Saving Energy: As Fun as Skiing?

Leveraging Big Data and Social Networks for Customer Experience and Viral Marketing

Beth Hartman
Senior Research Associate, E Source

2013 BECC Conference
Really? Skiing Is Already So Fun!

- Here is my husband enjoying a day at Vail …
- … with me and my friend
- It’s OK if you snowboard

Courtesy: Beth Hartman
But Could It Be Even More Fun?

EpicMix tracks vertical feet covered per day, automatically posts photos to social media accounts, and allows virtual racing against Olympian Lindsey Vonn.

Source: Vail Resorts
Quick Background on EpicMix

- Vail Resorts originally installed radio frequency ID scanners on lifts to help skiers keep their hands warm
- Once it had all this data, the company started to wonder what else it could do with it …
- Enter: an innovative platform for customer experience and marketing!

Source: Telegraph, UK
Why Is EpicMix So Effective?

- **Interesting**: visual data
- **Easy**: automatic and instant
- **Social**: leverages a network

This set of features:

- Improves customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Empowers customers to promote the company
- Supports customer experience and marketing!
Interesting: Make Data Meaningful

Information in context!

- Is 10,000 feet a lot?
- Which lift did I ride most?
- How does this season compare to last year’s?

Using data to tell a story makes numbers matter, improving customer experience.

Source: Vail Resorts
Easy: Automatic, Real-Time Updates

Updates without uploads
- Photos automatically post
- Available the same day
- No need to remember a login for a new system

Remove barriers to entry so it’s easy for your customers to participate.

Courtesy: Beth Hartman
Social: Leverage Network Effects

Create viral marketing
- Many-to-many model
- Exponential exposure
- Encourages new customers to join

Research shows that people are several times more likely to believe a friend’s recommendation.

Source: Vail Resorts
A Word on Word-of-Mouth Marketing

- Word-of-mouth marketing
- Ineffective marketing

Source: The Guardian

Source: Wikimedia
Social Media Management: Defensive
Can Energy Learn From EpicMix?

The energy industry has tons of data. Can it be:

- **Interesting**: Why does energy use matter?
- **Easy**: Where can data appear automatically?
- **Social**: How can sharing and comparing occur?

Source: Green Button
Interesting: Make Data Meaningful

- Comparisons with peers
- Translation to dollars
- Trends over time

Think about how kilowatt-hours matter to people!
Translate energy use into points, awards, and more.

EpicMix example: pins and badges for each lift

Source: Opower
Easy: Automatic, Real-Time Updates

- Text-messaging systems
- Mobile platforms
- Social updates

Allow your customers to get automatic alerts on the channels they prefer.

EpicMix example: daily social posts, not monthly paper reports

Source: iFactor
Social: Leverage Network Effects

- Invite friends to play
- Encourage shared stories
- Provide unique rewards

Empower your customers to share their energy success stories socially.

EpicMix example: photos and more posted online; also, Epic Racers!
Utilities Are Starting to Catch On

- Facebook games
- Promoting products on social media
- What else is possible?

Source: Xcel Energy

Source: San Diego Gas & Electric
Thanks for Your Time!

- Long journey, fun times!
- Worth the effort
- I look forward to your questions