



**2023 CONSUMER SYMPOSIUM**

**FEB 6, 2023, SAN DIEGO**

# **EMPOWERING CONSUMERS THROUGH THE ENERGY TRANSITION**

**#SECC2023**

Co-located with *DISTRIBUTECH International*

# More than Just an Energy Transition

**#SECC2023**



# Not Just an Energy Transition



**SMART  
ENERGY**  
CONSUMER  
COLLABORATIVE



# Amid flux, utilities are the hub of the clean energy transition

salesforce



## New Charters

Building decarbonization.  
EV charging infrastructure.  
ESG advisory services.  
Equity throughout.



## New Partners

Regulators, housing authorities,  
community co-ops, contractors,  
property managers, community  
groups, small businesses...

*And in NYC, maybe even battery-  
powered falafel trucks*



## New Sexy Things

Heat pumps.  
Batteries.  
Clean lithium extraction from  
geothermal brine.

<https://www.canarymedia.com/articles/heat-pumps/friday-social-check-out-these-heat-pumps-that-look-like-george-clooney>



“ Start where you are,  
use what you have,  
do what you can.”

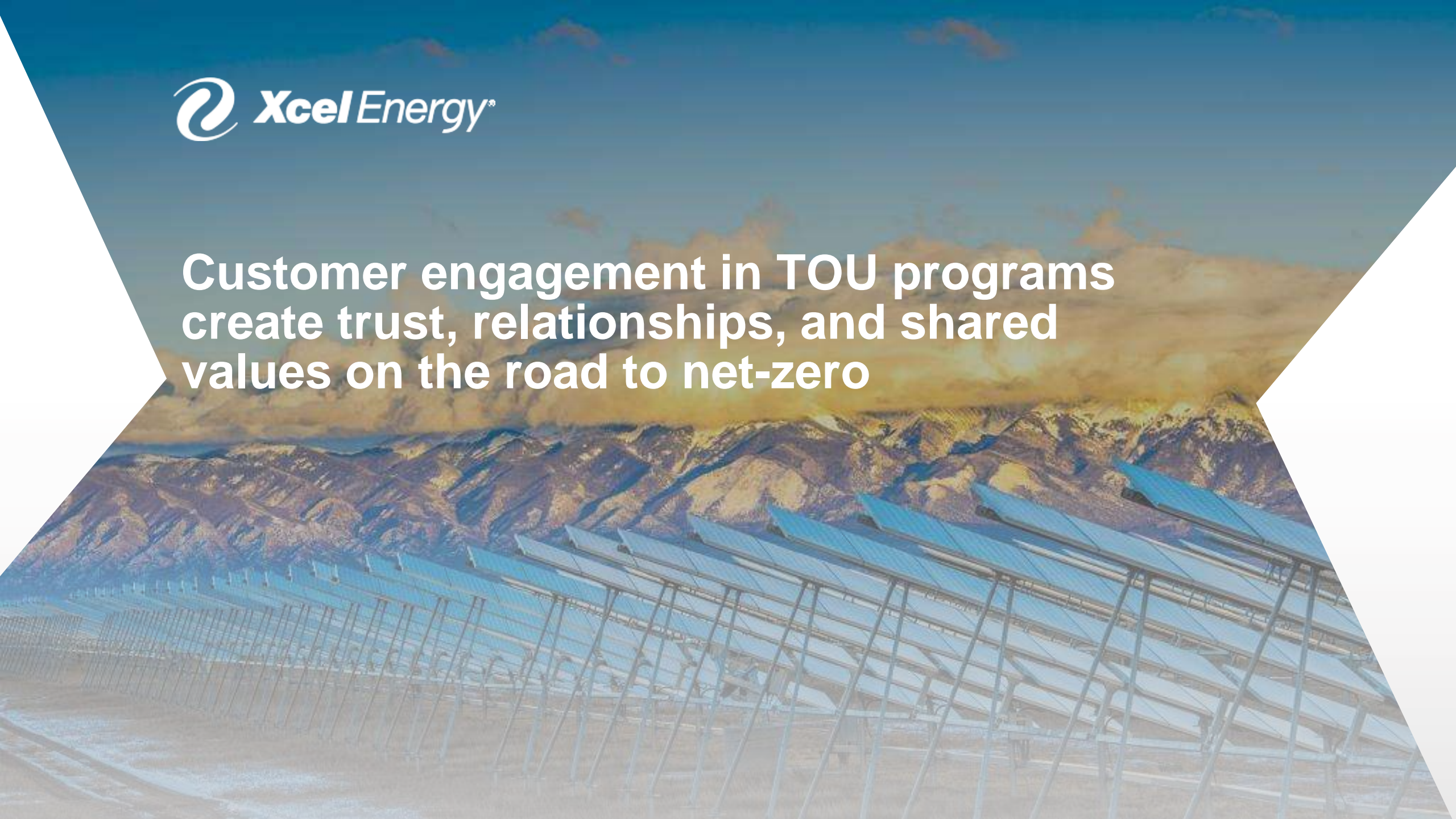
-Arthur Ashe

*How are utilities successfully adapting to change?  
By bringing customers along the journey with them.*





Customer engagement in TOU programs  
create trust, relationships, and shared  
values on the road to net-zero





