

Encouraging Changes in Commercial Customer Energy-Efficient Behaviors through Energy Benchmarking Reports

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

Overall, small commercial customers are interested in receiving energy reports.

The following factors are what make reports meaningful:

- Getting the comparison group *right* is critical.
 - Otherwise you lose credibility.
- “I want to see *my* energy usage.”
 - Not average customer usage.
- “The interactive web portal is helpful.”
 - But not more than once or twice a year.

AGENDA

- Program Overview
- Study Objectives
- Study Approach/Method
- Findings
- Program Impact
- Questions



Image Source: <http://www.hep.umn.edu/nova/Jul2014/agenda.html>

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Energy Check Pilot Program

- Energy comparison reports and interactive web portal for business customers



Program Purpose

- To reduce energy consumption by encouraging behavioral changes and promoting energy efficient upgrades opportunities



STUDY OBJECTIVES



Image Source: <http://www.inspirerendleven.nl/lezersblog-mindful-afvallen-week-8-investering-in-levensgeluk/>

- Provide early feedback on program long before results from RCT
- Assess how customers respond to the various report modules
- Identify improvements to the Energy Check portal
- Assess customers' interest in energy benchmarking data
- Help Consumers Energy understand whether to expand energy reports into a second year

METHOD

Usability studies completed with **18** commercial customers remotely using *GoToMeeting* software.

Why this approach?

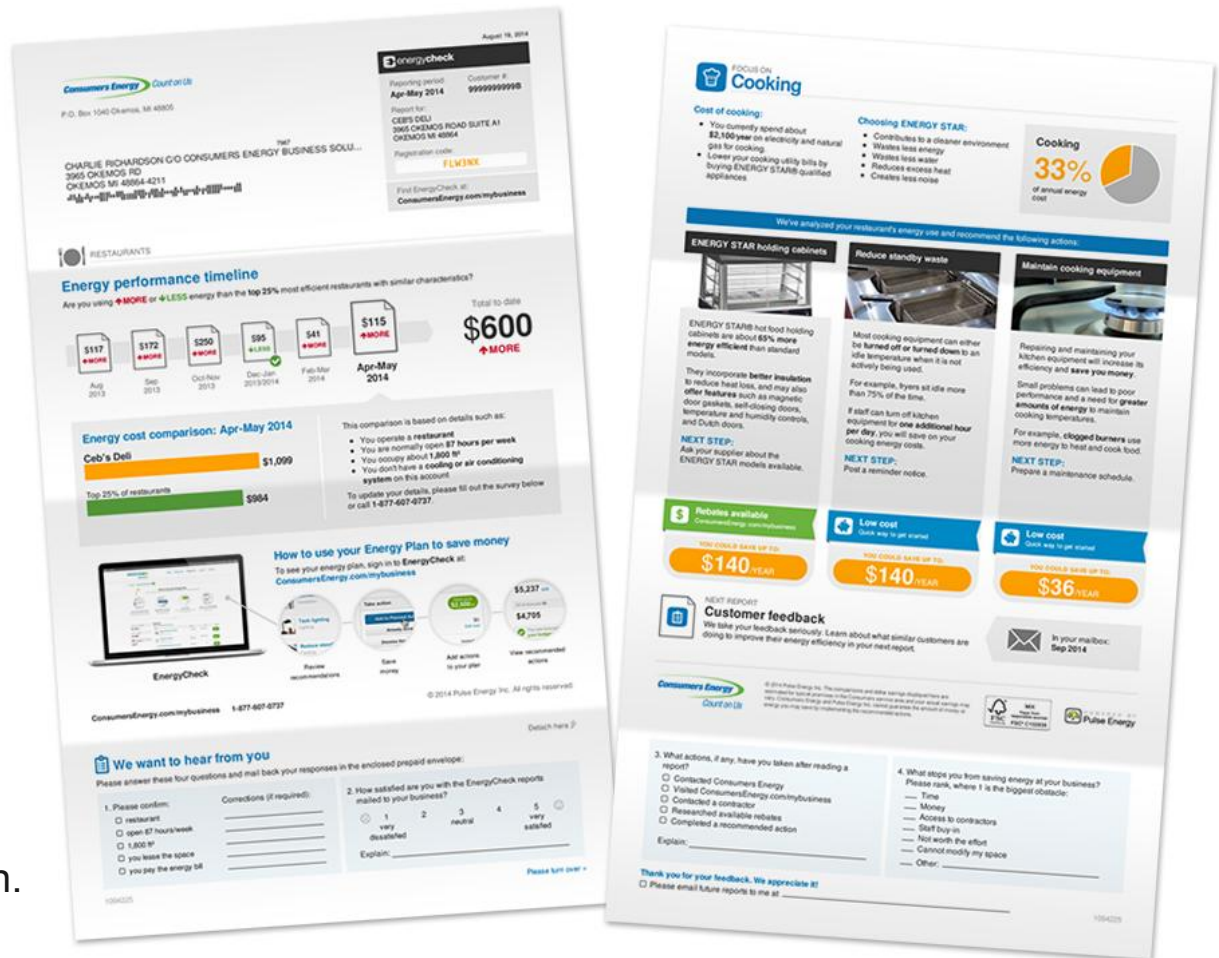
- To provide early feedback on aspects of the energy reports that Consumers Energy could adjust.
- To minimize the potential impact to the larger randomized control trial.
- To understand **how** energy reports influence commercial customer behavioral change.



