Messaging for Utilities

Come and Knock on My Door: Strategies for Effective and Welcomed Canvassing Outreach

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10/22/2010
Oregon Program

- A collaborative approach between Green Mountain Energy Company and Portland General Electric provides integrated “Multi-Touch” marketing

- Sales/Marketing channels include Direct Sales at Events & Storefronts, Courtesy Knock, Bill Inserts, Bangtails, Web & Phone

- Cooperative marketing opportunities with business renewable customers proving successful.
Direct Sales at the Grassroots

• Provides local jobs
• Opportunity to make a connection with customer
• Customer opportunity to talk through objections with “expert”, fellow customer/ community member
• Storefront and Event tables, small B2B outreach, and Courtesy Knock foster a green power community
Utilities and Courtesy Knock

Overcoming Barriers

- Utilities typically reluctant to go door-to-door
- Several quality assurance methods used in early stages
  - Carbon copy receipts with enrollment verification message
  - Third-party verification phone calls at every sale
  - Ongoing random check phone calls
- Rigorous new hire training and ongoing refresher trainings
- Naming the channel “Courtesy Knock”
Utilities and Courtesy Knock

Benefits of D2D Outreach

- Methodical coverage of territory
- Campaign directed at eligible prospects
  - Quotes based on customer usage info (if available)
  - Remove ASU and ineligible
- Low-pressure informed approach, ability to “call back”
- Low cost rep kit/ set-up
- Build annual knocking strategy
  - Coordinate with other groups

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<th>DIR</th>
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<th>APT</th>
<th>Kwh</th>
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<th>CB</th>
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NS - No soliciting
VAC - Vacant House
ASU - Already signed up
LF - left form
NI - not interested
X - irate/angry customer - unsafe situation - do not return
GS - Green Source Sale
HH - Healthy Habitat Sale
CW - Clean Wind sale
NOB - Customer's name is not on the electricity bill
NSE - No speak english
BLANK - nobody home
Building Rapport at the Door

The Basics of Canvassing

- Observe your turf—turf efficiency
- Note address on tick sheet before knocking
- Greeting- give this all the time it deserves
- Make a connection- use humor and your humanity
- Introduction and name recognition
- Suggest a need
- Suggest a solution/ product description
- Closing/ objection handling
- Share appreciation
Mapping Turf
Pie Chart

You Have the Power to Build a Renewable Future

Oregon Electricity Mix*

- Coal 41%
- Hydro 42%
- Natural Gas 10%
- Nuclear 3%
- Other 1%
- Waste 0.6%
- Wind & Geothermal 1%

VS.

PGE Green Source*

- New Wind 82%
- New Biomass 11%
- New Geothermal 7%

Choosing Green Source electricity is like:
- Taking 320 cars off the road for a week
- Recycling a stack of newspapers almost 100 feet high
- Over 2,800 homes turning off their lights for a week

**An Oregon household with an average monthly usage of 900 kWh can prevent almost 10,000 lbs of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions each year.

Legitimacy

Overcoming Skepticism

• How can I trust you?
• How do I know the utility isn’t just pocketing my money?
• Who’s checking up on these programs?
• How do I know the money is being used for the indicated purpose?

Portland General Electric Renewable Power Options

Since 2003, customers of Portland General Electric (PGE) have had three options for buying power from renewable resources such as new wind and new biomass generation.

Customers who choose one of the options can have confidence the utility is acquiring renewable resources from qualifying “green” sources, and in the right amounts.

Each electric company files an annual report with the Oregon Public Utility Commission known as a reconciliation report. The purpose of the report is to substantiate the company's product claims for the renewable resource options.

- The report shows contractual purchases of Tradable Renewable Certificates that match sales to renewable power customers.
- Green Mountain Energy, which acquires the renewable resources on PGE’s behalf, provides attestations of purchases from specific generating units.
- PGE submits those attestations to the Commission each year with the reconciliation report.
- Commission staff reviews the reports and also conducts program audits.

In the near future, a new computerized system will kick in that will track transfers of renewable energy through the Western power grid, which extends from western Canada south to Mexico. The Commission will consider utility requirements related to the system before it is operational.

In addition to reports and audits, an advisory committee monitors the renewable power options and makes recommendations to the Commission. The committee includes representatives from:

- Renewable Northwest Project
- Citizens’ Utility Board
- Oregon Public Utilities Commission Staff
- Oregon HEAT
- Fair and Clean Energy Coalition
- Oregon Department of Energy
- Local governments
- Small businesses
- Portland General Electric and PacifiCorp

Monthly reports on the number of residential and small business customers choosing renewable power options are available on the Commission’s website at: www.puc.state.or.us/PUC/electric_renew_indices/statspt.html

* PacifiCorp offers similar options.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June XX, 20XX

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News Release

Beware of utility company imposters
PGE says don’t put yourself or your money at risk

Portland General Electric (PGE) is alerting its customers to beware of imposters going door-to-door, identifying themselves as PGE employees and seeking entrance to homes.

“These folks are likely trying to steal something, or case your home for a later break-in,” said Joe Goodale, PGE’s security director. “PGE staff will never ask to come in your home unless you have already authorized them to make an inspection to read an indoor electric meter.” Even then, Goodale says you should insist on seeing a PGE photo identification card.

He added that the only PGE representatives who solicit door-to-door are selling the company’s popular renewable energy products and they will not come inside. “These are legitimate representatives of PGE,” Goodale said.

Recent incidents individuals wearing bright yellow jackets with “Power Savers” printed on them claiming they needed access to a home for weatherizing, such as checking seals around windows and doors. Police report similar incidents where the suspects identified them as water utility employees. In one such case a room was ransacked by one suspect while his accomplice distracted the resident.

Goodale offers this advice:

• Always insist on photo identification from anyone offering services door-to-door.
• When in doubt, call the organization the person claims to represent via the number in the phone book, not a phone number provided by the visitor.
• Never let a stranger inside your home unless it is through an appointment made directly with the vendor.

There are other scams were the perpetrator may pose as a utility worker, asking you for money, a credit card number or other personal identification. In one common fraud, the suspect claims he or she will cut off the power unless the resident immediately pays cash.

Never provide bank account or credit card information over the phone to a utility company unless you have initiated the call.

You can take the employee’s name down and then call back through PGE’s main customer service phone number, (503) 228-6322 in the Portland calling area, or (800) 542-9818 elsewhere.

Officials say that if you’re suspicious of a caller or visitor, obtain as much identification information as you can without letting them in your home and then immediately call the police and PGE.

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Success

Since 2004:

- 350,000 doors knocked
- 150,000 customers contacted (conversations)
- Over 18,500 signups (40% of those in the last two years alone)
- Relatively low 10.7% attrition rate

2010 YTD:

- Already our best year ever (3829 signups)
- Highest team SPH ever (1.10)
- 3 reps already over 500 signups for the year (compared with at most 1 in previous years)
- Highest individual SPH on the team 3.33
We Have the Power to Make a Difference

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