



The customer imperative: **Why the Energy Industry Must Embrace the Customer to Survive**

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What You'll Learn

- Discover what topics interest and engage the energy customer
 - Explore strategies for motivating audience segments
- Understand possible new customer-centric business models



Dear Executive,

With any drastic market shift, the old ways of doing business can quickly become obsolete. This has never been more evident than in today's energy sector, particularly in highly competitive markets.

Deregulation in any form means a shift from being focused, often exclusively, on regulators and legislators, to becoming customer-centric. This is a dramatic departure for almost any organization facing deregulation, and has proven particularly difficult for those in the energy industry. Even utilities in regulated markets need to adopt more customer-focused initiatives as consumers are increasingly mindful of alternative power sources and envious of their peers who boast of living off the grid.

Leading change and making the transformation brings with it a degree of difficulty often unprecedented. However, the upside is tremendous. There is significant opportunity in understanding customer needs, attitudes and drivers, and then harnessing this information to create relationships that yield more value and longevity. This is not really a choice. Taking action to adapt these realities is the only viable option, as many companies in other deregulated industries have learned. Any and all energy utilities or providers have to make these changes.

Through information presented here, you'll learn more about why becoming customer-centric is an imperative and what you need to make your corporate change efforts highly successful. You'll gain insights from our national research study that reveals exactly what customers today think about their utility provider, and how they compare it to other services that help run their homes and contribute to their lifestyle. You'll be exposed to new views on energy and how they have a direct correlation to the quality of life of today's consumer. You'll learn about the dangers of "received wisdom" — the things that people assume are true, but may not be. You'll also gain lessons learned from companies in other deregulated industries and in markets that have undergone rapid change. A few were utter failures, but many have thrived and their stories are both relevant and inspiring.

We will show how the energy companies are getting it wrong. The progress of smart meters epitomizes the kinds of mistakes that many are making. From its very name to the lack of communication regarding customer benefits, the industry is failing and turning what should be as great an advancement tool as the DVR was for cable companies into a distrusted negative. We will show how this can be reversed by being sensitive to customer perspectives and how other new technology and services can be successfully used to enhance profitability and loyalty.

Most importantly, you will be armed with the steps you need to take and the tools you can use to build marketing strategies for your organization that will differentiate you, more closely align your products and services with what is relevant in today's marketplace, and endear you to customers in a way that will continually drive profitable growth.

CBD Marketing is grateful to the experts that contributed to the insights and strategies presented here, starting with Richard Guha, President of Max Brand Equity and former President, Reliant Energy. Richard is a pioneer and the architect of many of these initiatives. From telecom to cable, energy to healthcare, he is unmatched in his understanding of how organizations in industries experiencing discontinuity should go to market.

Enjoy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Brohan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Liz Brohan
Co-CEO and President

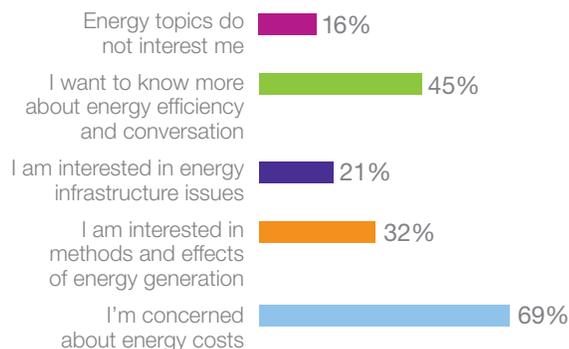
Who turned out the lights? The dawn of customer control.

Energy utilities and suppliers have always earnestly served their customers, albeit by creating a relationship that one might liken to a benevolent ruler. That is, they feel that they know what is best for the customer. After all, the customer knows little about how the energy industry operates, so a father-knows-best approach best suits everyone.

That was then. The new now finds that consumers are as distrustful of energy companies as they are any of the traditional “authorities” such as politicians, doctors or bankers. And this is news that couldn’t come at a worse time, as energy is gaining prominence on both the national stage and in the customer mind-set. Ironically, as early as last year, we were frequently told that energy executives believed that energy was a low-interest category. Not true, say consumers. Where power comes from, how it’s delivered, what it costs and how it can be conserved are all issues that are more top-of-mind today.

