



Awareness and Education as a Long-term Investment in Program Activity **Board Learning Topic**

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Introduction

At Energy Trust of Oregon's Board of Directors May 2018 Strategic Plan Workshop, staff presented the last of a series of papers on topics determined to be relevant to the organization during the time period of its next strategic plan (2020-2024). The goal of the papers was to educate and inform the board about the potential impact of these topics and enable its directors to better assess risk, identify opportunity and guide the direction and goals of Energy Trust. Board members saw value in an additional presentation on the topic of awareness and education. This topic was last presented to the board at its May 2016 Strategic Plan Workshop, and this paper provides an update on our work in this area since that time and key considerations for the board over the next strategic plan period.

Background

Energy Trust provides comprehensive energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions for 1.6 million utility customers. The information, technical services, cash incentives and contractor connections provided help homeowners, renters, multifamily property owners, small and large businesses, manufacturers, farmers, school administrators and other customers save energy and generate their own energy through renewable power. Energy Trust promotes offers to customers through many channels (illustrated below) to generate awareness of and drive engagement in program services and incentives. Energy Trust meets annual goals through these marketing interventions and resulting delivery of customer services and incentives. Energy Trust seeks to balance its overall budget for marketing activities with savings or generation sought on an annual basis.

Education and marketing to increase customer awareness and drive program activity is a necessary and long-used strategy of Energy Trust. However, not all customers become aware or engaged in energy efficiency or renewable energy offers through these marketing efforts. Based on surveys of residential customers conducted over

multiple years, unaided awareness of Energy Trust as a resource to assist with energy projects is around 14 percent. This number increases when survey respondents are provided with information about Energy Trust and the services offered.

Energy Trust Primary Marketing Channels



Some customers require additional exposure to marketing offers over time, or unique channels and education, before they are ready to take action. Opportunities exist to evolve, customize, broaden and deepen our work in education and general awareness marketing, particularly as Energy Trust seeks to reach and engage new customers who have not yet participated in our programs. Energy Trust has expressed a commitment to deeper engagement with low-income customers, rural customers and communities of color through its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative. This initiative is an effort to understand gaps in participation, and identify opportunities to effectively engage diverse customers in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. Awareness and education efforts may support this work by offering new ways of reaching customers, and spur creative thinking about changes to existing marketing messages and channels.

In preparation for the development of Energy Trust’s 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, this paper explores the longer-term investments in marketing and education that could be made to increase overall awareness and participation by new customer groups. During the planning process, the board will assess strategies and opportunities that could be leveraged to achieve organizational goals and whether/how increased energy education and market awareness could be a long-term strategy for achieving savings and generation goals

Recap of Past Presentations to the Board

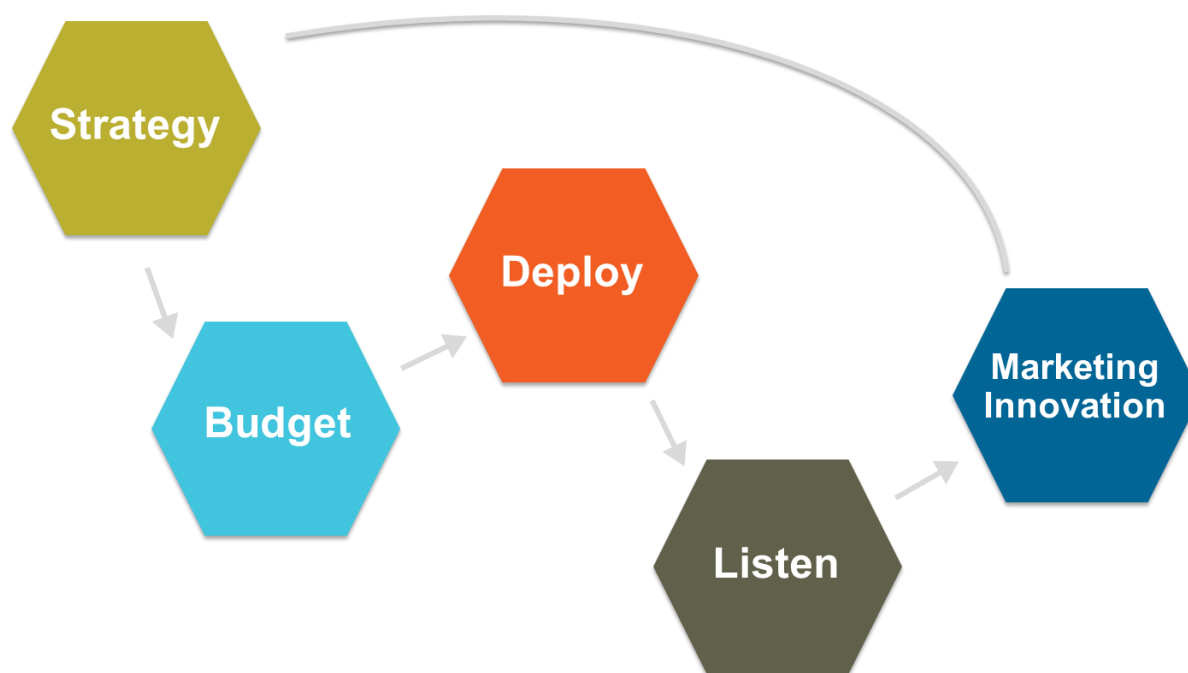
In September of 2015, marketing staff at Energy Trust provided an overview of the strategy and work involved in marketing programs and offers. In that presentation, staff introduced a common industry model, the traditional sales and marketing funnel (illustrated below). In this presentation, staff clarified the difference between Energy Trust’s residential and business marketing by the level of investment needed to engage potential customers in program offers. As seen below, residential marketing needs to carry a customer further to the decision to act than business marketing, where program delivery or contractor engagement comes earlier in the process.



