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Landmark Study on Energy Efficiency Reveals The More Powerful People Feel, The Less Power They Use

"Living Diary" Market Research Finds Generational Differences and Inspirational Approaches to Real World Solutions and Energy Conservation

WASHINGTON, DC December 6, 2007: Today, SmartPower, the nation's leading non profit marketing organization dedicated to promoting clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency, has released a landmark study on how to inspire and encourage consumers to conserve energy. SmartPower (www.smartpower.org) retained the award-winning marketing firm, RealityCheck (www.realitycheckinc.com), to conduct and manage a series of "Living Diaries" in order to study how to message and create a marketing campaign that will significantly change consumer behavior. Rejecting the "Boy Scout" approach or the morality argument, SmartPower recruited a cross-section of Americans for a real life market research experiment and over a two week period asked them a series of questions, gave them homework assignments and other tasks that led to over 1000 diary entries, all designed to solve and address these three issues: 1) Barriers to being energy efficient, 2) Motivations for being energy efficient and 3) Identification of energy efficient activities most likely to succeed.

The results were astonishing and surprising. Here is what SmartPower learned: Like any typical consumer, the participants in SmartPower's study want to know what is in it for *them*. They yearn to be inspired. They do not want to be preached to. They want to feel that they are a part of a "we" approach. They want to understand and feel the real-world ramifications of their actions. They're busy. They're over worked. They want quick, simple tasks they can do that will make a difference. They want to feel smart and cool. They want to feel empowered and knowledgeable about saving money and saving energy. One of the participants responded, "When I save energy it's like a light bulb has gone off in my head that I'm getting it."

SmartPower's research also revealed a distinction based on age and life stage in how consumers view energy efficiency. The old school mentality is one of not being wasteful, reducing, reusing and maintaining. The new school mindset is one of "saving my world" with opportunities, new ideas and technology. With this shift in motivation comes an equally important shift in household dynamics that places teens and young adults in the position of the 'informed consumer' and gives them more buying power within families. Where household purchases used to be dictated almost exclusively by parents, families now defer to the choices of younger generations, and youth and teens feel empowered by being informed consumers and by influencing both parents and other teens. These younger family members don't respond to appeals to duty or frugality, but are inspired by self-empowerment and reward. By relating clean energy to youth as a way to a) give them the power to influence others and take control of their future and b) make them feel informed, smart and cool, clean energy becomes trendy and empowering. In shifting consumer behavior to embrace clean energy, young people are key.



Brian Keane, President of SmartPower, stated, “This report proves once again that we can’t appeal to consumers from a moral point of view. Selling clean energy or energy efficiency is like selling Coca Cola. We have to inspire folks. Consumers have to see what they get out of the deal first before they’ll buy our ideas or change their behavior.”

Brian Keane, President of SmartPower, and Jim Chastain, CEO of RealityCheck, will be available for interviews regarding this project and its findings.

About SmartPower

SmartPower is the “Got Milk” campaign of wind, solar and water energy, a *national, non-profit marketing organization dedicated to promoting clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency. With offices in Washington, DC, Hartford and Philadelphia, SmartPower’s award winning marketing campaigns have been credited with creating unprecedented demand for wind, solar and hydropower. Please visit www.smartpower.org or www.gocleanenergy.com.*

