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Abstract Title: Socio-Demographics & Sustainability Value Propositions in DSM Programs

Abstract Text:

DSM programs provide utilities with established pathways to engage customers through a variety of value propositions to reduce costs and positively contribute to environmental sustainability. As DSM programs mature, existing measures and new offers must be tailored to specific socio-economic groups with historically low participation and/or barriers to program delivery. Understanding how these different socio-demographic groups perceive energy efficiency is critical to unlocking future energy savings and influencing behavior. This understanding must be deployed to engage customers beyond conventional channels, requiring a nuanced view of sustainability value propositions. A more diverse suite of customer engagement strategies can help DSM programs effectively appeal to the needs of different groups, capturing deeper energy savings and lasting behavioral changes. This presentation outlines a new socio-demographic approach to DSM program development and implementation. The approach relies upon multiple data sources and insights from cultural sustainability research to produce detailed views of unique subgroups within a specific service territory or region. These data sources include: state-specific energy usage trends and fuel mixes; individual energy consumption profiles and program participation history; building and/or housing type and ownership; cultural and lifestyle segmentation; and geo-demographic location data. Painting a broader socio-demographic picture can help DSM programs anticipate and adapt to diverse and changing markets and tap into relevant behavioral drivers. In addition to delivering cost-effective energy savings, effective communication of sustainability value propositions through a socio-demographic lens can enhance the existing suite of customer engagement strategies. This will ensure that DSM programs remain successful and relevant.