High interest in energy topics, especially related to cost and efficiency

When reading the news, energy topics are interesting to me because: (choose all that apply)



Consumer interest = consumer control

Your customers will soon demand more control over how they receive their power, services, bills and customer support. This new paradigm is worth embracing—wholeheartedly. Companies that act now to anticipate the customer’s need for more control will also find that it’s a pathway to profitability. When you help people feel that they are in control of their own destinies, everyone benefits.

Customer control healthy in hospitals.

When hospital patients are given the opportunity to control their own pain medication with a pump, not only do they suffer less pain, they use less medication. Patient control contributes to resource containment, conservation and reallocation, and that results in better productivity and profitability.



What's exciting is that while it may seem scary to hand control to the consumer, you'll be rewarded with better results. The consumer will trust the company more and the customer will come up with better ways to do things than the company will.

The energy business must commit to moving in this direction. And the good news is that there is precedent. You don't need to look further than the airline industry, telecommunications, financial services, and shortly, health care. In each case, the scenario stays the same, particularly the long-term results.

The deregulated market maturity cycle

Initially there is an explosion of entrepreneurial new companies, increased marketing spending, and lower prices to consumers. Then, companies are forced to improve efficiency, and economies of scale become important. Next, new product offerings are developed, which usually results in the growth of total consumer spending for superior results. Consolidation soon follows. Most of the companies in the business are acquired or go out of business. The winners are then in a position to increase marketing spending, again, as a barrier to entry. AT&T demonstrated this most recently with the announcement that they are purchasing T-Mobile.

In the old regulated environment, companies which do not do enough are insulated from failure. In the future, there is no such guarantee. Many companies will simply go out of business. Which ones? Those that innovate inadequately or underspend on marketing and advertising, and those that fail to meet customer needs.

Customer-centric business model: a clear winner

As mentioned, there are plenty of winners to emulate to ensure you don't just survive, but thrive. Deregulation was a huge opportunity for Southwest Airlines. Not so for TWA. With TWA's heritage solidly rooted in dramatic mergers and acquisitions, starting in 1930 when Transcontinental Air Transport and Western Air Express joined forces, its focus on the customer was not an evident priority. And while at its height in the early 1980's it was carrying over half of all passengers traveling from the U.S. to Europe, deregulation and a lack of investment in customer understanding, communications and new aircraft hit the airline hard. Its decline ended abruptly, shortly after the events of September 11, 2001.

Southwest took a different route. From its earliest days, it structured its brand to level a laser focus on the customer. This included a commitment to advertising with a consistency that's as robust as their value proposition. What's more, the airline understood that another critical point of touch was flight attendants and gate agents. It enlisted and engaged them as spokespeople and evangelists. It was an enterprise-wide message that has always stressed more than just low fares. They put fun first. Since deregulation, they have embraced an ever-growing commitment to lightheartedness, coupling it with giving freedom to every American to travel the country through their low-cost option. The success of these marketing mantras is realized in everything the organization does. The positive workplace culture and strategy results in high employee and operational productivity. Few other businesses have done this as well.

The blinding truth: **What customers think.**

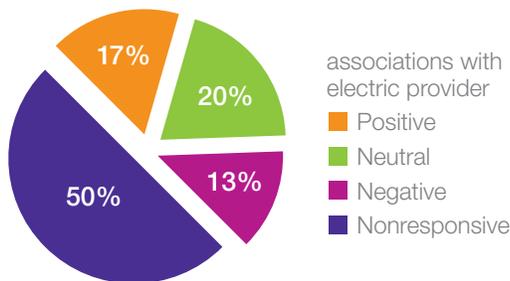
Following in Southwest’s footsteps is easier than you might think. It starts with gaining a thorough understanding of your customer, continually acquiring more knowledge, and remaining current about what’s on the mind of today’s consumers. How important are energy issues? What do they actually think about power and electricity today? What is the relationship with their energy provider or utility like? These are just a few of the questions we recently asked in a national research study.

New data sheds light

Using an established consumer panel, the online survey generated over 300 responses from utility bill payers and 50 adult influencers in the home. The study generated many eye-opening results.

Few participants hold their electricity suppliers in high esteem

If my electricity provider was a person, I would describe them as: [open-ended]



The first key opportunity is the need to change the consumer’s negative perception of you. When asked to describe their electricity provider as a person, over 50% of survey responders used hostile language. In fact, a whopping 15% describe their power supplier as greedy, followed by arrogant, cold, impersonal, sneaky, shady and corrupt. And that doesn’t even take into account the 17% of participants that didn’t/couldn’t answer the question or the 13% who used neutral descriptors like normal, basic and average to personify their provider.

