



***From Novelty to Necessity: Leveraging  
Best Practices in Information and  
Services to Make Smart Grid  
Technologies Work for Consumers***

Jennifer Mosser

Residential Program Manager, DSM

South Carolina Electric & Gas

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# How do we move from novelty to necessity?

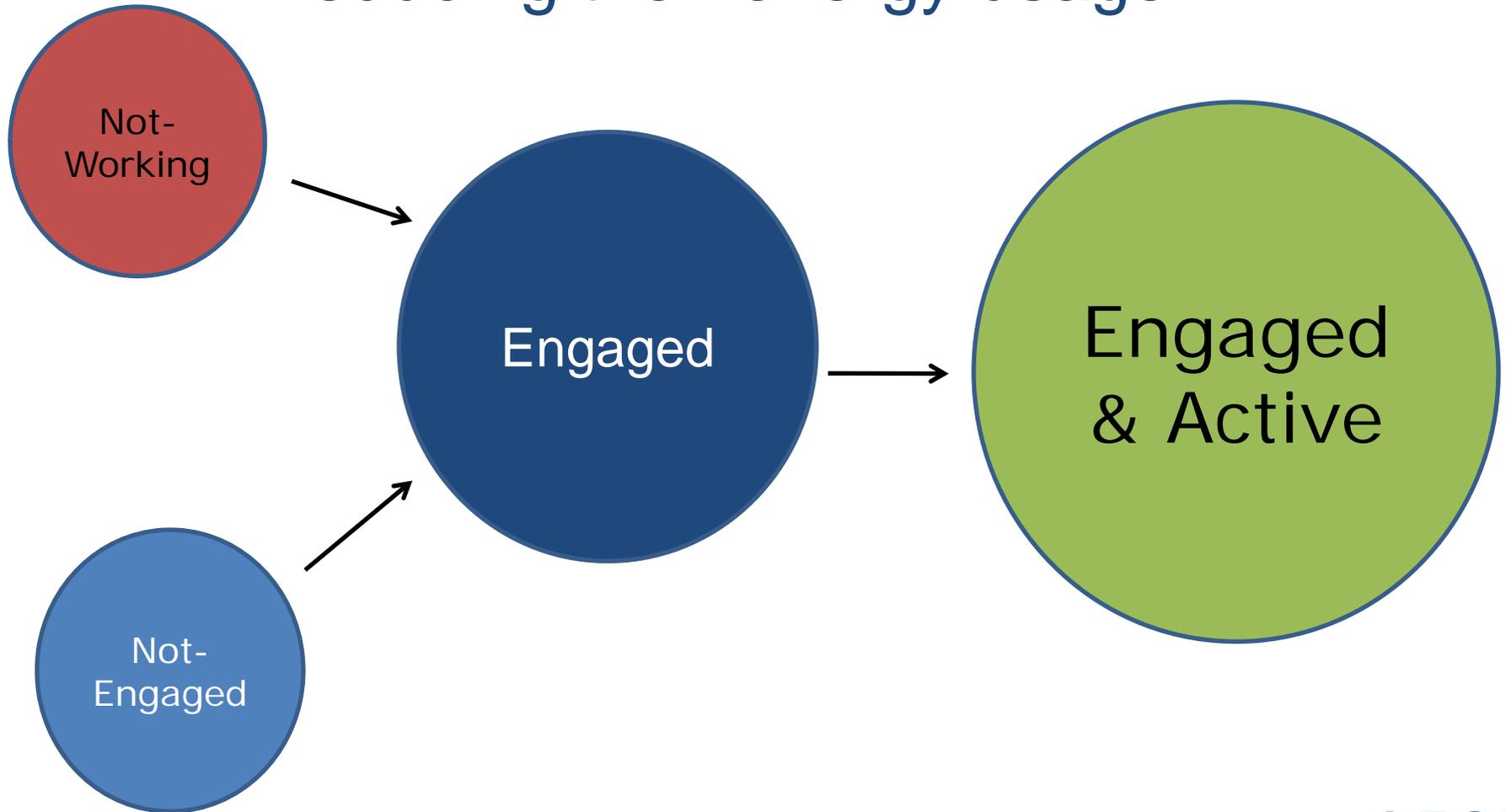
- Utilities are looking for new ways to gain energy savings from customers
- Smart Grid-enabled technologies offer promise
- However, our experience with IHDs shows there is more to success than the perfect widget
- How do we make energy information a must have?



