



Digital Innovations in Residential Energy Optimization

Overview

Utilities face an ongoing challenge in achieving residential customer satisfaction, particularly in promoting energy-efficient products and addressing the needs of a wide range of customers.

Traditional methods can be costly and may not align with customer demand. Program planners and design teams often debate the best approach to deliver the right products to customers when they need them most. Rising labor costs, increasing utility performance benchmarks, and changing customer engagement patterns have limited the effectiveness of direct installation programs on residential program portfolios.

Once the products are installed, program administrators face the question: How can we efficiently continue serving customers while ensuring they benefit from the intended advantages of these products and equipment?

Opportunity

Implementing digital tools such as self-service portals and automated customer support systems significantly improves the overall customer experience, enabling utilities to better serve their customers.

Utility platforms, including websites and mobile apps, should prioritize ease of use and intuitive design. By requiring customers to create an account and log in, we encourage engagement, streamline assessment progress, and offer personalized product recommendations through standalone promotions or offers.

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Program offerings:

Lighting, showerheads, faucet aerators, pipe insulation, thermostats, door sweep, advanced power strips and smart plugs.

Conversion rate: 44%

Accounts created: 1,529

Orders placed: 1,058

Number of projects: Increased by 69%

Average project costs: Decreased by 27%

Contact

Find out how RI can transform your business:
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Opportunity (Cont'd.)

To encourage customer participation, we focused on:

- **Convenience:** Enabling instant sign-up, facilitating quick completion of self-assessments (usually a few minutes), and ensuring timely product delivery (typically within two weeks).
- **Personalization:** Providing tailored recommendations based on each customer's specific needs.
- **Customer control:** Empowering customers to easily select desired products from various recommended options.
- **User experience:** The user-friendly, self-directed format empowers customers and fosters a positive program experience.

By leveraging these strategies, utilities can enhance customer satisfaction and effectively meet the needs of customers.

Solution

Our Illinois Program Delivery and E-Commerce teams collaborated on an innovative new approach to enhance product distribution and adoption, while also improving the customer experience, ISRs¹, and program evaluation. This approach involves the development of a platform that diagnoses and personalizes the selection of products and equipment to enhance home efficiency and comfort, utilizing actual customer input and insights about their homes.

The self-assessment platform, a unique blend of virtual home energy assessment and e-commerce, enables customers to purchase products immediately rather than searching for them later or potentially forgetting about them altogether. Designed with a mobile-first approach to cater to smartphone users, the platform ensures accessibility, considering that over 60% of orders and transactions occur via mobile on our e-commerce platforms.

- Customers provide information about their homes through four dedicated modules: heating and cooling, water, lighting and electricity, and weatherization and building shell.
- Conditional logic is applied to recommend water-saving devices, lighting solutions, advanced power strips, smart plugs, weatherization items, and other relevant products based on the customer's answers.

Solution (Cont'd.)

- Customers can opt in to receive free or discounted recommended products and equipment based on their responses. Additionally, they have the flexibility to purchase items not fully covered by the program incentives.
- Customers can save their responses and return as needed to complete their assessment, reducing the impact of assessment fatigue and ensuring a smooth interactive experience.

This innovative platform revolutionizes the way customers engage with energy efficiency programs, offering a seamless and personalized journey while driving efficiency and satisfaction.

Results

Our proactive problem-solving approach exemplifies a fraction of our team's commitment and capabilities in identifying and resolving long-standing program challenges.

The platform received a favorable initial response, with over 84% of customers opting to participate during the first month. More than a third of these participants went on to place orders, yielding an impressive site conversion rate of 44%, significantly surpassing the standard e-commerce conversion rate of 2-3%. Additionally, customers spent an average of over five minutes on the site, engaging in assessments and placing orders for qualified measures.

ABOUT RESOURCE INNOVATIONS

Resource Innovations (RI) is an energy transformation firm. Women-led, purpose built, and focused on impact, we're constantly expanding our portfolio of solutions to guide utilities through increasingly complex, connected challenges. For communities across North America, we're leading the charge to power change.