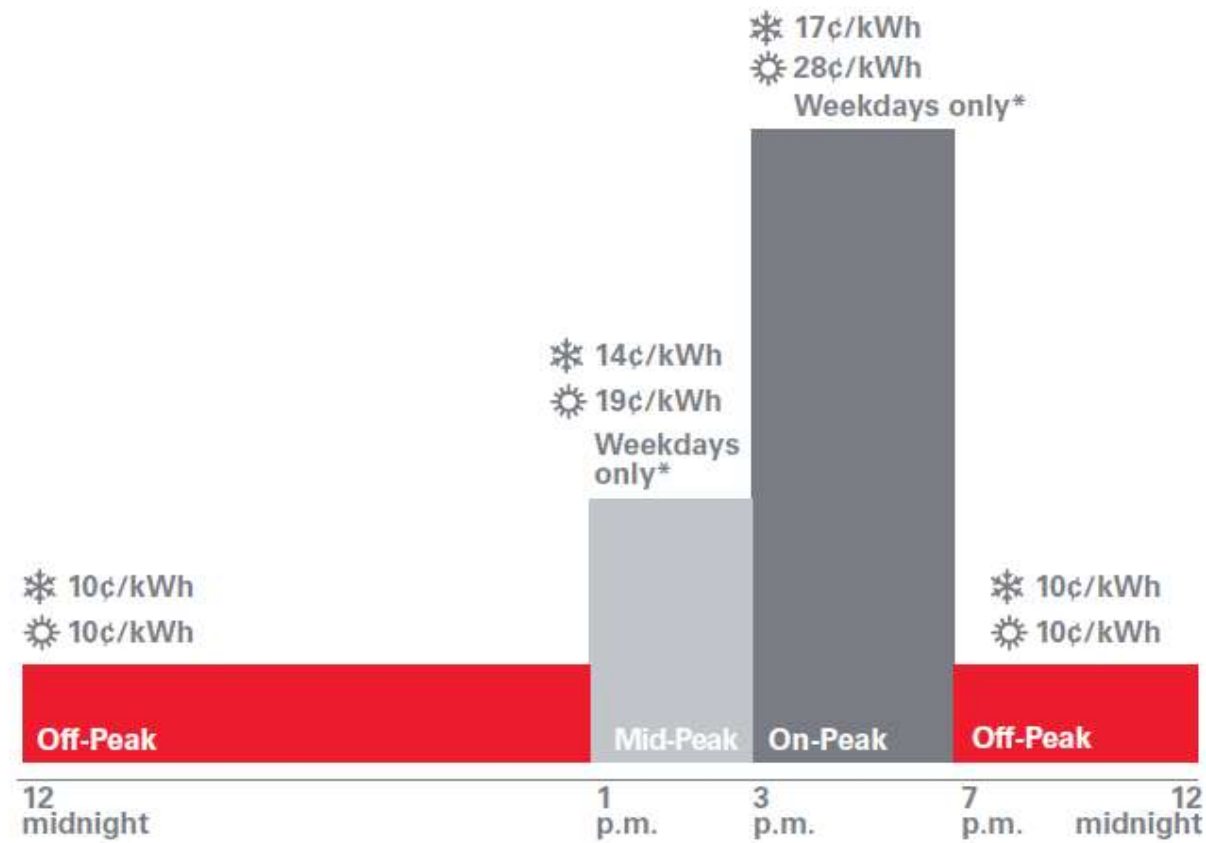
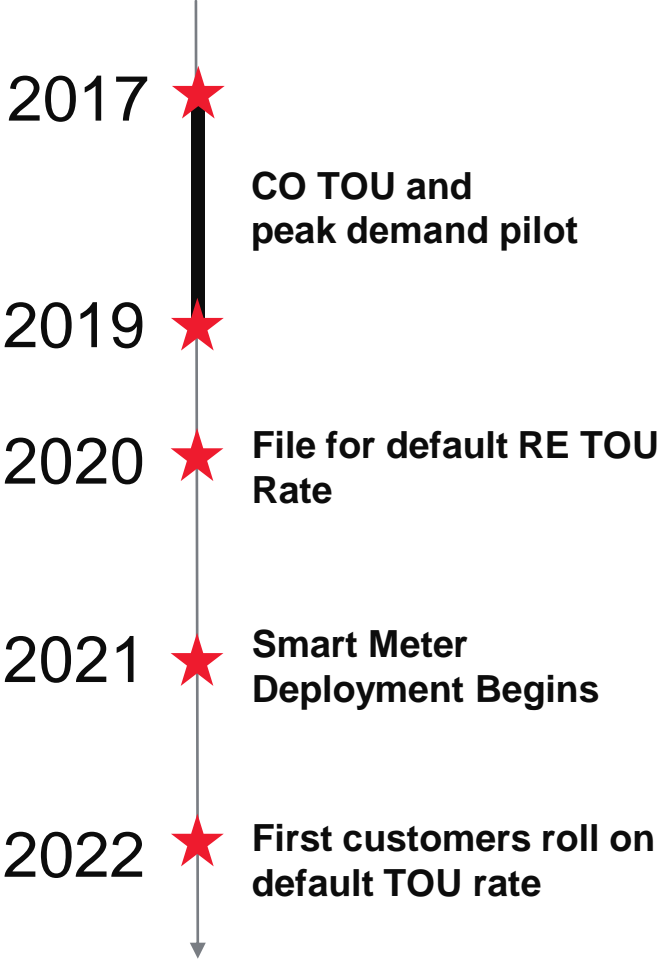
# **BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE RATE EXPERIENCE**

**A Deep Dive into Colorado Residential Time of Use Customer Experience**

February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023



# TOU History



\*On-Peak and Mid-Peak hours only apply on weekdays

❄ Winter electricity prices are in effect from October through May.  
☀ Summer electricity prices are in effect from June through September.



# Overall Summary

A comprehensive, coordinated, multi-channel customer experience effort yields high awareness, engagement, and customer understanding.

