User Research: Maximizing Human Behavior to Increase Program Effectiveness

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Agenda

• What is User Research?
• What are the Benefits?
• When is it Appropriate?
• Case Studies

User Research

A set of techniques and methodologies implemented to understand, create, or improve a person’s interaction with a program, product, or service.
Behavioral

WHAT PEOPLE DO

WHY?, SO WHAT?, HOW TO ADAPT?

Attitudinal

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

WHEN?, HOW MANY?, HOW MUCH?

Qualitative

Quantitative

Adapted from Christian Rohrer, 2014
Web and Tool Usability Studies

A research method that evaluates a user interface design by testing it on real users

**Example Research Questions:**
- How do current and prospective customers use the website to find information about program offerings?
- What barriers do customers encounter when using the tool provided?
- Do customer’s understand informational graphics?

**Case Study**
- Large Midwestern Utility
- Key Question: How do contractors use the direct install online application tool and where do they experience challenges?
Ethnographic Field Studies

A type of research that involves studying groups or individuals in their natural environment, where they would most likely encounter the product or service in question.

**Example Research Questions:**
- How do customers use a product in their home?
- How do customer’s install a product?
- What features of a product drive increased customer satisfaction?

**Case Study**
- Midsize Northeastern Utility
- Key Question: How do new ductless mini-split heat pump owners use their heat pump in conjunction with other heating sources in their home?
Diary Studies

A type of research that captures the day-to-day experience relevant to the purpose of the study

Example Research Questions:
- How do customers use your product? Experience your program?
- How do customer perceptions change over time?
- What are the pain points for customers currently participating in your program or using your product or service?

Case Study
- Large Midwestern Utility
- Key Question: Are incentivized LEDs and specialty CFLs meeting customer expectations?
Choice Modeling Studies

A type of research that models the decision-making process of an individual or segment in a particular context.

**Example Research Questions:**

- What factors drive a customer to participate in a program or purchase a product or service?
- What set of product attributes will maximize product sales or program participation?

**Case Study**

- Large Western Utility
- Key Question: What factors drive HVAC Quality Installation and Quality Maintenance customer purchase decisions?
Questions?

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