2024 MEMBERS MEETING & Fall Workshop

HOSTED BY ICF

OCTOBER 16-17
RESTON, VIRGINIA

SMART ENERGY
CONSUMER COLLABORATIVE

#SECCMM24

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GOLD

gridx®

Modern Energy Messaging

Holly Baird
Director of Accounts
& Client Delivery
Milepost
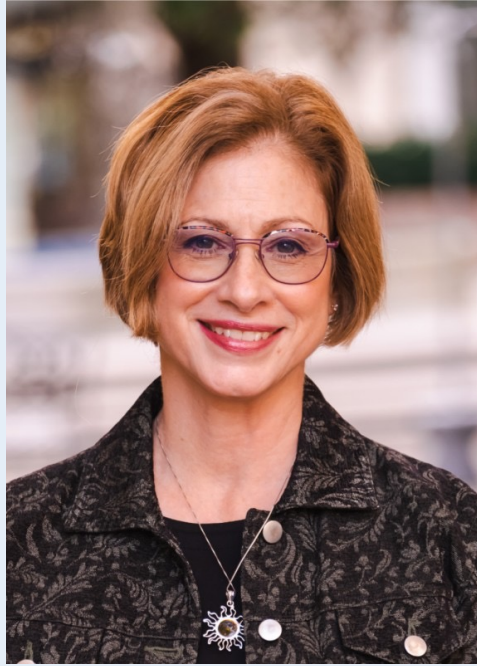
Mary Ann Cristiano
Senior Director,
Consumer Marketing
Touchstone Energy

Patrice SoSoo
Director of Brand
Marketing and Creative
PSEG

Matt Silverman
Senior Partner,
Brand Strategy
ICF

Ana Bogdanova
Senior Product Manager
Virtual Peaker

Modern Energy Messaging:
Engaging Stakeholders and Consumers

Holly Baird, Director of Accounts

Public opinion is a reliability issue.

Fun Fact:

In a distributed, interconnected, and integrated grid, there will be even *more* people in your span of care.

How might we move the people in your ecosystem from liabilities to assets?

milepost

Remember that guy that called me an ungineer?

Look for your stories

Stories aren't just Superheroes and "Once Upon a Time" stuff.

In business, stories hide in plain sight

- Case studies
- Vision casting
- Cautionary tales about risk or status quo
- Visualizations

- Comparisons
- Urgency builders
- Change management
- Alter ego of sales (non-sales sales)

Use stories to reset the dimmer switch of attention

I've come to think of attention as being like a dimmer switch… Story resets the dimmer switch of attention… **two minutes of story will "buy you" up to nine minutes of attention** for your data/theoretical/ didactic/telling information.

David Hutchens, *Story Dash*

Before today, how many of you have intentionally used storytelling in your work?

milepost

Evolve from an *explorer* of data to an *explainer* of data.

Data does not tell a story...
it informs it.

Accuracy is contingent on
the audience.

Touchstone Energy Was Created to Amplify the Power of Human Connections & the Cooperative Business Model

28 founding members

- Founded in 1998.
- 28 founding members funded and created a unified voice for co-ops to be the gold standard in the marketplace.
- Now, over 46 states and nearly 700 members
- 14 board of directors, 21 Regional Members and 60 advisory committee seats.
- Members serve 30 million member-owners

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

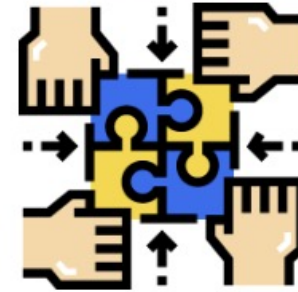# 7 Cooperative Principles

1. Open and Voluntary Membership

2. Democratic Member Control

3. Members' Economic Participation

4. Autonomy and Independence

5. Education, Training, and Information

6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives

7. Concern for Community

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Advertising and Engagement Model

Member cooperative benefits:

Increased value by being aligned with a national trusted brand providing information for member-consumers to increase energy efficiency and use of new technologies.

Network-wide digital communications effort focused on the cooperative difference reinforces the value of being a member and having a voice in your electric utility.