## Customer Impacts

- Based on early data, on average, most customers do not experience large bill changes
- Customers are not making major changes to their energy use habits, but will change activities that do not impact comfort and convenience

## Customer Perception

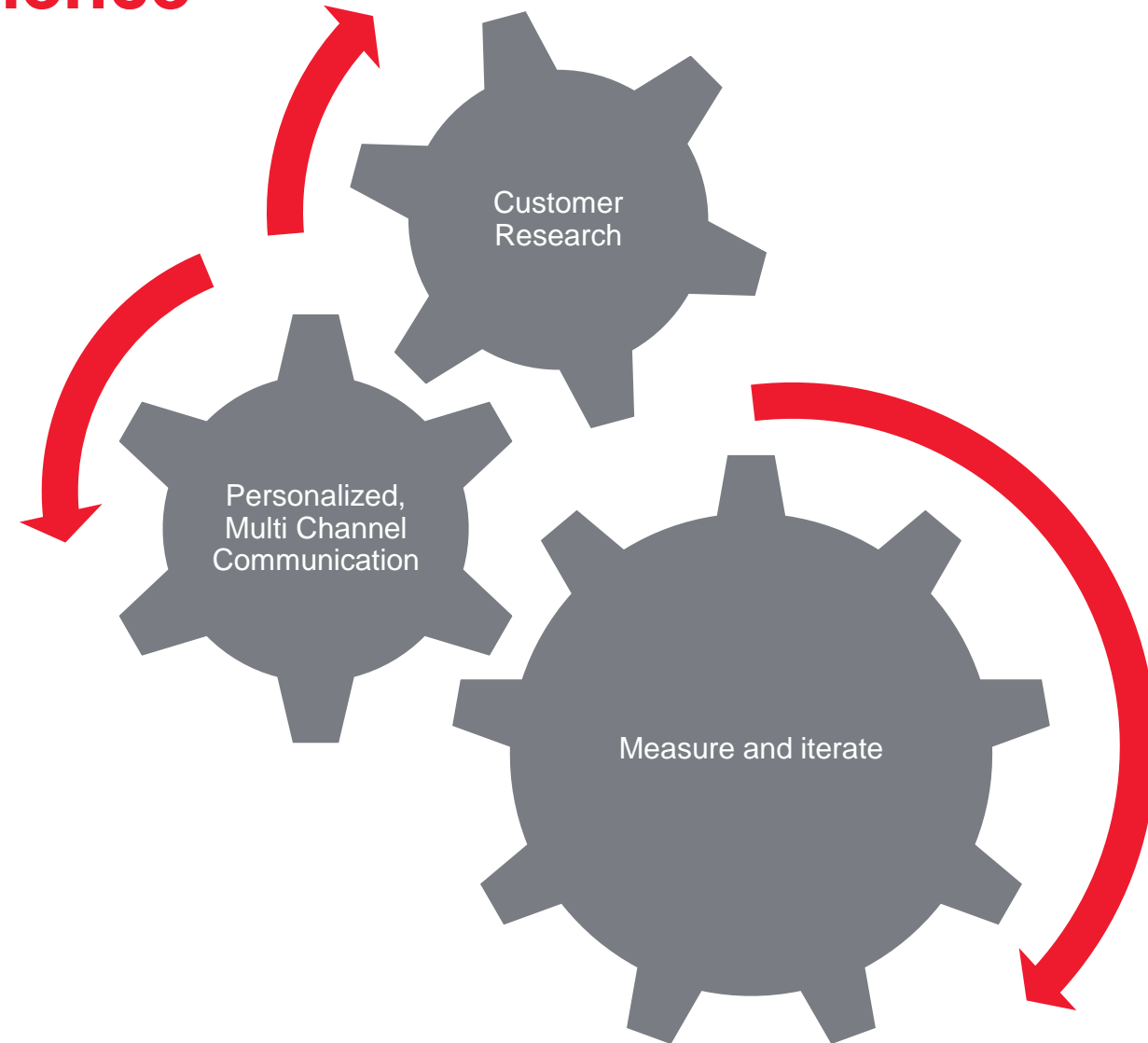
- Customers are **highly aware of TOU**
- Overall opinion of Xcel Energy communications is high
- Customers do not view TOU as a savings opportunity, but rather a defense against rising costs

## Experience Performance

- A multi channel experience is an effective way to deliver complex messaging for concepts such as TOU
- Direct mail, out of home billboards, and paid media yielded large numbers of impressions and contributes to high customer awareness.