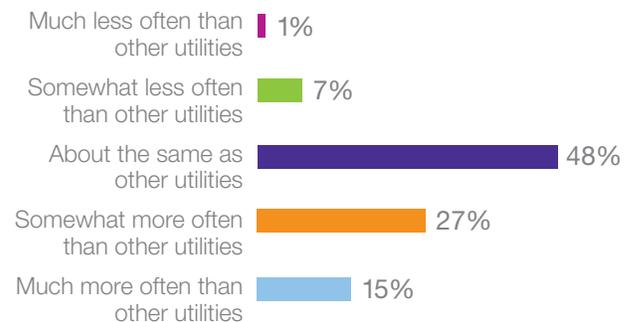


This level of detachment and unhappiness needs to be acknowledged and corrected immediately.

On a brighter note, energy is a hot topic. A high majority of participants expressed interest in a variety of energy topics. From infrastructure and generation to conservation and efficiency, consumers want to learn more about what’s happening in energy, and often read articles related to these issues. Not surprisingly, they are also eager to understand how these issues correlate to costs. 69% of survey responders noted concern about the cost of energy.

42% say they think about their electricity consumption more or much more than other utilities

Compared to other utilities like gas, cable or telephone service, I think about how much electricity I’m consuming:

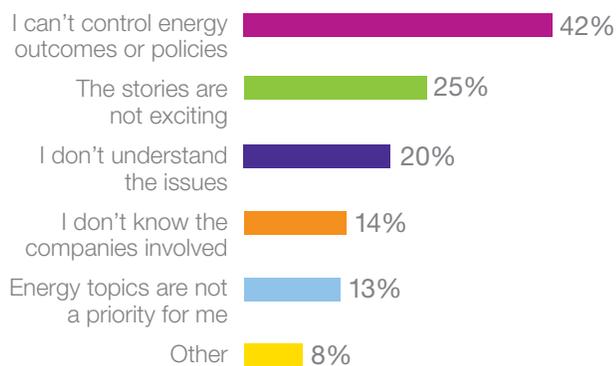


Electricity is top-of-mind in the home in another meaningful way—consumption. In fact, 42% say they think as much or more about their electricity consumption as they do about other utilities. Electricity is clearly not a low-interest category. When compared to other utilities like gas, cable, cell and phone service, electricity usage is a primary thought.

Perceived lack of control over policies and outcomes is the primary reason for disinterest

- Especially for males and those age 36-50
- Those under age 25 more likely to say stories are not exciting, or they don't understand the issues

I might ignore energy topics in the news because: (choose all that apply)



Cost concerns also have a direct correlation to two other findings in the research. First, the consumer, quite literally, feels powerless, and therefore resentful. Most of them believe they have no control over energy policies or outcomes. And they also assume that prices are being set solely by the provider. 68% of responders say their utility has 80-100% control over the electricity rate. The enormous misconception that the utility sets and controls the rate is a perfect example of where communications programs can be leveraged for positive change.

68% of responders who are the primary bill payer say their utility has over 80% control of the electricity rate.



In fact, each of these survey results points to the opportunity to tell a new story. Capitalize on the moment by communicating in a way that changes the conversation. Customers are starved for information and, quite possibly, for attention too. After all, we've taught them to ignore us by ignoring them first. But now they are waking up, showing interest and ready to take control. In those cases where they are unsatisfied, it is imperative to find a way to meet those needs. Electricity providers have the ability to set the record straight, clear up misconceptions, and provide information on issues where there is little to be found. Behavior research has all but proven that how information is presented has a material impact on how consumers respond. For the energy provider, one of the first steps will be to change the engagement vocabulary.

Energy companies need to learn what it is like to be their own customer. Put yourself in customer shoes. What needs do you have? What more do you want? Is it easy to communicate? Success requires a deep, visceral understanding of the customer, and an active innovation program.

Put on a human face.

A great place to start for every company in the energy industry is to simply become more human. Stand up against anything that is impersonal. Put humanity into every communication. It's important to show that people are the heart and soul of your organization and to make it feel as though your family is reaching out to their family. A few immediate fixes in your communications would be to include positive images of you and your customer, smiles in the voices of everyone on the phone, and the ability to speak to an individual.

