



How Do You Use Customer Testimonials to Promote Residential Energy-Efficiency Programs?

An Ask E Source Answer

By Jessica Bailis

Q: What are some examples and best practices for using testimonial videos to promote energy-efficiency programs to the residential market?

A: Testimonials can be an authentic, empathetic, and trust-building way to promote your energy-efficiency programs and offerings. Best practices include:

- Focusing on real people who are looking for solutions to real problems
- Varying the video lengths to suit the attention spans of customers who use each marketing channel
- Using targeted marketing with segmentation
- Distributing the content via multiple marketing channels
- Working with trade allies for extended reach and branding opportunities

We turned to [E Source Energy AdVision](#)—our database of more than 3,800 examples of utility marketing and advertising campaigns—to view campaign results and testimonial examples from SDG&E’s and PECO’s home energy audit campaigns. We also explored video testimonial examples on social media from OG&E and Madison Gas and Electric (MGE). Although it doesn’t use video testimonials, Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance’s (NEEA’s) energy-efficiency testimonial digital display and Facebook advertising campaign shows the insight you can gain from the testimonial process. We also include our best practices for the creation and

marketing of energy-efficiency testimonial videos.

Best-practice examples from SDG&E, PECO, OG&E, MGE, and NEEA

In 2015, SDG&E found success in marketing its [California Alternate Rates for Energy \(CARE\)](#) and [Energy Savings Assistance](#) programs through its Customer Assistance testimonial campaign via TV, print, digital display, and pre-roll video, according to SDG&E's Energy AdVision entry. As a result of the campaign, SDG&E achieved more than 56,000 new CARE enrollments. Though the campaign featured multiple people, including Toni and Gerald, we highlight Bryon's Story (**figure 1**) in this answer. You can watch the [long-form video of Bryon's Story](#) on YouTube.

Figure 1: SDG&E's Customer Assistance testimonial campaign

More than 56,000 SDG&E customers enrolled in the utility's California Alternate Rates for Energy program as a result of a campaign featuring customers such as Bryon.

In PECO's Closing the Window on Energy Loss campaign, a project case study and customer testimonial helped underscore the real-life benefits customers could expect from scheduling an in-home energy audit as part of the utility's Smart House Call program. PECO employed the full complement of direct-to-customer and awareness tactics along with a special promotion and social media push to drive participation, according to PECO's Energy AdVision entry. Working with a TV partner, the utility conducted man-on-the-street interviews to highlight viewers' energy-efficiency efforts and then segued to a promotion for the sweepstakes. PECO aired a minute-long TV segment to announce one of the winners (**figure 2**).

Figure 2: PECO's Closing the Window on Energy Loss campaign

PECO aired its interviews on TV to encourage customers to schedule an energy audit.

PECO also used a testimonial quote to promote its home energy assessment on Facebook (**figure 3**).

Figure 3: PECO's testimonials on Facebook

PECO posted a testimonial quote to Facebook to advertise its energy assessments.

OG&E created a [video testimonial of a residential homeowner named Terry](#) to promote its Home Energy Efficiency Program on YouTube. The utility also posted on Facebook to direct followers to the video (**figure 4**).

Figure 4: OG&E's testimonial video

OG&E posted a link to its video testimonial on Facebook to promote the utility's residential efficiency program.

In 2017, MGE ran a Show Your Energy-Saving Smarts sweepstakes on social media, asking followers to use the hashtag #MGE2030 to tag videos or photos of their energy-saving actions. MGE posted some of the videos on its official Facebook page (**figure 5**).

Figure 5: MGE customers show their energy-saving actions

Madison Gas and Electric (MGE) asked customers to tag the utility with their efficiency efforts and posted the responses to Facebook.

Although not a residential customer testimonial, the video testimonial of MGE trade ally Focus on Energy, as well as partner Monona Public Library Eco Action Tuesday organizers, highlighted an MGE home energy assessment offering. A Facebook post features the video (**figure 6**).

