



Marin Clean Energy: Lessons Learned

Community engagement, marketing, and reputation management are essential keys to success.

CCA programs are very unique for most government agencies in that it will be the first time that they've had to be on the open market competing for customers and business. CCAs must build memorable brands that their customer base supports and relate to.

Get to know and understand your customer base. Budding CCA programs should conduct qualitative and quantitative research to identify what issues are most important to customers and to gain an understanding of customer expectations, so that the CCA can deliver on these needs and expectations.

Customer messaging needs to be simple and concise. Make information easy to find. Avoid industry terminology, acronyms, and technical jargon. Keep messaging fun and simple so that your customer base wants to stay engaged. Customers need to know key points of information like rates, power sources, and billing or other programmatic changes. Provide this to them in clear formats: What's the bottom line cost difference? How do the power sources compare to the Investor Owned Utility?

Train a call center of friendly experts. Customer interactions with CCA call centers may be one of the only tangible things that a customer gets from your program. Make sure any call interaction is positive. You'll need enough staff to ensure short wait times and quick and efficient caller resolution.

Make opting out easy. Customers should have the means of opting out quickly and easily, and should have various options for doing so. If a customer decides not to choose your service, it's much better to have them end on a positive note than one that leaves them frustrated.

Build an advocacy community. Make friends with community groups and individuals who are enthusiastic about your program. They will go out of their way to actively support your program and spread the word to their friends, families, and neighbors. Word of mouth will help fuel growth. Two challenges related to this are maintaining these relationships and keeping a consistent marketing message. This can be time consuming but MCE guarantee's it's worth it.

Get to know your local journalists and editorial boards. Your customer base probably already has local news and information sources that it trusts. Make sure that information going out publicly in your community is accurate by proactively reaching out to journalists, editorial boards, popular bloggers, or any other media outlets. Send out press releases and news information but follow up with in-person meetings or phone calls to answer questions and promote positive articles.

Community events, community events, community events. Face to face conversation is the best method for communicating information to your customers. Speak at local rotaries, homeowner associations, ESL (English as a second language) classes, chambers of commerce, and as many other venues as you possibly can.

Questions? Contact:

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