



But I'm not like the Jones's! Improving Customer Understanding of and Satisfaction with Home Energy Reports

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Opower's Home Energy Report (HER) program has been widely implemented, working with utilities in 28 of the 50 states, reporting savings of over six terawatt-hours. Yet customer satisfaction with the program tends to hover in the 60-80% range. In addition, negative press coverage with headlines like "Utility Customers Bristle at Comparisons to Neighbors," and customer complaints sent directly to the utility company's CEO is not uncommon. In an environment where positive customer experience and high customer satisfaction are of paramount importance to utilities, even a few unhappy customers can present a problem to utility program managers and leadership. DTE Energy has monitored customer satisfaction with its HER program closely, identifying the primary cause of low satisfaction as mistrust in the "neighbor" comparison and information contained in the report. Evaluations of HER programs across the country have exhibited a similar trend. During the Spring of 2015, DTE Energy implemented several changes to address these customer concerns, including moving from a "neighbor" comparison to a "similar home" comparison, updating FAQs, and giving customers the opportunity to update information about their home to make their comparison more relevant. DTE Energy monitors the impact of these changes on customer satisfaction using monthly phone surveys. This presentation will report on the results of these surveys and discuss how enhancing HER program communication has impacted both customer satisfaction and energy savings.