During this presentation staff presented examples of two types of marketing interventions: those designed to encourage immediate engagement in Energy Trust offers, and those designed to generate broader awareness of Energy Trust so that when customers decide to engage in the future they know where to turn. Energy Trust benefits from awareness of our offers when customers have an immediate need, such as when they are replacing broken equipment.

Staff also described the iterative process of marketing, which leverages feedback from customers to understand if the marketing approach is achieving the desired result. Market research, including surveys, interviews and focus groups, is an important tool to learn about customer behavior and decision-making, and then apply the appropriate marketing messages and strategies to drive program activity.

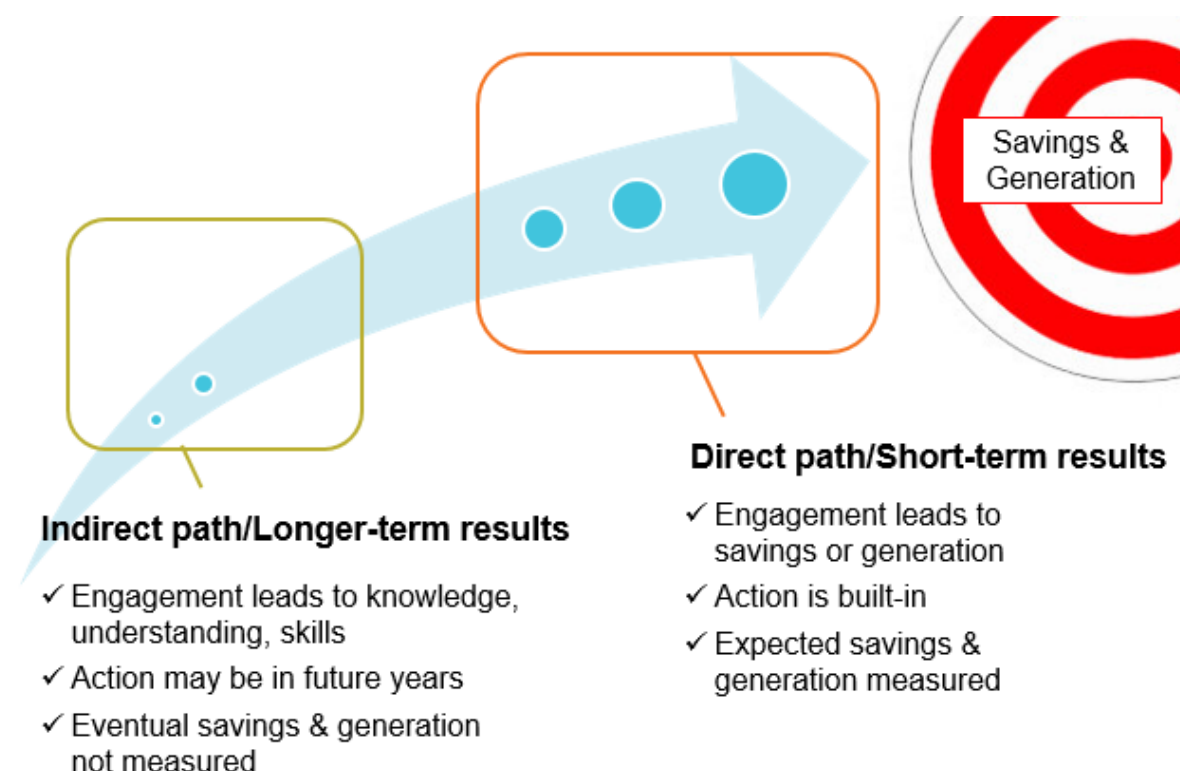
Market Feedback and Response



In a 2016 Board Workshop presentation, staff covered educational activities undertaken by Energy Trust at that time, primarily as components of programs designed to deliver savings in the short-term, and the possibility to expand educational efforts leading to

broader participation in energy measures over time. This presentation came at a time when Energy Trust was considering how to maintain and expand customer engagement in its programs as some education-related measures and services were ending and other measures were moving upstream. The discussion question for the board at that time was whether Energy Trust should consider a higher level of investment in educational efforts that have a longer path to energy savings. The board expressed interest in educational activities and asked the staff to consider how the effectiveness of such investments might be measured, and how to balance the benefit of customer education against the administrative costs. Additional board feedback from this Workshop is included in Section III below.

Education as a Long-term Investment in Program Engagement



The remainder of this paper provides some foundational information about marketing and education to support general board understanding, an update on our work in the

areas of awareness and education since these board presentations, and key considerations for the board over the next strategic plan period.

I. Awareness and Education – Definitions and Guidance

A. What is Marketing?

Marketing is defined by the [American Marketing Association](#) as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large."ⁱ

Marketing at Energy Trust is primarily the presentation of an offer to receive a service or cash incentive presented through a number of channels, including contractors, program staff, advertising, social media, website, public relations, or partner communications, such as an utility bill insert. Marketing often delivers information, including educational content, which supports a customer's understanding of the offer and its benefits and costs.

B. What is Awareness?