Customer service training for cooperative employees ties to high member satisfaction with an average score of 85 in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®)
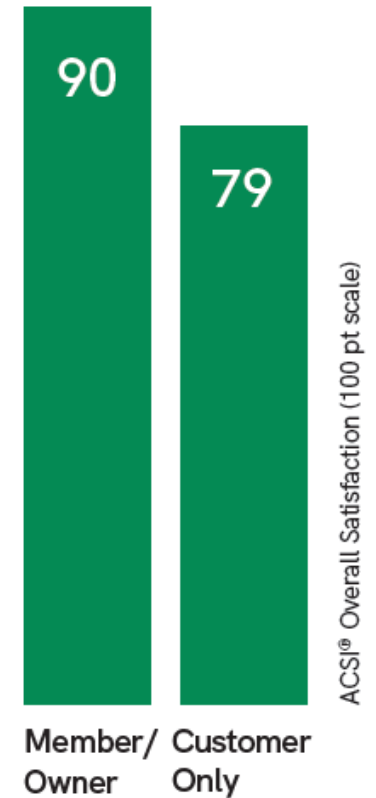
Satisfaction is higher for those that identify as a member

Member identity is the biggest factor in influencing member satisfaction.

Cooperative Difference messages to members create a sense of belonging.

Cooperatives are embedded in the communities they serve which can have an impact.

Co-ops are focused on interactions instead of transactions.

Source: 2024 Trends & Tactics Report, surveys completed in 2023's National Survey on the Cooperative Difference

90

79

ACSI® Overall Satisfaction (100 pt scale)

Member/ Owner

Customer Only

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Touchstone Energy's role

- Position cooperatives as the trusted source communicating key co-op principles and reliable energy information.
- Broad ad messages about the cooperative difference
- Create economies of scale customization options for local branding
- Create educational animations for co-ops to run locally
- Conduct ad awareness surveys to determine awareness of messages, association with cooperatives and impact on member satisfaction.

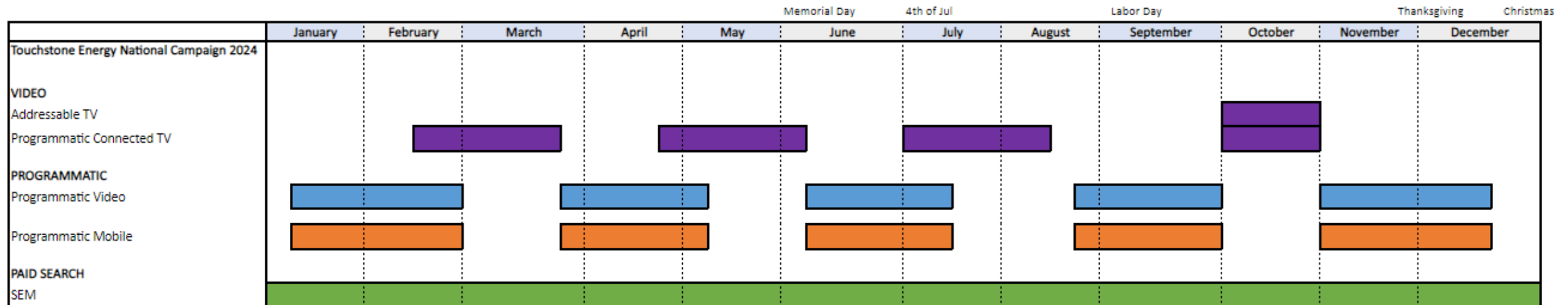# National Advertising Drives Up Satisfaction Levels

Member-owners that are aware of the ads associated them with their local cooperative and gave their co-op almost **8.6% higher satisfaction scores** in surveys over a three-year period.

ACSI® Scores Comparison (2021 - 2023)

