

Case Study: Home Renewable Technology ***Using multi-modal techniques to understand drivers and barriers for households***

BACKGROUND

The Energy Saving Trust is one of the UK's leading organisations set up to address the damaging effects of climate change.

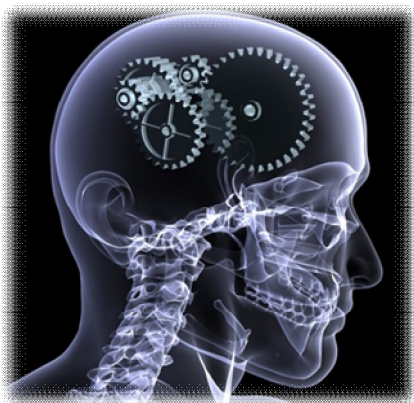
One aspect of the Energy Saving Trust's work is to provide advice to householders who are interested in using home renewable technology thus contributing to lowering carbon emissions.

The barriers to installing technologies such as solar panels and air source heat pumps are already well understood – generally around lack of awareness and understanding as well as lack of confidence and high set up costs. The Energy Saving Trust wished to go beyond this and better understand how the advice they offer fits into the 'customer journey' and potentially addresses the barriers mentioned above.



METHODOLOGY

M-E-L Research were commissioned to design and undertake telephone surveys with consumers who had either had advice from the Energy Saving Trust or had recently received a household grant. The survey was specifically tailored to take into account that consumers may have already installed the technology, may still be at the planning stage or had perhaps rejected the option. The interview allowed us to measure the various stages in the decision making process that consumers contact the Energy Saving Trust, any potential gaps in the advice offered, and the pros and cons of other sources of information that people gather.



As a second stage to the research in England, 35 follow-up interviews were conducted with consumers who agreed to be re-contacted. Most of these interviews were conducted in the respondent's home, allowing us to discuss more in-depth technical issues and to gain insights into how home renewable microgeneration technologies had been incorporated into every day domestic lives. A semi-structured interview was designed to give respondents the flexibility to tell our moderators about relevant parts of the decision making journey – for instance, where they first heard about the technology and their experience of getting quotations and dealing with installers.

OUTCOMES

As expected, most participants in the research were found to be very aware of climate change and their own energy use, but the research has shone new light on the emerging customer base for home renewable advice. In-home interviews have allowed us to paint portraits of real consumers who had received advice through a series of insightful case studies. The research has provided valuable evidence for their Microgeneration Taskforce to develop ideas around a peer-to-peer referrals system and to explore a voluntary Code of Practice with installers which may eventually lead to a 'star rating' type system.

**For further information about this project, please contact
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