

Understanding Customers' Needs – Is It Time for Surveys?



Introduction – Purpose of Surveys

The primary reason for conducting surveys is to collect information about your electric cooperative members. However, what information should you collect and how do you effectively use it after you have collected it?

Key Issues for Surveys

In today's changing energy environment, customers are receiving information from numerous sources that can impact their energy usage, energy habits and energy costs. Issues that affect customers' energy activities include:

- Affordability
- Reliability
- New electronics (computers, flat screen TVs, digital devices, etc.)
- More timely information about customer energy usage (smart metering, smart grid, etc.)
- Customer renewable distributed generation options – solar and wind
- Climate change impacts (carbon footprints and going green)
- How to manage costs with energy efficiency alternatives
- How to take advantage of government financial incentives and utility rebates/programs
- Others

***DO YOU KNOW
HOW YOUR
CUSTOMERS MAY
BE IMPACTED BY
EMERGING
ENERGY TRENDS?***

As electric co-ops work to satisfy their members' energy needs, do you understand how your customers may be impacted by these and other emerging trends? Is it time to survey your members or survey them again? Is it time to survey a segment of your members? Perhaps some residential customer segments will act differently than others. Your small commercial customers will likely have different needs than your large commercial/industrial members. Now may be the time to assess/reassess demographics, energy-using habits, potential changes in energy usage, and help members with new focused energy programs/services to meet their emerging needs.

Essential Parts of the Solution - Surveys

Surveys can be an excellent tool to address these issues and concerns. With electric co-ops, member responses to mail surveys are typically high in the 30-50% range. With today's computer technologies, surveys can also be easily conducted over the Internet on the electric utility's own website so that customers can use their own computer expertise.



The results of surveys can provide timely input as electric co-ops develop/implement effective energy efficiency programs, new rates, and possibly renewable resource alternatives to provide to their members. The surveys can also provide information on energy topics beneficial to electric cooperatives as they work with their state and federal government representatives in forming energy policies as well as enhance member public relations.

EnerVision's Experience/Expertise with Surveys

EnerVision has experience developing and implementing numerous surveys to help our electric cooperative clients. Surveys have been conducted to obtain information about residential customers, small commercial customers, and large commercial/industrial customers as well. Surveys have been performed that assist with system planning, load forecasting, meeting RUS requirements, developing energy efficiency programs, and improving customer relations. Survey projects have been completed for both distribution cooperatives as well as G&Ts.

***ENERVISION HAS
EXTENSIVE
EXPERIENCE IN
RESIDENTIAL AND
COMMERCIAL /
INDUSTRIAL
SURVEYS***

Recently, the results of EnerVision survey activities have been used to effectively evaluate energy efficiency alternatives and develop meaningful energy efficiency programs to address specific customer segment needs for each individual cooperative client. Please note that surveys can also be used to evaluate the results of energy efficiency program implementation efforts as key measurement and verification (M&V) initiatives.

Thus, EnerVision can assist your cooperative with developing and implementing surveys for your members as well as use the results to help your cooperative develop and implement meaningful energy innovation programs (energy efficiency, demand response, dynamic pricing, etc) to meet your members' unique needs. EnerVision survey results can also be used as key inputs with two new comprehensive EnerVision services – the Energy Efficiency Evaluation Tool and Total Energy Planning – recently developed for our clients.

For questions or more information regarding this or other EnerVision services, please contact Nelson Hawk at 1-888-999-8840 or e-mail him at nelson.hawk@enervision-inc.com.