

Abstract #: 301

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Energy efficiency is a “low involvement” category—that is, a category that sells an invisible product that seldom rises to the top of consumers’ minds. Because of this, energy efficiency marketers and program designers have defaulted to a standardized approach to behavior change: offering short-term financial incentives to change a single behavior. Not surprisingly, these “carrot-and-stick” approaches are viewed by consumers as little more than bargain shopping opportunities, which catalyze short-term spikes in program participation without achieving true behavior change. But is there a better way? In this presentation, Sue Kochan, CEO of Brand Cool Marketing, explores the question of energy-related behavior change from a perspective that she argues is desperately lacking in the category: a human one. What are the intrinsic motivators beyond financial gain that drive people to change their behavior? How do subconscious feelings influence the decision-making process? How do social, societal, and environmental factors figure into the energy equation? And how can we use the answers to these questions to inform more meaningful, holistic, and values-based approaches to energy efficiency marketing and program design? In this session, participants will learn:

- Insights from Brand Cool’s series of in-depth-interviews with NYSERDA program participants and partner contractors
- Psychosocial shortcomings of incentive-based approaches
- The current state of the consumer relationship with energy, and how we can make it more meaningful
- Why face-to-face, human interactions are critical to conversions
- How control, mastery, and autonomy will change the energy category