Abstract: Residential Behavioural Market Test Findings

In 2007, BC Hydro set up a year-long market test to investigate the feasibility of a residential behavioural program. Participants were encouraged to sign up online at the BC Hydro website and commit to a given electricity reduction target. Those participants that reached their target (5%, 10% or 20%) in one year, were rewarded with a monetary incentive (paid out as a rebate), or entered into an exclusive prize draw. A specially designed tracking tool allowed participants to track their consumption during the year, the website served as a source for behavioural tips on saving electricity, and participants received a dedicated bi-monthly eNewsletter. The market test consisted of 4 different test groups. Key findings include:  
* Significant energy savings were achieved, particularly by participants that were more engaged with the program  
* The higher the reduction target, the lower the willingness to participate  
* The monetary incentive attracts interest in the program and rewards behaviour change  
* The program pushed participants past the “Tipping Point”  
* Changes tend to happen at the start of the program, and need to be maintained  
* Savings are correlated with effort, ease of making changes, distractions  
* Level of co-operation among household members influences success  

The results of this market test were used to develop the Power Smart Residential Behavioural Program, that was introduced in October 2008 as part of Team Power Smart.

Bio: Gareth Clarke is a marketing specialist working in BC Hydro’s Residential Power Smart department. He has spent the past 10 years with BC Hydro, mainly working on energy efficiency initiatives, but also spending time in meter reading and customer service. In February 2007, Gareth launched a behavioural market test to learn more about the feasibility of a large-scale behaviour change program. He is currently helping to implement a behavioural change program that was launched to all of BC Hydro’s residential customers in October 2008.  
Contact: Phone: 604-453-6392  
E-mail: Gareth.Clarke@bchydro.com  
BC Hydro Power Smart 900 - 4555 Kingsway  Burnaby, BC, V5H 4T8  Canada