# How to Build a Customer Experience

- Qualitative and quantitative approach to identify perception, pain points, barriers to behavior change, and communication preferences
- Leverage customer data and voice of customer research to create a multi channel approach with personalized messages
- Comprehensive measurement plan that included
  - Surveys
  - Focus groups
  - Load/Bill Impact Analysis

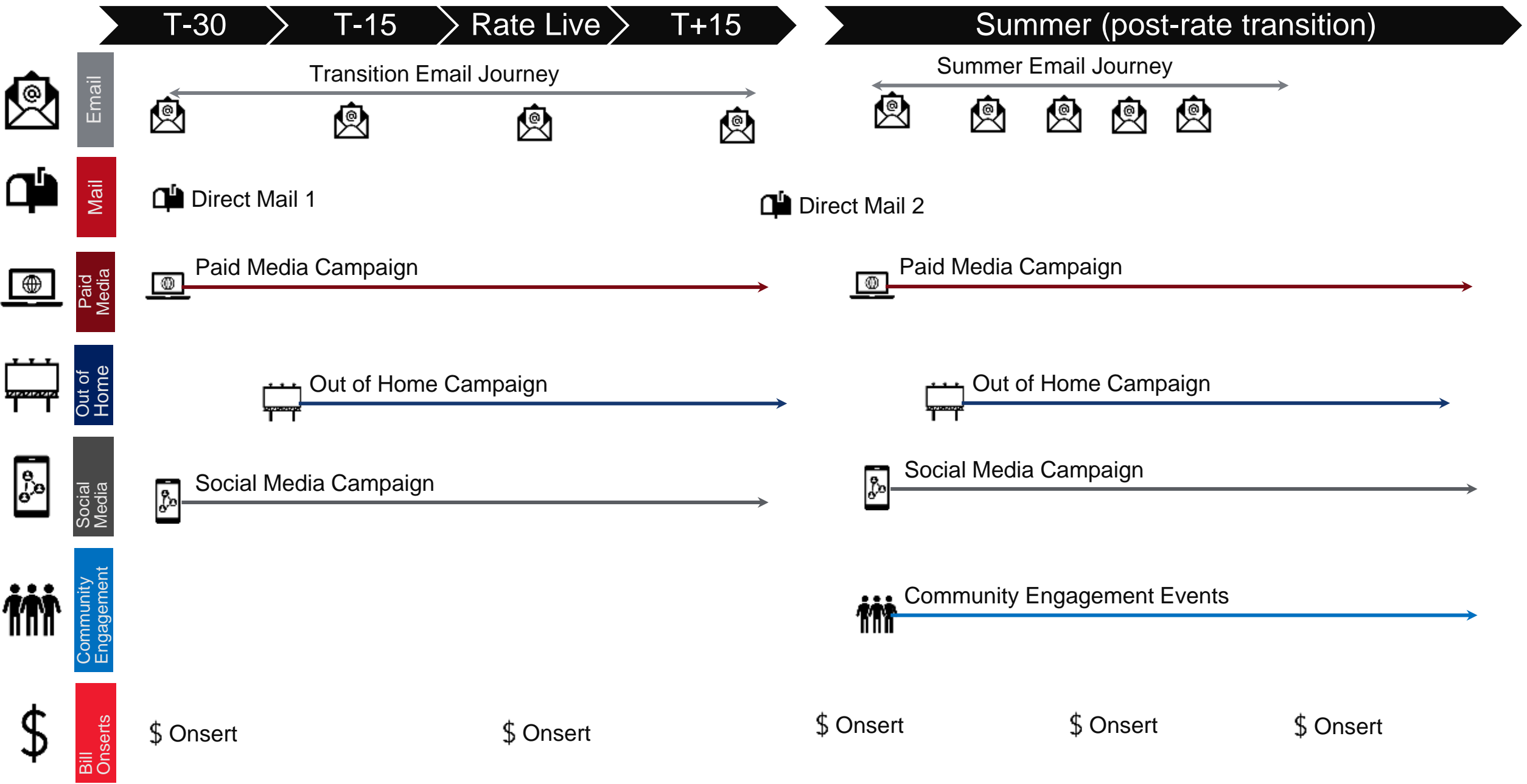


# MULTI- CHANNEL APPROACH





# RE-TOU Experience



# Spanish Language Engagement

**Robust communications strategy helped build awareness in Latinx communities.**



Spanish language content with QR code to Spanish video included on mailers



