing neighborhood benchmarks, this will help people see how much money they can save through home energy retrofits.”
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Majority of Exit Survey respondents said they were most motivated by seeing how their energy use compared to their historical energy use.
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“Would you participate in a similar competition in the future?” **94% Yes**
What Did We Learn

Strengths

• Cooperation with co-sponsors
• Social connectivity

Ongoing Issues

• Ease of data extraction and acquisition
• Lack of third-party verification
• Continual awareness

This was NOT OPOWER
Future Manifestations

- Schools, community groups, multifamily buildings
- Future competitive solicitations
- $500k per year for 2012-2015
Thank You

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