- Sessions lasted 30-45 minutes
- Audio and on-screen recording

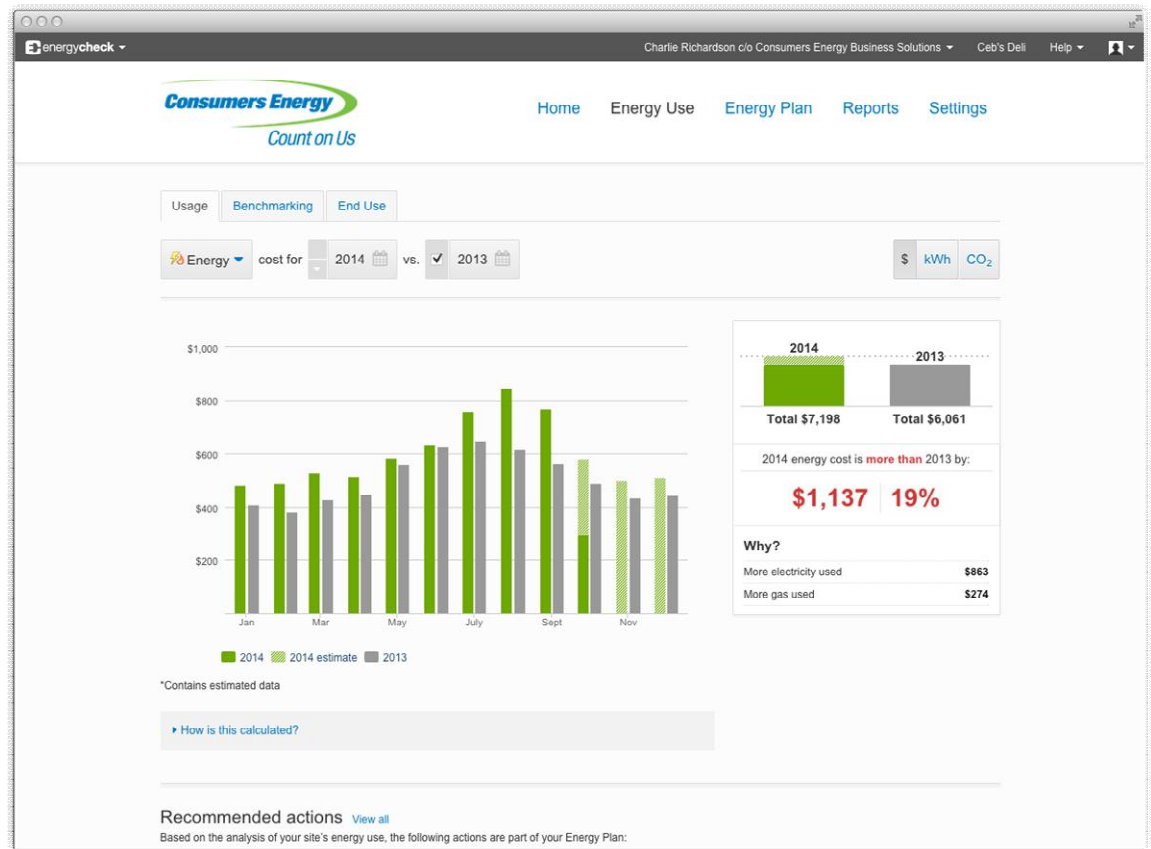
ENERGY REPORT FINDINGS

1. Customers are first drawn to graphical images and bold energy comparisons data.
2. The accuracy of comparison group and detailed building factors greatly impacts perception of report usefulness.
3. Customers had a strong preference for historical energy comparison figures that made it possible to quickly track changes in energy usage.
4. Few customers are willing to read in-depth sections, despite the useful information.



WEB PORTAL FINDINGS

1. Customers are first drawn to graphical images and bold energy comparisons data.
2. Inaccuracies in data are distractions and can lead to reliability concerns elsewhere.
3. Interactive functions are highly valued because they allow for personalization.
4. Guide the user when there is additional key information available or they will miss it.



IMPACTS ON PROGRAM

Research findings highlighted the need to provide **easy** and **convenient** methods for customers to verify the business information.

Sample of a tear-off business reply from one energy report:

Who are you being compared to?

Your electricity and natural gas use is compared to **other restaurants in Michigan**.



The comparison is adjusted to match the following details about your business:

- Occupies 1,800 ft²
- Open 87 hours/week
- Has no cooling/air conditioning system on this account
- Uses natural gas heating

Are we comparing your business correctly?

Tell us about your business:

1-877-607-0737

ConsumersEnergy.com/mybusiness

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Questions?