Paid media/Rich media ads were translated into Spanish



Spanish billboards were placed in predominately Latinx neighborhoods



Social media campaigns included Spanish language posts



Attended/hosted community events featuring Spanish speaking Xcel Energy personnel

# MEASURING THE EXPERIENCE

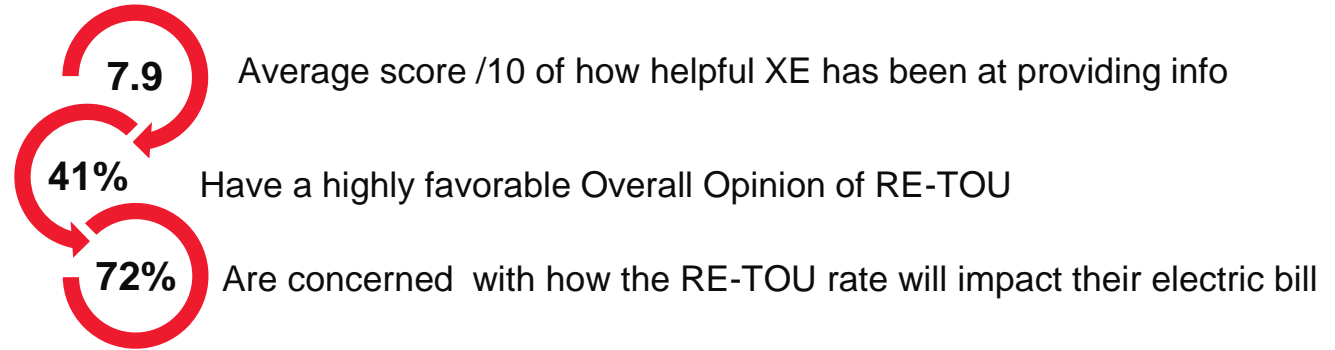




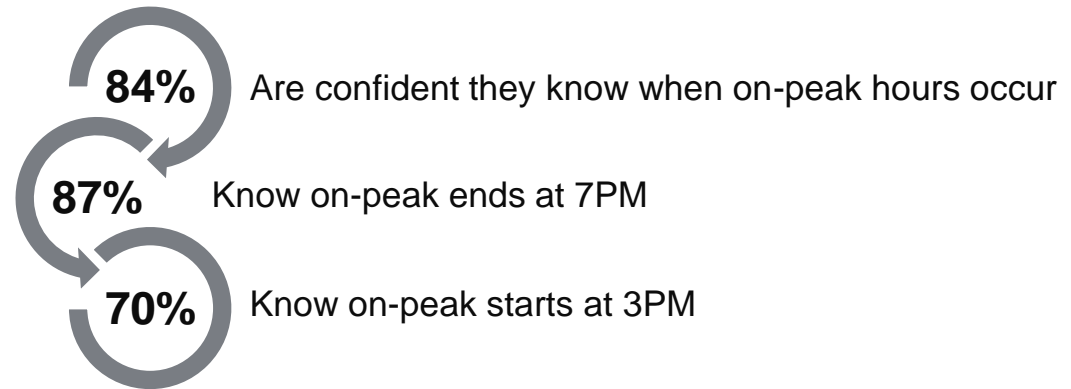
# Customer Survey Results

- Customers are aware of RE-TOU and time periods
- Customers are highly concerned with how RE-TOU will affect their bill
- While customers say they understand how changing energy use will affect their bill, they do not actually feel empowered to save money