Out of the dark and into the black: How to profit through differentiation and relevancy.

What is abundantly clear from our research is that putting a human face on energy companies is long overdue. This once-abstract, inanimate product that you generate, distribute, manage and sell is something customers experience tangibly in their lives and think about often. Lack of customer engagement breeds misconception, resentment and defensiveness. These are tremendous hurdles that will complicate and stall advancement of infrastructure development and optimization. Your success depends on eliminating them.

Customer engagement can correct smart meter missteps.

While the introduction of smart meters seemed perfectly timed with the rise of several “smart” consumer devices, they are not being warmly embraced or accepted. In fact, they are having quite the opposite effect. Consumers are distrustful of the devices, following numerous complaints that they were installed without permission and, worse yet, result in much higher electricity bills. While smart meters are critically important to a more efficient infrastructure, they are also important in creating a more productive partnership with consumers. It’s not too late to take a step back and work to reverse consumer opinion by following one simple principle: focus the message on customer benefits.

To start, the industry should find a new way of describing or naming these devices; one that is more customer-benefit oriented. Unfortunately, the irony of the name “smart meter” is that customers don’t believe it makes them smarter. Worse yet, they feel they’ve lost a measure of control. To change this perception, the industry must produce a benefit-oriented identity such as a whole-house energy control system.

Ultimately, the new identity of smart meters needs to perfectly align the device with the most important customer benefit. That is, the ability for customers to monitor their energy use and realize that understanding usage and gaining energy conservation is now completely in their control. Give them control panels that help them consume energy smarter and they’ll soon begin to clamor for it, and eventually find that they can’t live without it. From heating and cooling systems to individual appliance management, messaging needs to stress the benefit and level of control that will be firmly in the hands of every consumer.

This strategy will also allow energy providers to offer more services and products, such as whole-house surge protection, safety devices, and voltage and cps fluctuation products.

Engaging with customers differently during installation creates the opportunity to help customers understand what their actual usage is and how it impacts costs. In advance of issuing higher bills, give the customer time to understand the new reality. Provide alerts and be proactive with education about why a customer’s historic manual readings do not align with automated ones, and offer a grace period before issuing higher bills.

Truth is, most customers are probably consuming more energy today than they realize. Innovation and technology never leads to a decrease in usage. Case in point is the increased number and use of devices in the home. From laptop computers and game consoles to multiple televisions, cable boxes and DVRs.

Working with smart meter manufacturers to rethink a consumer roll-out strategy offers enormous potential for everyone to create a win-win scenario.



Four success factors worth adopting today.

1 Create a strong brand identity

A brand identity is established at each and every touch point. It is critical that not only is the positioning well thought-through, but the company has the ability to “walk the talk.” What personality traits and values embody our brand? What differentiates us? How do we live it? These are three good questions that successful companies ask themselves while in the process of establishing a clear brand identity.

The biggest opportunity for energy companies is to define points of differentiation from the competition in a way that’s sustainable and not easily replicated.

Differentiation—inspiration from Charles Schwab

From its inception in 1971, it didn’t take long for Charles Schwab Corporation to differentiate itself as an innovator.

Charles Schwab’s momentum was catapulted in 1975 when they seized the new opportunities offered by deregulation. Its strategy was to focus on providing informed investors with low-cost access to security transaction. The firm invested heavily in technology as a way to lower costs, and developed several technology-based services that

would become central components to its business. In addition to trading software and back-office processing, the investment in the brand included better enabling human interaction including customer service support and a branch network.

Schwab also invested in aggressive marketing campaigns. In 1995, Schwab spent almost double the average level of advertising and communications expenditures for brokerage firms as a group. The result was that they more than doubled their customer base. Schwab’s brand achieved 71% awareness and has been on a growth trajectory ever since.

Charles Schwab’s brand identity has never wavered, and has been consistently articulated by Schwab himself saying, “Technology is the driver and enabler of all we do, and it has been Schwab’s hallmark to enable customers to interact directly with technology themselves.”

Similar to Schwab and Southwest, often the most important criteria which people will mention for selection of an energy provider is price. However, while price consciousness may be something your brand must address, you must move to the next level of differentiation. Price alone is very rarely the only reason for choice, and at the next level there are other elements energy utilities and providers can consider, such as sustainability, customer service responsiveness, service programs and energy conservation.

