

## 2012 BECC Conference: Poster Presenter Abstracts

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### ***Beyond Extrinsic Motivators: Applying Alternative Theories of Motivation to Understanding Customer Behavior.***

Energy Efficiency programs have become one of the cornerstones in our efforts to reduce overall energy consumption. Recently, increasing attention has been paid to focusing on “usage-based” behavior programs, as opposed to “equipment-based” behavior programs. Both types of programs, however, tend to rely on what psychologists call “extrinsic” motivators to incite customers to participate, whether via monetary incentives (typical rebate program) or social pressure (social comparison usage reports). By and large, we assume that extrinsic reward systems result in greater uptake of program participation or more energy efficient behaviors. Yet, we limit ourselves and underestimate underlying values that some customers hold that motivate them to engage in more energy efficient behavior. In our marketing or program designs we rarely address how to communicate with the people who are not motivated to purchase an appliance because of the rebate or because their neighbor is more energy efficient – but rather by personal values and autonomous self-directed decision making. It is important to recognize the value of this typically under-recognized type of motivation and incorporate some of the theoretical and empirical research from this area into how we design and market programs as well. This presentation will outline the core differences between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and discuss merits of some key alternative theories regarding motivation that are rooted in the premise that people do activities (in this case, energy efficiency behaviors or actions) that are not entirely for extrinsic reasons.