90.2

83.1

Unaware of Either Ad   Aware of Either Ad

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives
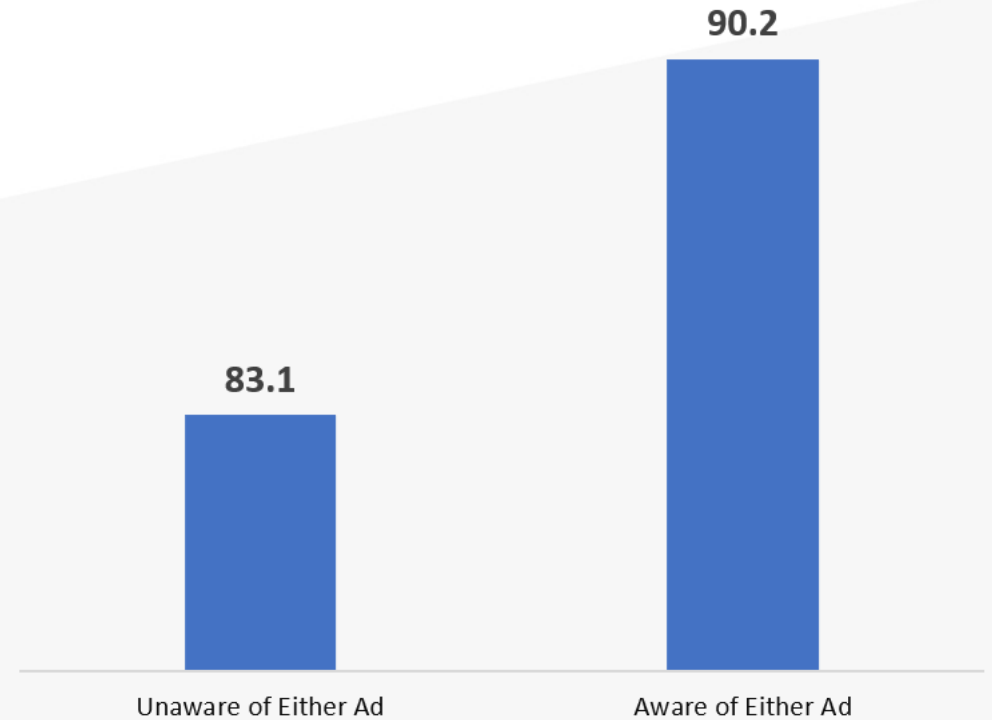
2024 Touchstone Energy® Media Plan

- Deliver more than 227 million impressions annually
- Target is member-owners
- Media includes video, mobile, search and Connected TV
- Addressable TV is scheduled for Q4
- Ads only run in co-op zip codes

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
						Memorial Day	4th of Jul		Labor Day		Thanksgiving	Christmas

Touchstone Energy National Campaign 2024

VIDEO
Addressable TV
Programmatic Connected TV

PROGRAMMATIC
Programmatic Video

Programmatic Mobile

PAID SEARCH
SEM

Overarching advertising themes

Cooperative
Difference

Community

Savings

Safety

Trusted
Source

Renewables
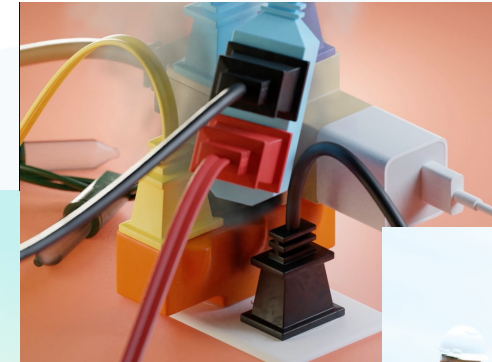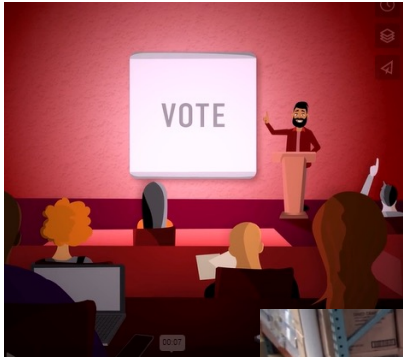
VOTE

5 WAYS
RENTERS CAN SAVE

WILDFIRE RISK AND MITIGATION
PRACTICES FOR CO-OP MEMBERS.

Concern for Community

Touchstone Energy focuses on the broad overarching messages.

Co-ops provide the specificity of what those messages mean in their own communities.

Together we extend the reach of the Cooperative Difference through all our ad buys.

The Cooperative Difference in Action

Nationally, Touchstone Energy's ad campaign promotes the Cooperative Difference and builds on local efforts in every cooperative member zip code.

Locally, members build the co-op brand identity by communicating local value that demonstrates the cooperative difference in their communities.

Together we extend the reach of the cooperative network

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

THANK YOU!

Questions?