2 Engage the customer

There are two common elements that the successful organizations we've highlighted here use to shape their success: they solve a pain point for customers, and they know how to engage customers. Achieving each of these initiatives begins with understanding the entire customer experience and letting the customer know you authentically value a relationship with them.

You may have the world's most exciting product, but if trying to buy that product proves difficult, you'll quickly lose trust, credibility and customers. And the only way to find out how the customer interacts with you is to constantly monitor the experience yourself. That way, you'll be able to detect any areas of difficulty, dissatisfaction and hidden needs.

The way to go about building the relationship is to make it a two-way street and empower your teams with the ability to act on behalf of your company. For example, during a power outage provide proactive updates via every communications channel. This is something cable companies are doing a very good job of today. Any service disruption is often communicated within the second ring of an incoming call. Each call is met with a proactive acknowledgement that you may be experiencing difficulties. This is immediately followed by instructions on what to do or expect and the reassurance that your next bill will be credited for any inconvenience. They also deploy instant messages when services such as On Demand experience difficulties. Customers receive an automated screen pop-up complete with a telephone number to call for immediate assistance and a code to refer to in order to receive a credit. They then take it one step further by providing at no charge the program or movie that was disrupted.

One way for you to emulate this kind of relationship-building behavior is to arm your line technicians with gift cards from local restaurants and chains. On service calls when they encounter an unhappy customer, have them honestly tell the customer when power is expected to be restored and present them with the opportunity to have dinner on you, thanking them for their patience. This is a demonstration of superior customer support which should always be a hallmark of your brand.



The importance of a unique loyalty program

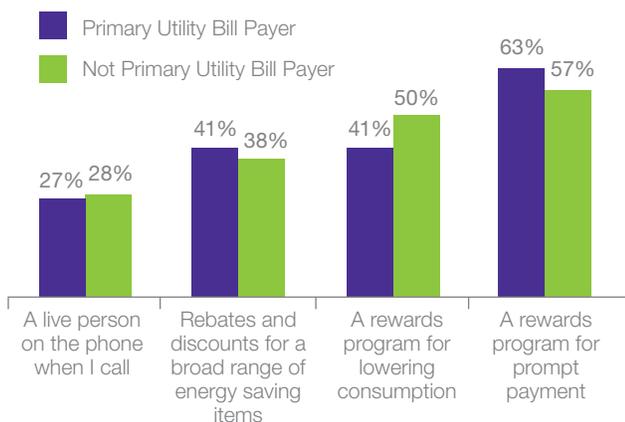
Another pillar of engagement is the development of an original loyalty program. When we asked consumers what they most wanted from their electricity provider, most indicated that they would like to be rewarded for their bill paying or consumption behavior.

The premise of a loyalty program is to strengthen the emotional connection between your brand and your most profitable customers. You want to ensure “stickiness.” That is, a compelling reason to stay with you long-term. As we've been saying, the key is to examine the customer experience to gain a clear understanding of what your best customers value most about your products and services.

When structured correctly, your loyalty program will also yield another reward. Customer data. While you reward your most valuable customer, you do so in exchange for information that you can leverage for innovating your products and services. The data you collect should tell you what your customers' needs, wants and desires are so that you can tailor your new offerings accordingly. Ask them what they like, then pay attention.

A best practice in creating or revamping a loyalty program is to avoid the trap of rewarding frequency rather than loyalty. Some of the best-known loyalty programs train their customers to pursue points and discounts. This encourages customers to shop around for the lowest price, instead of giving them a compelling reason to stay.

If my electricity provider granted me three wishes, I would ask for:



Everyone also assumes that these programs, even pricing, should be one-size-fits-all. In reality, it's much more effective to have different plans for several segments based on their needs. This could entail offering time-of-day pricing strategies that smooth out usage in high peak times, or voltage reduction offers that give credits for cutting back voltage in times of crisis. Others might spark to in-home storage batteries that can be tapped for high usage times. This strategy will lead to the best customer segments that can be used to fuel growth.

For example, be sure to include a plan for leveraging your most passionate customers to drive word-of-mouth support for your business. This can be accomplished by harnessing social media channels. Through email communication to your best customers, encourage them to respond to your Facebook page, blog, YouTube channel or through Twitter. Generating a positive discussion via social media among your best customers will help spread the word about the most positive aspects of your products and services.