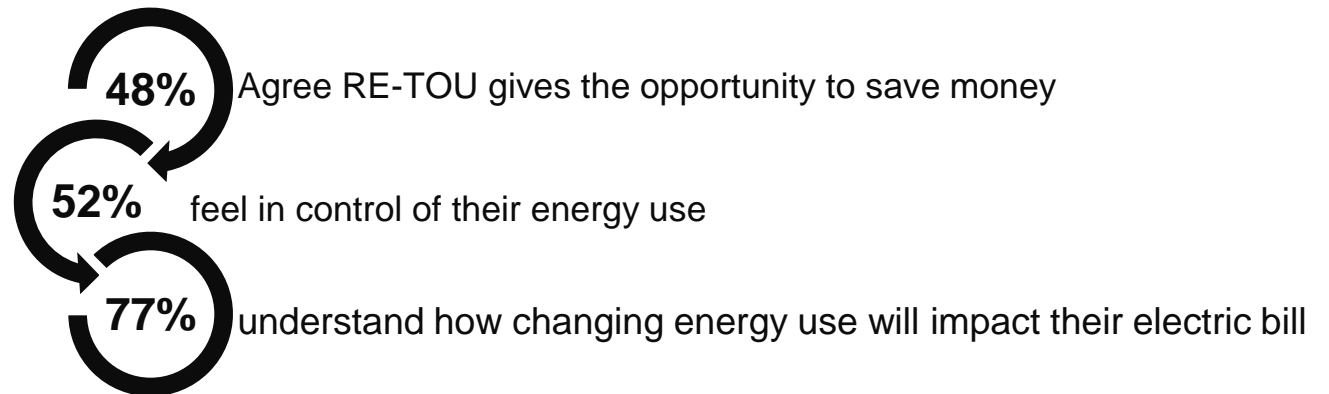
## OPINION



## KNOWLEDGE






## EMPOWER



# Customer Interviews

Interview participants have a general understanding of the Residential Time of Use rate and its implications, but some details are less clear.

	<b>What is Understood</b>	 <b>What is less Understood</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Even those with limited familiarity recognize that Residential Time of Use entails a <b>variable rate</b> that is higher at peak times than at off-peak times</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beyond a fundamental recognition of the variable rate, there is some <b>confusion</b> around:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Exact times of day at which the rate varies</li><li>- Mid-peak is often not acknowledged</li><li>- Whether gas use is included on the rate</li></ul></li></ul>	
	<b>Perceived Rationale</b>		
	<p><i>Customers' understanding of the rationale behind RE-TOU drives their acceptance of, and engagement with, the new rate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The most common perception – by far – is that the rate structure is aimed at <b>reducing daily strain</b> on the power grid, which benefits Xcel by enabling more efficient output, and benefits consumers by avoiding outages</li><li>• Some see it as a way that Xcel is seeking to <b>mitigate general rate increases</b>; i.e. those optimizing RE-TOU may not see their bills go up as much as non-participants would</li><li>• A cynical minority feel that it's simply a means of generating more <b>revenue</b> for Xcel</li><li>• Few connect the new rate with long-term shifts away from traditional energy sources and toward <b>renewable</b> ones</li></ul>		

# Key Takeaways



## Knowledge

- Customers are **highly aware of RE-TOU rates** and have strong knowledge of the peak period.
- Customers are unsure if RE-TOU applies to gas usage as well.



## Opinion

- Opinions of RE-TOU are polarizing, with some **customers viewing it a tool to fight increasing bills**, and others viewing it as a way for Xcel Energy to increase revenue.
- Customers rate Xcel Energy communications and helpfulness positively.