# In-home Displays (IHDs) have promise, but need customer-focused solutions

- Best practices research found:
  - IHDs have high energy saving potential
    - IHDs have generate as much as 12% evaluated savings depending on the program offerings, but most realize between 3.4%-9.3% savings
  - However, they are not without their challenges
    - Evidence suggest that these savings decay over time as the novelty wares off, as soon as 6 months
    - Verified installation rates trend between 65-75%
    - Device retention over time is lower, with studies indicating as much as 23-60% remain installed
  - As would be expected, those who were the most engaged with IHDs achieved the greatest savings

How do we move customers to being actively engaged with their device and reducing their energy usage?



# SCE&G Customer IHD Program

- Participants:
  - 244 Residential customers
  - 42 Small Commercial customers
- Duration:
  - 4 months
  - Customers kept device at end of pilot
- Cost:
  - No cost
- Process:
  - Devices mailed to customers with UPS
  - Customers returned postcards with their ERT ID confirmation of set-up
- Feedback:
  - 3 surveys conducted electronically
  - 15 in-depth interviews with commercial customers

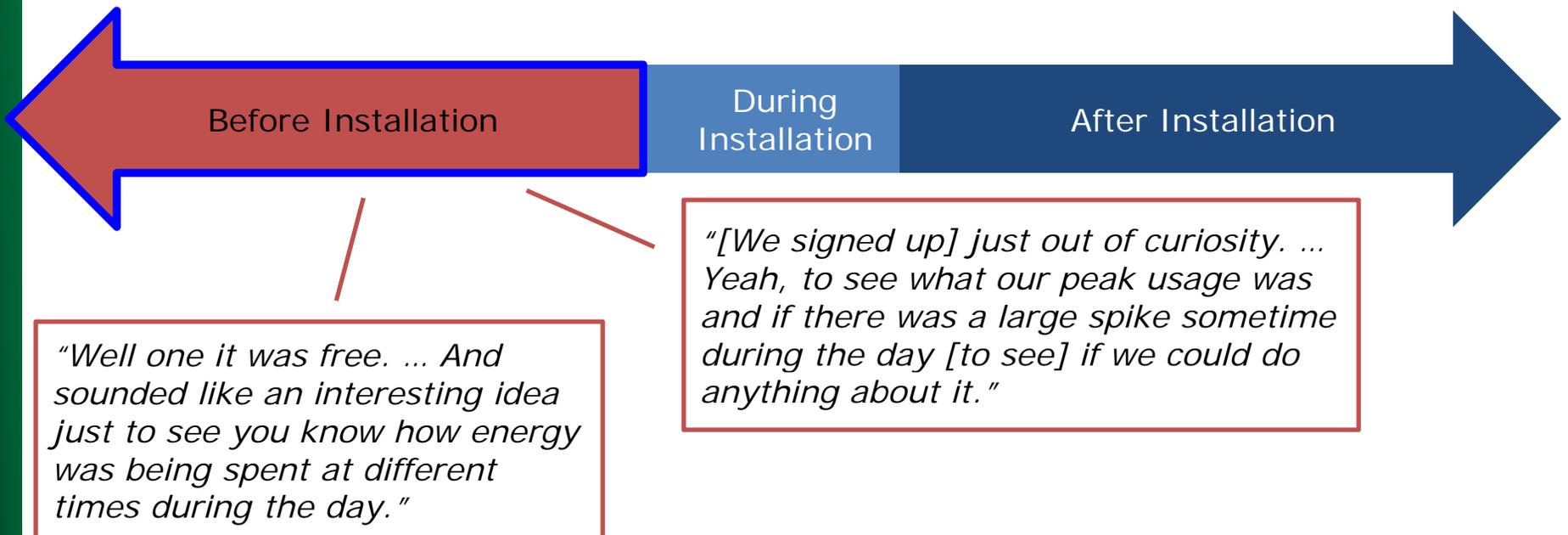


# Success requires enhanced support before, during, and after installation



# Findings: Before Installation

- There are few barriers to enrolling, though true interest in the program varied by customer
  - Customers who signed up said they were not necessarily already interested in the information that the device would provide, but participated out of curiosity and because the device was free