3 Build a customer-driven acquisition strategy

When marketing to consumers, offering a low price and an easy conversion process will never be enough to sustain an electricity provider's penetration strategy. Although your offering may be interesting to consumers, switching energy providers is truly a hard sell when consumers are listening to internal chatter like "It's too much trouble," "I bet there's a catch here somewhere" and "What will I lose?" Fear of loss is far more powerful in their minds than what they may gain.

Energy companies who dominate in a cluttered marketplace will do so because they are able to strategically channel their understanding of the consumer's emotional and rational needs from acquisition throughout retention.

Many marketers tend to weight emotional and rational drivers somewhat equally, and favor rational drivers in their business strategy and marketing. This is a mistake. The emotional part of our brains developed eons before the rational mind and is a quicker, more commanding driver of behavior. Consumers actually tend to buy under the influence of their emotional mind, and then justify their behavior with their rational side. Prospects and customers who are not emotionally engaged with your brand will jump at the first golden opportunity.

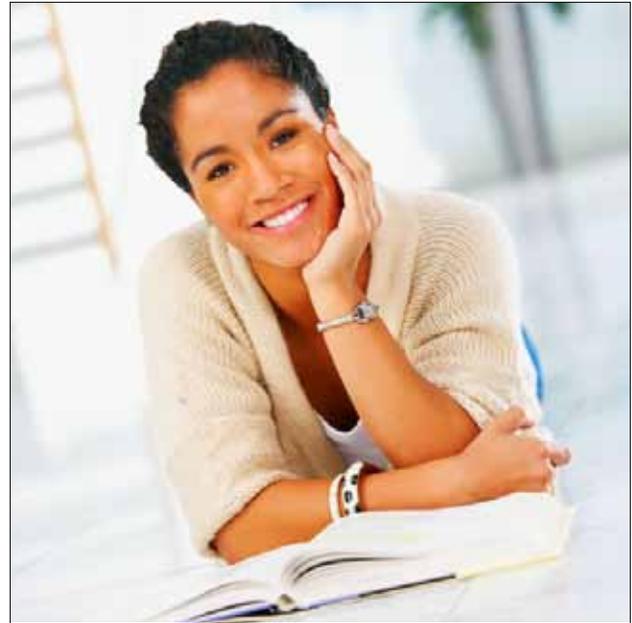
Due diligence in developing an acquisition strategy must include understanding the needs and motivations of segments of prospects/customers—and tailoring products, services, messages, offers and response channels appropriately. There are consumers who will be more motivated by status than price, or willing to pay a premium for products that align with their values. Other segments may be more likely to be motivated by a discount at Home Depot over cash or airline miles. There’s an abundance of actionable marketing insights in segmentation... and those that do it well will thrive.

As deregulated markets mature, offering differentiated products and services becomes more difficult, and emotional drivers are increasingly important. Only through emotional bonds with your brand will you develop engaged consumers who look beyond price and see value. Those that don’t harness deep knowledge of their prospect and customer will soon be outmuscled and outspent by those who do.

Integrate communication to ensure engagement

As far as the tactical aspect of customer acquisition goes, energy marketers who intend to drive significant customer gains must invest at a sustained level in integrated outreach and engagement touch points. Every year, leaders in other deregulated industries invest at levels that seem unbelievable to energy marketers. But others know it takes a high investment to build the awareness and trust required to earn a customer.

Frequency and reach are musts in the consumer marketing arena. So is being seen everywhere your customer is. Successful energy competitors today use a healthy mix of paid media, direct marketing, door-to-door and telesales, plus social media, event and affinity marketing. But beware...a “me-too” approach will be destined to failure if the marketing fails to embody a differentiated brand, cultivate trust, or promise an experience customers want.



Engage employees through customer-centric operations

We’ve said it before, but it bears repeating that your own employees are your most valuable asset when it comes to customer acquisition and retention. Engaged employees create engaged consumers. Passionate, happy employees who understand the customer and are empowered to quickly give them what they need...these are the hallmark of today’s most successful companies. But as our research indicates, this may be a quantum leap for utilities and energy providers.