Mary Ann Cristiano
MaryAnn.Cristiano@nreca.coop   571.388.8676

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Reimagining Customer Communication

Shifting From Words to Actions
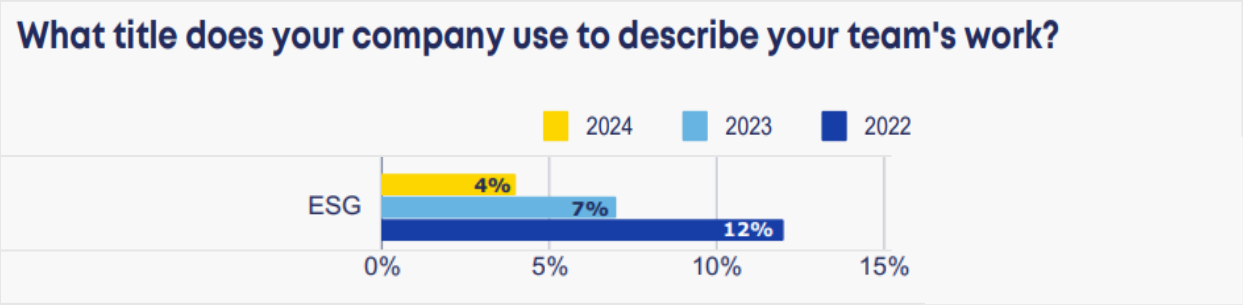
October 2024

The Problem with Jargon

Language should reflect visible change, *not just verbal corporate commitments.*

Our audiences found words like DEI and ESG vague and detached from the real-world impact.

They want to see *action*.

A Decline in ESG Usage

What title does your company use to describe your team's work?

Legend: 2024 (yellow), 2023 (light blue), 2022 (dark blue)

ESG:
- 2024: 4%
- 2023: 7%
- 2022: 12%

(axis: 0% 5% 10% 15%)

"The term ESG is being used less frequently, likely due to the ongoing backlash against the term. It dropped from 12% in 2022 to 7% in 2023, and now stands at just 4% in 2024."
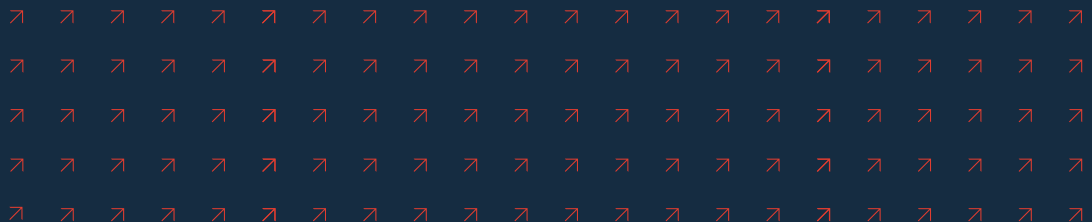
CSR Insights Report

Source: 2023 EDELMAN TRUST BAROMETER
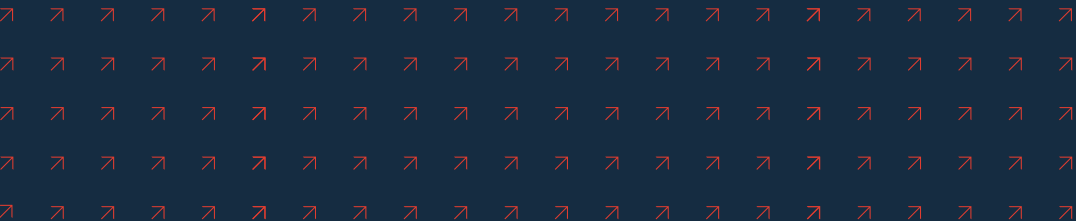
DEI is Losing Impact

Over 52% of global respondents feel that companies addressing DEI can seem divisive or overly political, which *contributes to public distrust.*

We hit
refresh.

The Shift in Our Communication Strategy

Talk straight.

Be clear.
Be brief.
Be believable.