Awareness is knowledge or perception of a situation or fact, and sometimes a broader education process is required to obtain that knowledge. According to the American Marketing Association, "awareness (cognition) may be of the product generally, its brand, and one or more of its attributes."ⁱⁱ Brand awareness is often considered to be a prerequisite of consumers' buying decision. Brand awareness can also influence consumers' perceived risk assessment and their confidence in the purchase decision, due to familiarity with the brand and its characteristics.ⁱⁱⁱ

C. What is Education?

Education is a purposeful, designed intervention that provides information about a particular subject and develops a body of knowledge on that subject. While it may lead to other objectives, the core objective of education is to build knowledge, understanding and skills.

Three types of knowledge can be gained from education, and various combinations of each are needed to drive action, depending on the customer group.

- General knowledge or information about a topic (*the what*)
- Knowledge that increases awareness of a problem or challenge (*the why*)
- Knowledge that increases skills (*the how*)^{iv}

Education can also reinforce the importance of a behavior and promote a person's belief that their behavior will have an impact. Education is a key input for changing consumer behavior in contexts such as healthcare, financial literacy, and employment.

C. What type of Education in Marketing Motivates Action?

Below is an example of a marketing campaign that leveraged education to drive behavior change. As a broad campaign, awareness of the Orlando Utilities Commission was likely another outcome of the campaign.

Orlando Utilities Commission (OUC) “Summer of 78” campaign^v

This advertising campaign educated customers on the ideal thermostat setting for summer cooling. It ran in 2016 to combat high utility bills in the summer. The campaign stretched over nine weeks and included radio spots, digital banners, a dedicated landing page, digital billboards, and social media. To further supplement the reach of the campaign, OUC attended and provided campaign content at an Hispanic community event. The utility created a mini summer environment at the event with giveaways including lemonade, OUC branded rubber ducks, and sunscreen with savings tips attached. The campaign's web site landing page got the most page views for any OUC campaign.



D. Guidance on Best Practice

A scan of current literature on the topic of education and awareness, along with Energy Trust staff experience, offers the following guidance and suggestion for successful approaches to leverage education in marketing campaigns.

- 1) **Tailored information.** For education to increase awareness, it must provide a better understanding of how the information personally relates to the audience. Information should be tailored to the individual and their community and should include a focus on the knowledge, skills and tools needed to create change.^{vi}
- 2) **Address barriers and tap into motivations.** Effective education and awareness campaigns help customers remove barriers to participation and tap into what motivates them. Below are barriers and motivations drawn from past Energy Trust research and other academic studies.