It takes time and a top-down effort to build a customer-centric organization; new processes, vocabularies, incentive structures, and types of talent. You can accelerate the process by engaging employees, learning what they know, and involving them in developing solutions. But utilities and energy providers are well advised to consult expert leadership on customer-centric operations. The alternative “learn-as-you-go” strategy can be painful, and ultimately much more expensive.

Leverage customer advocates

With what appears to be a high level of entrenched negative sentiment, customer advocacy may well be the most important way the energy industry can reshape perceptions and conversations, increase credibility and demonstrate commitment to customers. In other similarly challenged sectors, certain innovative companies have formed customer advisory boards to take up some of the thorniest issues. Many have taken this a step further with customer advocacy programs.

Since customers and prospects are more likely to trust peers than company employees or product information, advocacy programs play an important role in leveraging how consumers research and make purchasing decisions.

Building an advocacy program will require resources, a strategy, a plan, and a long-term commitment. You need to build deep relationships with carefully vetted bloggers, the most helpful and knowledgeable community forum members, and those who are influentially active in online ecosystems. Invite them to your headquarters, and let their voices be heard. Make these individuals an extension of your business, with ongoing access to key people and information; let them be the first to try and review new things you're offering. Give them a group blog or community platform so they can tell their story. Continue to deepen your relationship over time, and ensure they get the recognition they deserve...but NEVER pay them.

At a minimum, customer advocacy programs create more engaged customers who will give you the benefit of the doubt if they have an issue. But the most engaged customers will go out of their way to do business with you, defend you in private and social media conversations, and recommend you to friends.



Harness the online channel: Content is king

If you're directly marketing to consumers, "your" website has to become "their" site. Consumers need to be able to find more about you online than a chest-pounding website, a search ad and a handful of consumer comments. And if you make it difficult or time-consuming to do what they want to do or find what they need to find, a more pleasant experience is a click away.

The purpose of a customer-centric website is to inform, serve, and engage customers. Companies in deregulated markets have the opportunity to take a step back, as though they were entrepreneurs just starting a consumer business, and think through what online face and voice they want to have for their consumer brand. What would you do if you were starting over?



For a consumer who is researching you online, credibility and trust are driven from deep and broad search results that are positive, engaging, and informative. Those competitors who engage consumers and provide content that proves this engagement have a tremendous edge. Transcripts from a town hall meeting, a round table Q&A forum that allows consumers to get to know utility leadership...innovative games parents can use with their children or colleges can use with their students. CBD has seen some wonderful new content tactics emerge in the last few years, but the potential for differentiating and engaging online material in the energy sector is vast and largely untapped.

The engaged consumer is not interested in the old PR approach to content you've used for your largest commercial and industrial consumers, investors, legislators and regulators. If it's not positioned in a way that is relevant and beneficial to them, it will not help you grow, stabilize, or retain your residential customer

4 Use a fully integrated marketing strategy

At a recent presentation by Martha Stewart for the International Direct Marketing Association, she noted that Omnimedia, Inc. strives for "omnipresence." She has the right idea. You need to be everywhere at once. The decision path that leads from awareness to purchase has many stops along the way and will always include a couple of forks in the road. That's why it is imperative to strategically map your communications against every channel.

Being where your customers are when they are first receptive to information and content and later ready to buy is imperative. Today's complex communications environment requires an approach that fuses brand awareness, relevant messaging, and motivation to act. This holistic approach ensures that all forms of communications and messages are carefully linked together.

At its most basic level, this means integrating all the promotional tools so that they work together in harmony.

There are important uses for traditional media such as TV, radio and print that cannot be gained from interactive channels including mobile marketing, display ads, search, social media and email.

Marketers who rely too heavily on interactive channels, at the expense of traditional channels, risk losing out on the lucrative segments that are avid multimedia consumers.

Plus, traditional media sources provide the foundation of awareness and knowledge of brands. And consumers routinely augment their daily traditional media consumption with time online, using the Internet much more heavily to research and purchase products and connect with friends and family. Typically, traditional advertising triggered their online search.

Leading **the way.**

Our survey clearly indicated that the average US electricity consumer believes that energy companies have a vast stash of cash, and are exploiting their customers. Trust in providers has plunged, just as energy has become an issue of personal, political, and national significance.

We've written at length about all the opportunities available to marketers who seize the moment, and we've provided a few ideas for brands that want to survive the inevitable deregulated market maturity cycle. We've also urged traditional utilities to engage with customers, to cultivate partnerships with consumers. These are not just business-building opportunities. Customer-centric energy organizations will ultimately be able to help their communities, and our nation, make better energy decisions in the future.