People don't want promises from a utility. They just want us to keep their lights on and homes warm. (Oh, and save the planet while we're at it.) Our brand voice should always be honest and direct, backed by facts and 100% hype-free. That means less marketing-speak, more human-speak.

trust

The Shift in Our Communication Strategy

Reaching Our Audiences at the Right Time in the Right Channels
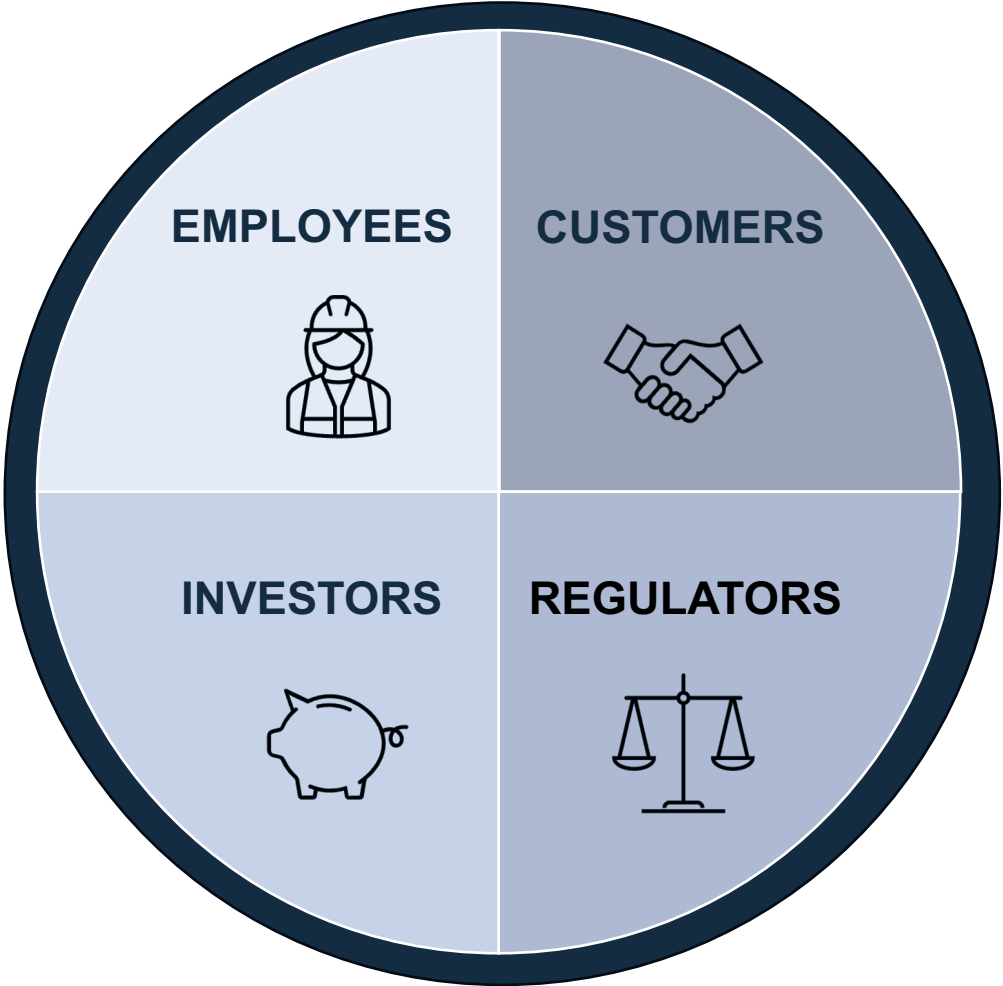
Impact of Our Actions: Governance

Green (Safe) Topics	Yellow (Check First) Topics	Red (No Go) Topics
Products and services	Infrastructure improvements	Politics
Our affordable rates	Transmission	Voting
Biodiversity initiatives	Nuclear	Cybersecurity
Recruitment	Internal employee groups	Immigration
Performance earnings	Reliability/Storm aftermath	Taxes/tariffs Supreme court
Weather/Storms	DEI	Permitting
	ESG/sustainability	Eminent domain
	EVs, electrification, renewables	Religion
	Climate change/Climate Week	
	Climate bill/Infrastructure bill	
	AI	
	Data centers	
	Supply chain	
	Environmental Justice	