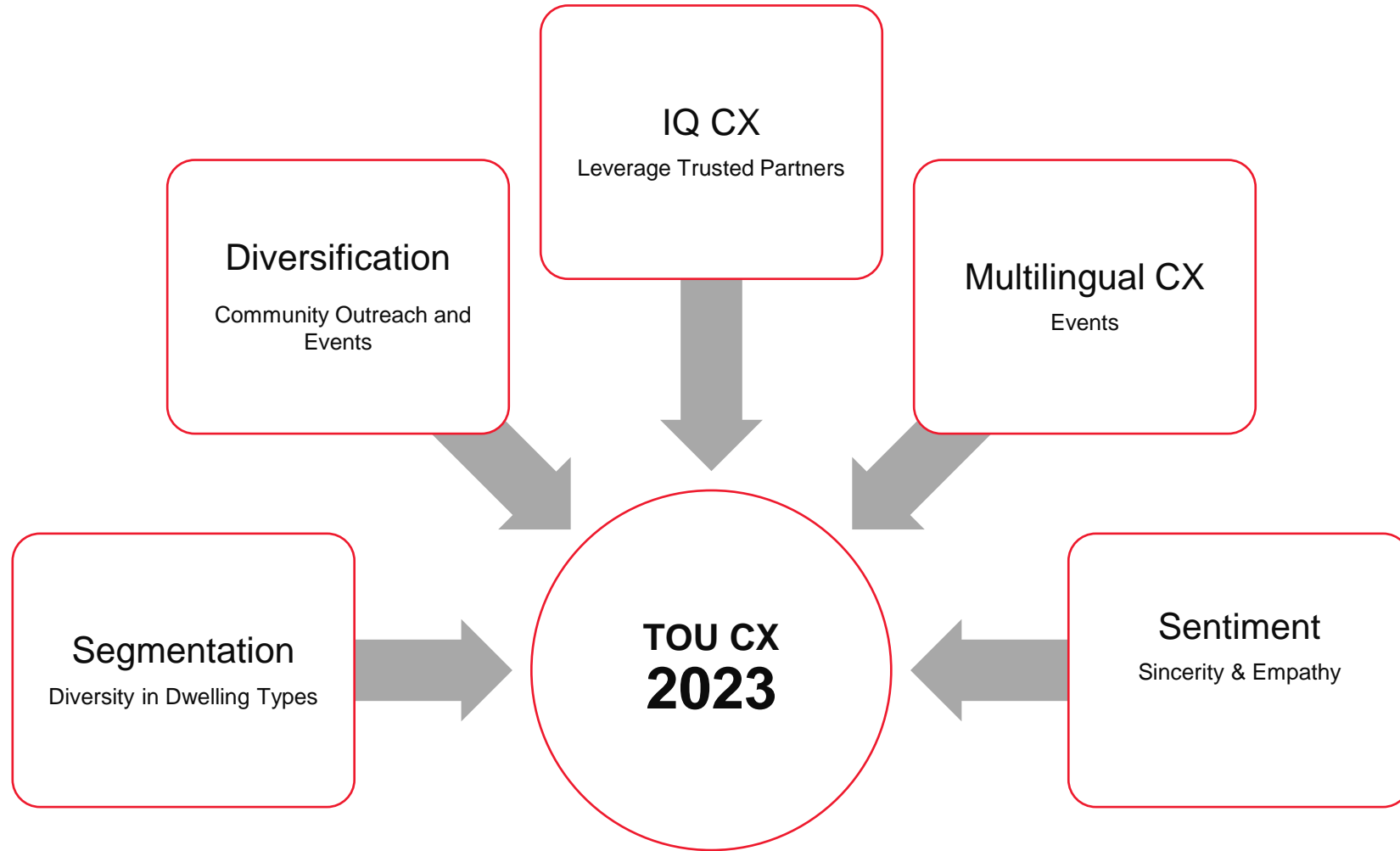
## Empowerment

- Customers are less likely to make behavioral changes that affect comfort
- Customers **do not understand why their bills are increasing**, but do not attribute it to RE-TOU. There is little sense that RE-TOU is a “savings” opportunity since customers do not feel that they are saving money compared to pre-RE-TOU bills.



**ITERATE**

# Iterate: Expanding the Model



# Keep in touch



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