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**Title:** Leveraging the Brand: Partnering with ENERGY STAR Increases Customer Satisfaction

**Abstract:** The Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR label is the world's leading brand for energy efficiency. Since its launch in 1992, more than 5 billion ENERGY STAR certified products have been purchased by consumers, and there are more than 4,500 ENERGY STAR partners (e.g., retailers, manufacturers, utilities). Previous research has shown that 90 percent of American households recognize the ENERGY STAR Label and many report the label as influential in their purchasing decision. While the value of the ENERGY STAR program for consumer demand for energy-efficient products is clear, how might this translate into customer satisfaction with services or products? For energy utilities, deregulation has resulted in increased competition in the energy sector, and utilities are paying increasingly more attention to customer satisfaction. This presentation summarizes the results from a series of analyses testing the impact for a utility of partnering with ENERGY STAR. Nationally, there are 3,269 utilities, and to date 1,116 of these have joined the ENERGY STAR program as partners. Analyses focus on customer satisfaction measured using data from JD Power. Since 1998, JD Power has measured customer satisfaction among utilities in the United States on six factors: power quality and reliability, price, billing and payment, corporate citizenship, communications, and customer service. The presentation reports change in customer satisfaction over a 10-year period, compares partner utilities with non partner, and explores the degree to which partner utilities engage with ENERGY STAR. Because some utilities became new partners during this period, it's possible to examine both the standing differences in customer satisfaction between partners and non-partners, as well as the change over time in customer satisfaction for utilities subsequent to becoming a partner. Results show that overall, customer satisfaction with utility services has increased over the 10-year period, but partners increased more than non-partners. The effect was especially strong for new partner utilities. Additional analyses examine the role of partner engagement, the degree to which utility partner leveraged the ENERGY STAR brand in their website and communications, and the impact of winning "ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year" designation by EPA. Taken together, the results speak to the national impact of the ENERGY STAR program, and the value to utilities of partnering with ENERGY STAR.