Impact of Our Actions: Social Media

THEN

NOW

Impact of Our Actions: Employee Experiences

THEN

NOW
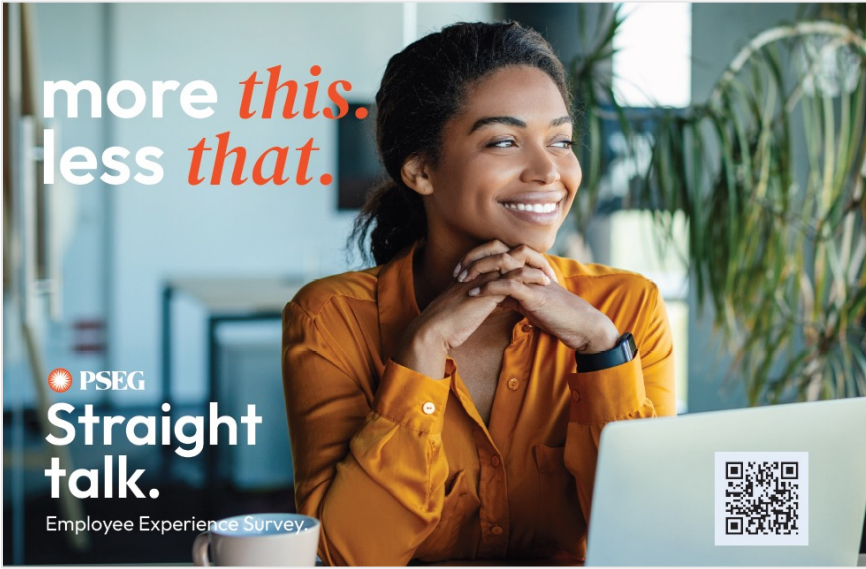
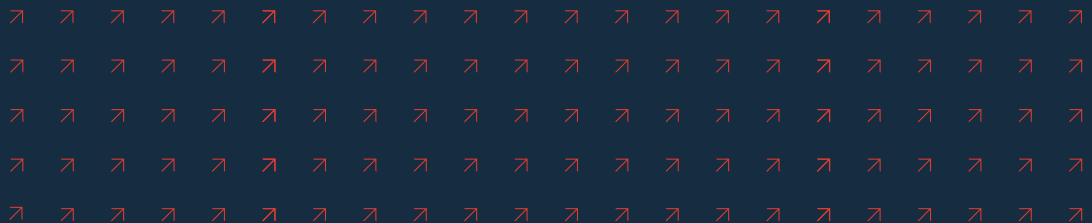# Modernizing how we talk about J.D. Power Awards

Restrictions & Must Haves

All ads must contain one of the approved claims:
- Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Residential and Business Electric Service in the Ease among Large Utilities

Must include the disclaimer.
- Full disclaimer is only to be used when the trophy is not displayed
  PSE&G Company received the highest score in the East Large segment (serving 500,000 or more residential customers) of the J.D. Power 2023 U.S. Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study and the East Large segment (serving 90,000 or more business customers) of the J.D. Power 2023 U.S. Electric Utility Business Customer Satisfaction Study. Visit jdpower.com/awards for more details.

- Shortened disclaimer is used for TV, Radio, Billboards & any time the Trophy is displayed visually:
  For J.D. Power 2023 award information, visit jdpower.com/awards.

2023

PSEG

JD Power Award Campaign Refresh 2024

How do we…

- Avoid sounding like we are patting ourselves on the back?

- Be less corporate and more authentic?

- Have stopping power?

- Implement new brand standards and comply with JD Power standards?