Barriers	Motivations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of time • Lack of money • Lack of information • Lack of engagement • Lack of proper technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate need for repair/improvement • Saving money/improving bottom line • Increasing comfort • Improving home/business value • Improving the environment

3) **Detail skills and resources necessary to make the change.** Awareness and education campaigns should be focused not only on the facts and information, but also the detailed skills and resources necessary to make the change—the *how* to go with the *what* and *why*. By showing why the change is important and how it can be accomplished, Energy Trust will help customers believe in their ability to accomplish a task and increase confidence.

4) **Connect to broader benefits and values.** Awareness-focused education should be centered around benefits to the individual, the community, and the environment. For example, the Oregon Values and Beliefs project stated that Oregonians value the environment (including clean air and water)—57 percent believe the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of slowing economic growth.^{vii} We have learned through our own awareness research that this concern for the environment varies by region. For instance, those in Eastern Oregon and the metro Portland area are more likely to be motivated by environmental benefits, while those in southern Oregon are more interested in saving money. Aligning marketing messages with broader values and beliefs can more quickly translate to action.

II. Awareness and Education – Energy Trust’s past, present and future

A. Education in Energy Trust Marketing and Programs

In a presentation to the board in 2016, Energy Trust staff brought a sample of existing, and past, educational efforts. These efforts are primarily delivered by programs and directly affect savings in a current year or the near future. Below are examples of past or current efforts along with the program that delivers it, where existing efforts are indicated by an asterisk.

Community or partner driven

- School-based curriculum developed with and delivered by external parties (Residential)
- Kill-a-watt energy monitors available for check-out in libraries* (General)
- Community energy planning and projects* (General)
- Onsite energy kiosks or monitors that show project savings or generation* (General)

Online tools

- Energy Payback Estimator – online tool for residential customers to estimate payback for certain measures* (Residential)
- Lighting Calculator and Lighting Wheel – tool to estimate savings from business lighting installations and online residential tool to guide bulb purchase* (Business and Residential)
- Web content – information on Energy Trust website that provides context and background beyond direct services or offers; builds knowledge or understanding* (All programs and General)

Events

- Employer energy fairs – on-site employer engagement by Energy Trust with employees, typically to promote residential offers* (Business)
- Fix-it Fairs – City of Portland engagement of residents in ways to save energy and money* (General)

- Zoo teens engagement and Zoo lights – past effort by Zoo teens to engage attendees at seasonal Zoo lights and generate awareness of Energy Trust offers (General)

Within program design and delivery

- Home Energy Review – a review of energy-efficiency opportunities in a home, available on-line* (Residential)
- SEM curriculum – Strategic Energy Management is a core behavioral element of industrial sector savings and a growing element of commercial sector savings* (Business)
- Home Energy IQ – this outreach tool was a training for residential customers on opportunities to save energy in homes but is no longer offered (Residential)
- Builder Operator Certification webinars, incentives - these trainings are technical and offered through the commercial and industrial sectors* (Commercial)
- Home energy scoring, EPS – EPS is Energy Trust’s home score offered in new homes* (Residential)
- LivingWise kits for school classrooms – these kits came with a sixth grade math and science curriculum, as well as energy-saving products to install in the home, but is no longer offered (Residential)
- Training for Trade allies and Real Estate Allies, Home Inspectors – trainings to build a network of contractors able to successfully engage customers in offers* (All programs)

B. Research on Possible Expansion of Education Efforts

The 2016 conversation with the Board informed two research efforts to further guide whether, and how, Energy Trust might invest in educational activities that raise Oregonians’ awareness and knowledge of energy efficiency and renewable energy, and help the organization achieve its goals in the long term. Additional market research has also been conducted that has further broadened our understanding of customers, their behaviors and approach to decision-making.

Grounded Research

Energy Trust contracted with Grounded Research and Consulting in 2016 to conduct a scan of educational efforts in other states. The research purpose was to help staff identify education opportunities with the greatest potential, in terms of primary audience and tools for raising awareness and impacting savings and generation over time. The research focused on educational efforts implemented in communities, K-12 schools, and on the web. The researchers identified the benefits and drawbacks of each approach. The common drawbacks across each were the limited ability to track effectiveness and need for ongoing staff resource.

