

Abstract #: 482

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Abstract Title: Switch it! Change it! Save it! - Lessons from a Social Marketing Campaign aimed at Reducing Residential Energy Use

Abstract Text:

In a three-year NSF project to assess community-level interventions to increase energy efficiency behaviors, a large quasi-experimental field study was conducted in three Midwestern communities. In a pre-post design, two intervention communities and one control were assessed via telephone survey prior to the onset of a community-wide social marketing campaign to encourage specific residential energy conservation behaviors (adopting LED bulbs and changing furnace filters more frequently). The campaign (Switch it! Change it! Save it!) included radio PSAs on local stations, billboard advertising with campaign messages, literature available at local businesses, and tabling at prominent public events. The pre-campaign survey assessed a host of variables, including participants' awareness of energy conservation behaviors, the specific behaviors and or steps participants had taken to save energy in their homes, and general attitudes toward energy conservation. The social marketing campaign concluded in the summer of 2013 and a post-test survey was conducted to assess participants' awareness of energy conservation behaviors, their actual household conservation behaviors, and possible changes in those behaviors targeted by the campaign. The presentation will provide a process review of the planning, formative work and execution of the project. Emphasis will be placed on the lesson learned, advantages gained by working with industry partners, and knowledge gained about best (and worst) practices and the challenges faced when conducting quasi-experimental research in a community-wide energy efficiency intervention.