2024 concept   *People focused*
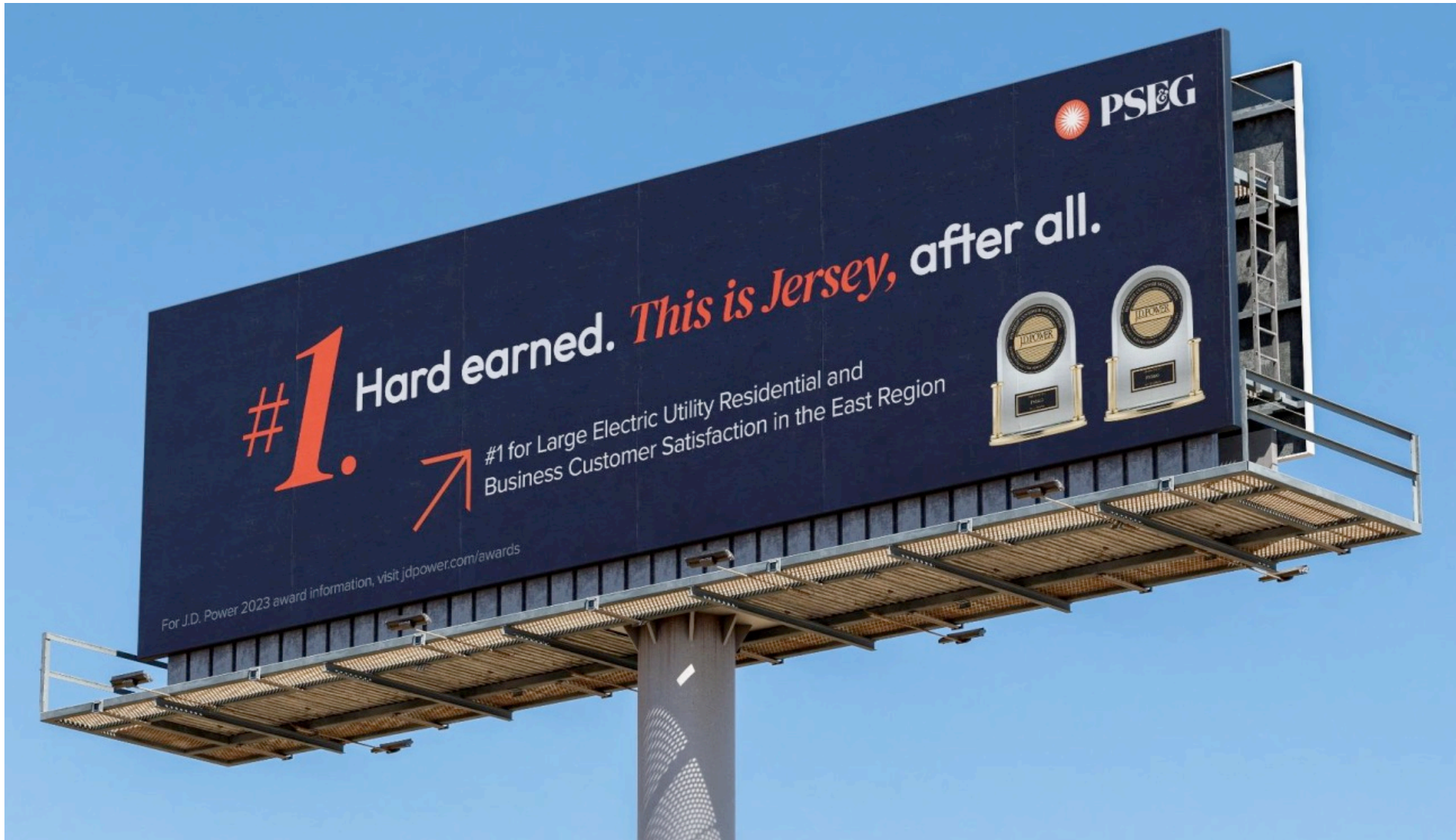
2024 concept *People focused*

2024 concept   *Sense of place*

2024 concept

Sense of place

2024 concept   *Sense of place*

2024 concept *Sense of place*

2024 concept

Striving to be better

2024 concept   *Striving to be better*

2024 concept   *Striving to be better*

Striving to be better

People focused

Sense of place

Striving to be better

People focused

Sense of place

Why they work

- Have more stopping power than 2023
- More authentic
- Feel less corporate
- More relevant to customers