The three approaches were defined as follows:

- **Community-based Engagement** – Programs that generally work with existing community organizations or community leaders to educate a wide range of customers on energy efficiency or renewables. This type of program actively looks for and educates the targeted audience.
- **K-12 Engagement** – Programs that target students in one or several K-12 grade levels with a secondary audience of the students' families. This type of program actively recruits schools to bring forward education specific to energy efficiency and/or renewables.
- **Customer Engagement via Web** – Inclusion of educational content and materials on a website, or a website designed specifically to deliver an educational experience. This activity includes various ways to educate the customer on multiple topics related to programs on energy efficiency or renewables. (For Energy Trust, this type of engagement would require expansion of the current website, which currently includes only a small amount of educational content.)

Overall, the researchers had the following findings for education efforts deployed through communities, K-12 and on the web:

- Community-based engagement may be the most effective option for driving participation.
- Community-based engagement may be the best option for reaching diverse audiences because they can leverage existing networks of community-based organizations that work with diverse audience, but K-12 efforts can also be used to target these groups.

- K-12 engagement is the most likely to document its effectiveness at improving customer readiness because it can be structured as a traditional educational effort; however, it is limited to families with children and often just to families with children in grade school, as grades 4-6 are typically the focus of K-12 programs.
- Customer engagement via website is a good option for reaching many customers simply because of the ubiquitous aspect of people accessing the internet, and efforts are available to new audiences.

Customer Insights Study

Energy Trust conducted a Customer Insights study in 2016 and 2017 as part of its market research efforts. The study is designed to measure awareness and attitudes over time and provide insights each year based on organizational need. In those two years, the study was used to gauge the energy knowledge of both participants and non-participants, as well as attempt to understand whether a connection can be made between knowledge of the impacts of energy use and actions to reduce energy use. In addition, some findings revealed a different way of consuming media, and learning about new opportunities, among certain groups.

Key findings related to education and awareness from this research:

- Customers were most interested in how they could save money, and where they might be wasting energy.
- Participants and non-participants who recalled learning about energy use and saving energy in school, compared to those who did not, were significantly more likely to pay attention to their energy use and to have talked to their friends and neighbors about saving energy.
- Both participants and non-participants most frequently said they turn to online sources if they want to learn more about energy efficiency and home improvements, but a notable proportion of both groups – 21 percent of participants and 29 percent of non-participants – reported they do not know who to turn to for information on how to save energy at home.

These findings indicated a gap in education for some customers, and that further information on the benefits of energy efficiency would be helpful. Those with household incomes between \$50k and \$150k were more likely to be aware of Energy Trust offers, and those with household incomes below that were more likely to learn about Energy Trust via word of mouth.

C. Expansion of Educational Efforts

Since this topic was last discussed with the board, Energy Trust has continued to make some modest investments in education efforts designed to drive to program engagement over time (as opposed to the types of program efforts listed on pages 10-11, which are justified on the basis of savings within the annual time frame), primarily by expanding existing efforts or approaches. Below are three examples of additional work in education across the dimensions explored in the Grounded Research, community, K-12 and web-based efforts.

Community Education & Engagement

In 2017 and 2018, Energy Trust increased sponsorship funding for Sustainable Northwest and municipalities to support community education and engagement efforts in rural communities able to champion energy efforts. This investment expanded the “Making Energy Work for Rural Oregon” workshop series offered to four communities in Energy Trust territory in 2015-2016. This recent investment went deeper to help them identify and initiate municipal projects or community engagement efforts, continue RARE (Resource Assistance for Rural Environments) intern placements for a second year, and engaged additional communities.

K-12 Engagement

Students, staff and families valued LivingWise Kits, a 6th grade in-class and take-home energy efficiency curriculum and kit previously provided by Energy Trust, which generated awareness about energy efficiency and renewable energy, energy saving products and behavior strategies, and positioned Energy Trust as a credible organization and expert resource. LivingWise Kits were discontinued mid-2017, eliminating an early opportunity for shaping future thinking about energy use among youth and their families. In Fall 2017, Energy Trust staff engaged in a Lean Start-up project to explore the energy curriculum interests of local

teachers, and researched school engagement and educational curriculum options to identify potential offers to make available to teachers.

A kit developed by the NEED (National Energy Education Development) Project included energy use and energy efficiency education components that engage students and raise the energy IQ of Oregonians. As part of a small field test in the 2017-2018 school year, Energy Trust offered these kits to teachers who expressed a keen interest in continuing to use an energy curriculum supplied by Energy Trust. Feedback on the kits has been generally favorable among the small sample of teachers, but the expansion and management of such an offer would require more significant dedicated staff or contractor resources, education and relationship building.