Figure 6: MGE's home energy assessment testimonial

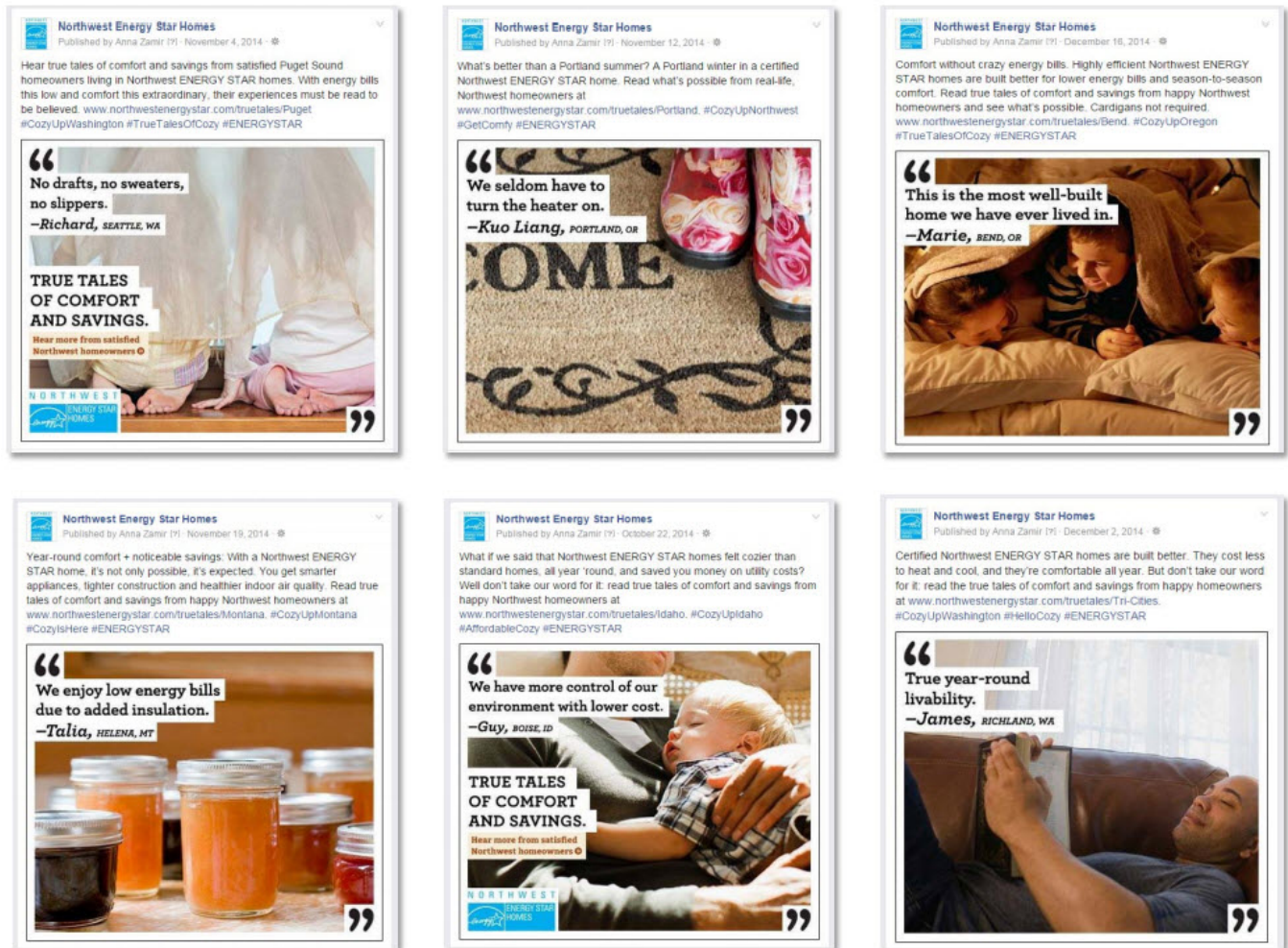
MGE posted a Focus on Energy video testimonial to its Facebook page.

In 2014, NEEA's Northwest Energy Star Homes team launched its True Tales of Comfort and Savings targeted digital multimedia campaign using homeowner stories to demonstrate the value of owning an energy-efficient

home, according to NEEA’s Energy AdVision entry. Participating utilities included PSE, Clark Public Utilities, Energy Trust of Oregon, Idaho Power, Avista Utilities, Benton PUD, and Benton Rural Electric Association. NEEA learned that consumers trust peer recommendations more than any other source, based on behavioral research from Nielsen. NEEA collected quotes from residential customers that reinforced the energy-efficiency benefits that are most important to homeowners and used them to create Facebook ads (**figure 7**).

Figure 7: NEEA’s True Tales of Comfort and Savings

Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) used quotes from residential customers to promote energy efficiency on Facebook.



Source: Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

Best practices for testimonial marketing

It’s a best practice to use geographic and demographic data for targeted marketing. In its True Tales of Comfort and Savings campaign, NEEA used regionally specific quotations to ensure its messages resonated

with specific geographic markets, according to its Energy AdVision entry. In the Background and Goals section of its entry form, the utility states:

While compelling and powerful on an individual basis, the quotations collectively tell a holistic story demonstrating how the individual benefits and features of energy-efficient homes work together to create whole-home comfort and energy savings.

NEEA then chose its target market audience based on the areas with the greatest propensity for awareness and potential purchase of Energy Star homes by researching markets with high volumes of permits and certified homes across its participating utility service territories.

Based on our awareness of utility testimonial campaigns and best practices for marketing energy-efficiency programs, we recommend the following tactics:

- *Connect with people.* Focus on the emotional element to connect with real people who are looking for solutions to real problems.
- *Keep it short and leverage the content.* Try to keep the main video under two minutes and use shorter edits (15 to 30 seconds) to reach customers on short-form channels such as social media. This strategy also allows you to use one piece of content in multiple ways.
- *Make it relevant.* Use targeted marketing with segmentation based on your intended audience.
- *Get it out there.* Use a multichannel marketing approach that incorporates video, print, digital display ads, email, social media, bill inserts, direct mail, radio, earned media, and community events.
- *Use partners.* Work with trade allies for cooperative advertising and co-branding opportunities.