We know the US needs new power plants and associated infrastructure. As it stands today, the only personal impact consumers will see for these investments is higher electricity costs. It is incumbent on all energy providers to change the conversation now...to focus on benefits and value, to find innovative ways to give the customer more control, to work to rebuild the consumer's trust and respect. The industry will need the help and support of consumers to reach our nation's energy goals. We hope you take this once-in-a-career opportunity to help lead the way.



About CBD Marketing

CBD is a B2C and B2B marketing services agency that clarifies and articulates what's most meaningful about your brand, product or service and helps you build more intimate and profitable relationships with your customers.

At the heart of everything we do is a deep understanding of the rational and emotional drivers that inspire your customers' choices. At CBD, "market what's meaningful" is our mission, guiding all disciplines from brand development to media strategy, from public relations to creative.

Let's Talk!

To talk about how CBD can help you create moments that matter to your audience and better connect them to your brand, product or service, please contact Doug Davila, Director of Business Development at 312.661.1050 or ddavila@cbdmarketing.com.

About the 2011 U.S. Electricity Consumer Study

In March 2011, CBD conducted an online survey to a nationally distributed consumer panel. There were 364 total participants consisting of 304 residential utility bill payers and 60 adult influencers in the home. The sample consisted of 75% homeowners and 25% renters, with an equal distribution of males and females. Participants were asked 27 questions about the beliefs, behaviors and preferences related to their electricity consumption and electricity supplier. For detailed survey results, contact Gina Miller, Vice President, Director of Customer Experience, at 312.661.1050.



About the Authors

Liz Brohan, Co-CEO and President, CBD Marketing

As Co-CEO and President of CBD Marketing, Liz Brohan contributes strategic marketing expertise in the areas of branding, positioning, strategic messaging platform development, and brand revitalization for a broad spectrum of clients, including those in the higher education sector. With a passionate focus on customer-centric marketing principles, Liz leads the development of successful acquisition and retention programs. An active industry advocate and speaker, Liz served on the Board of Directors for the Chicago Association of Direct Marketing and currently leads thought-leadership and education sessions for the AMA Symposium for the Marketing of Higher Education, the Direct Marketing Association, the National Retail Federation, the National Business Marketing Association and the Direct Marketing to Business Conference. She also serves on the national CRM Board of Experts for Baylor University.

Gina Miller, Vice President, Director of Customer Experience, CBD Marketing

Twenty years ago, while pursuing a career in business management, Gina Miller took the reins of a database marketing firm—a role that would change her life. Out of this experience grew a passion for applying customer insight to build high performance, ROI-driven marketing programs. Gina now serves as CBD's VP, Director of Customer Experience. In this capacity, she spearheads research initiatives and is an integral member of the strategic marketing planning team for business-to-business and business-to-consumer clients. Gina is also an active writer and speaker on a wide variety of customer experience and engagement topics.

Richard Guha, President, Max Brand Equity, and former President, Reliant Energy, one of the world's largest gas and electricity marketers.

Richard's prestigious accomplishments span over thirty years. He has led Fortune 500 companies as a C-level executive and corporate officer in both general management and marketing, and has served on the board of nine highly successful companies. His expertise is in building businesses from a market-driven perspective and growing market value of both consumer and B2B brands.

He started his career in marketing at Procter & Gamble, later becoming a Division Head at Mars, Incorporated, and CMO at U.S. West and BMC Software as well as President of Reliant Energy. Additionally, he was a partner in two respected consulting firms, where he advised top management of Global 2000 companies. He is currently Chairman Emeritus of the Marketing Executives Networking Groups and Chairman of the International Executive Resource Group.

In 1996, he was the first to introduce and name the consumer "broadband" market while at U.S. West/Comcast. From there he ran the most successful retail energy business in the U.S. at Reliant Energy, where he was a pioneer in multichannel and direct-to-consumer marketing. He grew market value of three public corporations severalfold in periods of around two years each.

Richard has focused on initiating and leading change to achieve successful results in global organizations in changing markets. From consumer packaged goods to communications and high-tech, he has created new paradigms which have changed the market structure and built substantial revenue and profit growth.

As an acknowledged expert, he is also a published author and noted public speaker.