Best Practices for Messaging in Utility Demand Response Programs

SPEAKER

Ana Bogdanova, Sr. Product Manager
Virtual Peaker

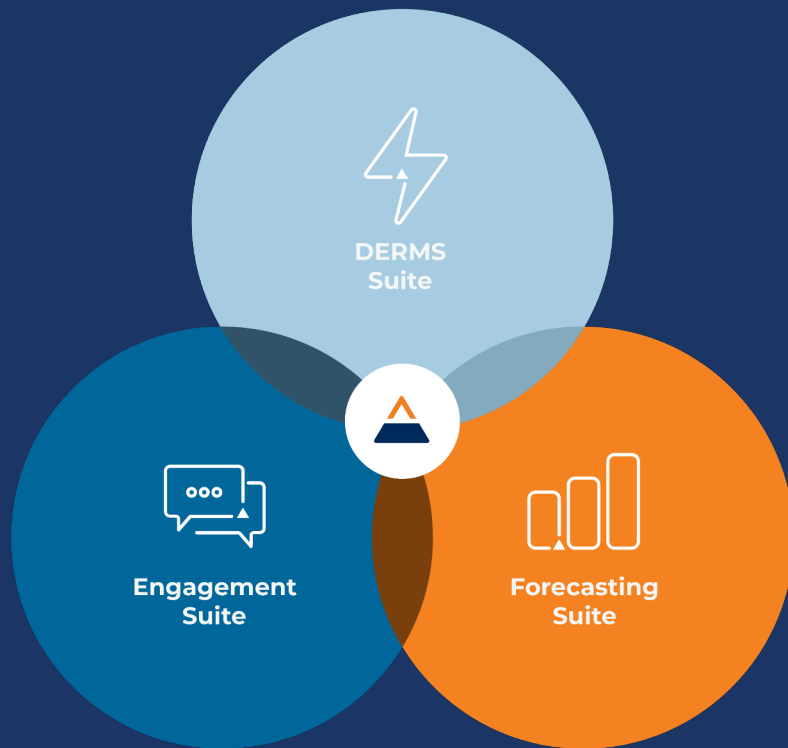# Personalized Messaging

- Personalize messages for higher engagement (e.g., name, program, device)

- Leverage customer data (e.g., energy usage history, engagement preferences)

- Tailor messages to different demographics

- Consider multilingual support

Clear and Concise Communication

- Use simple, jargon-free language

- Focus on key points

- Use text styles to highlight the main CTA

- Provide easy-to-understand instructions

- Add visuals to support text

Timing and Frequency

- Automate messages based on customer behavior and performance

- Use of real-time communication for events (notifications, reminders)

- Post-event follow-up messages for feedback or to share program results

Empathy and Transparency

- Address customer concerns (e.g., comfort, inconvenience)

- Align benefits with customer motivations (e.g., financial incentives, environmental impact)

- Foster trust and transparency

Use Multiple Channels

- Explore channels: Email, SMS, other apps

- Multi-channel strategy for maximizing reach and engagement

- Allow customers to set communication preferences

Customer Recruitment Messaging

Initial Efforts
Struggling with Low Enrollment Numbers

○ One email before the start of the program

○ Push notifications sent to customers located in the utility's service territory via the Google Nest app

○ One post on instagram and one post on Facebook promoting the program

Implemented Solutions
Boosted Enrollments with Messages

○ Targeted customers who opted in to receive marketing messages

○ 8 week email campaign, with 1 email sent each week

○ Campaign ran in April and May

○ Clear and concise messages

○ Call To Action: Enroll in the program
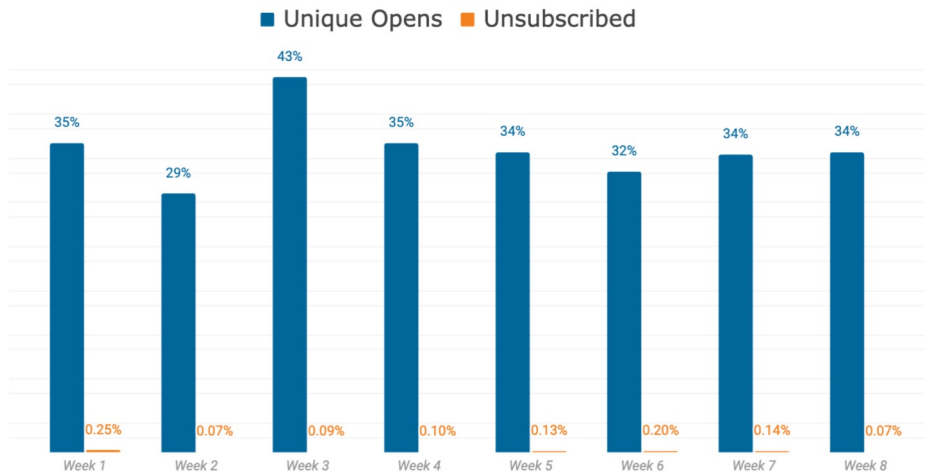
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Questions?

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