Informational Content via Web

Energy Trust currently has low-cost, no-cost tips on the website, as well as information on the impact of energy efficiency in Oregon. Recent focus group research indicated that those with lower educational attainment and moderate income were more likely to learn through word of mouth, seek advice on energy costs from friends and family, and perform do-it-yourself (DIY) projects to save money. In addition, outreach efforts have surfaced a need for simple communication tools to help customers understand the impact and value of energy efficiency and renewable energy development. Based on this information, a segmented advertising campaign featuring short educational messages has been developed in 2018 to reach a variety of audiences and drive new visitors to pages on our website, including low-cost, no-cost tips, the annual report, a video on our overall impact, and a listing of our offers. The campaign will launch in July 2018, and an image from the DIY component of the campaign is below.



The first round of the campaign will test channels and content, using online targeting tools. The data collected from visitor response to existing content on the website will help build further content packaged specifically as educational/informational content. Potential online customer tools, blog and social media posts, and related printed materials will be considered for use in general outreach activities. Training would be needed for call center staff on the new content and best practices for handling inquiries that are not about specific program or incentive offers. This work could also be done by an external contractor that specializes in this type of educational content.

III. Planning for the Future – Considerations for Energy Trust

A. Potential to Invest in long-term Awareness and Education Activities

Recent research points to the effectiveness of awareness and education as a driver of future action. Energy Trust has consistently leveraged educational content as an approach for driving program activity, and sees value in further expansion. The upcoming campaign, described above, will apply research learnings, and could provide additional insights to guide this work.

As we identify customer groups in need of information and more community groups that show motivation but require additional engagement, there will be greater interest in education as an engagement tool. Data analysis conducted as part of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative may also identify areas of Energy Trust's service territory that could be targeted for

greater outreach due to lagging participation. The opportunities above represent example investments. Any new activities would be ramped up slowly and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

B. How does Energy Trust Measure Impact of Awareness and Education Strategies?

Evaluating marketing efforts that do not result in immediate, attributable engagement in programs can prove difficult. Evaluation approaches for educational efforts should be considered at the front-end. Energy Trust could consider measuring the effectiveness of these efforts beyond acquisition of energy savings and generation, using the following metrics:

- Increased awareness among both participants and non-participants as measured by the annual Customer Insights study
- Increased engagement on the website, through site visits, time on site, bounce rates, and completion of engagement activities such as the online Home Energy Review
- Specific actions taken that can be attributed to the educational content, such as viewing a video or requesting certain information

C. Key Questions and Next Steps

Energy Trust's mission, vision, values and annual energy savings and generation goals will drive our awareness and education goals. When this topic was last presented to the board, board members indicated cautious support for further exploration of educational programming, and provided the following feedback to guide staff consideration of expansion in this area:

- Make sure educational efforts are aligned with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative objectives and outcomes
- Seek partnerships and collaborate to help us reach under-engaged customer segments
 - Identify specific goals and determine where to focus educational approaches; board members suggested or responded positively to:
 - Leveraging public interest in climate and resiliency issues
 - Engaging youth who are shaping household purchasing and will be future consumers
 - Expanding current offers or collaborations with community colleges

- Expanding activities that support consumer understanding in a complex marketplace

The following key questions will be considered as Energy Trust staff explore expanding education and awareness activities:

1. What is the appropriate level of investment in these approaches?
2. How can education and awareness specifically advance Energy Trust's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative and other strategic goals and values?
3. What are priority metrics for success? How would these efforts be evaluated?
4. What opportunities exist for collaboration or partnership?

ⁱ From American Marketing Association – Retrieved from

<https://www.ama.org/AboutAMA/Pages/Definition-of-Marketing.aspx>

ⁱⁱ From American Marketing Association - Retrieved from <http://marketing-dictionary.org/ama>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Importance of Brand Awareness in Consumers' Buying Decision and Perceived Risk Assessment, Ovidiu Ioan Moiescu, Retrieved from <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=233682>

^{iv} Arlinghaus, K., & Johnston, C. (2018). Advocating for Behavior Change With Education. *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*, 12(2), 113-116.

^v ESource – 2017 Marketing Awards - OUC Campaign (Material not publicly available)

^{vi} Arlinghaus, K., & Johnston, C. (2018). Advocating for Behavior Change With Education. *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*, 12(2), 113-116.

^{vii} Oregon Values & Beliefs Project (2018). From the 2013 Oregon Values & Beliefs Surveys. Retrieved from <http://oregonvaluesproject.org/findings/top-findings/>