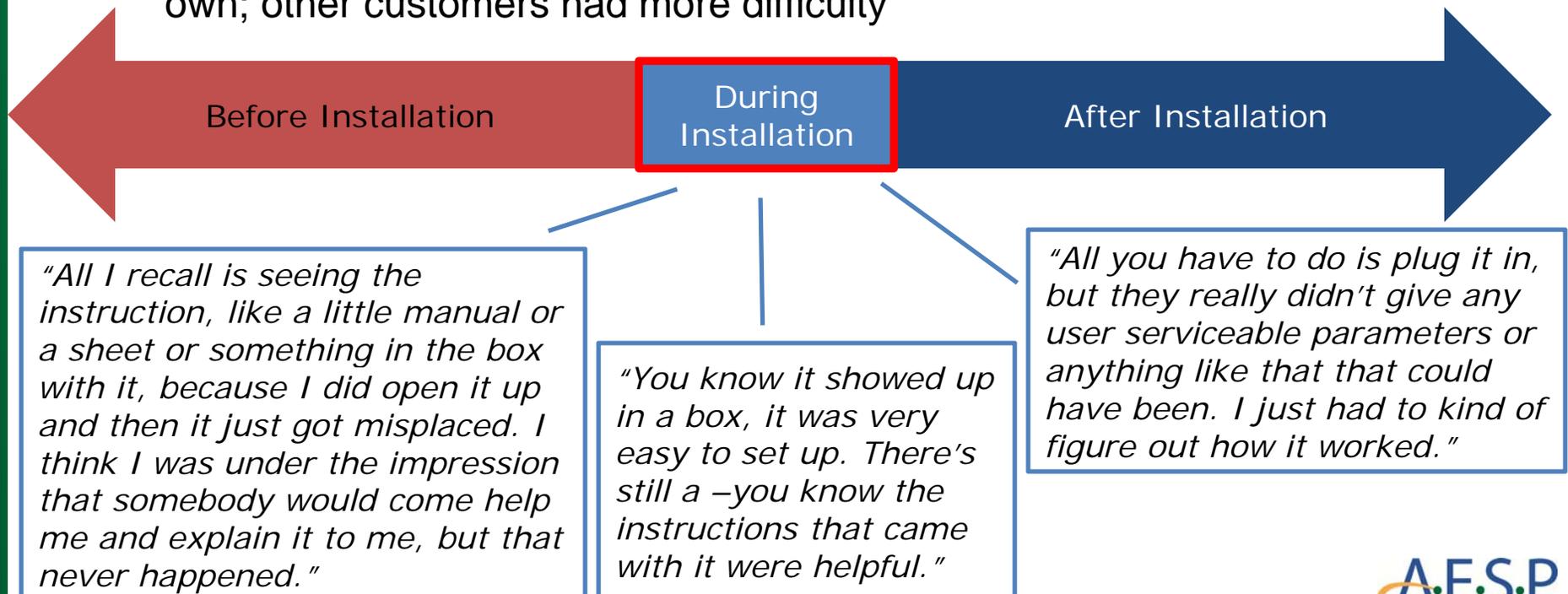
# Findings: Before Installation

- The knowledge that customers have prior to sign up strongly affected their ability to take action after installation
  - Engaged customers:
    - Are familiar their energy usage patterns before signing up
    - Had a sense of what they could do to reduce their energy use
    - Understood the source of energy and energy-specific terminology
  - Unengaged and not active participants:
    - Had less general knowledge of energy going into the program
    - Had little understanding of what used/wasted energy



# Findings: During Installation

- Many customers had to figure out what to do when they received the device. They asked for more instruction on:
  - How to use device
  - What the information meant
- Engaged customers were proactive figured out this information on their own; other customers had more difficulty



# Findings: After Installation

- Many customers have difficulty interpreting the information on the device
  - Engaged customers figured things out on their own (or already understood the key data), though few said that they understood everything the device told them
  - Not-Engaged customers had more difficulty understanding the data and stopped using it

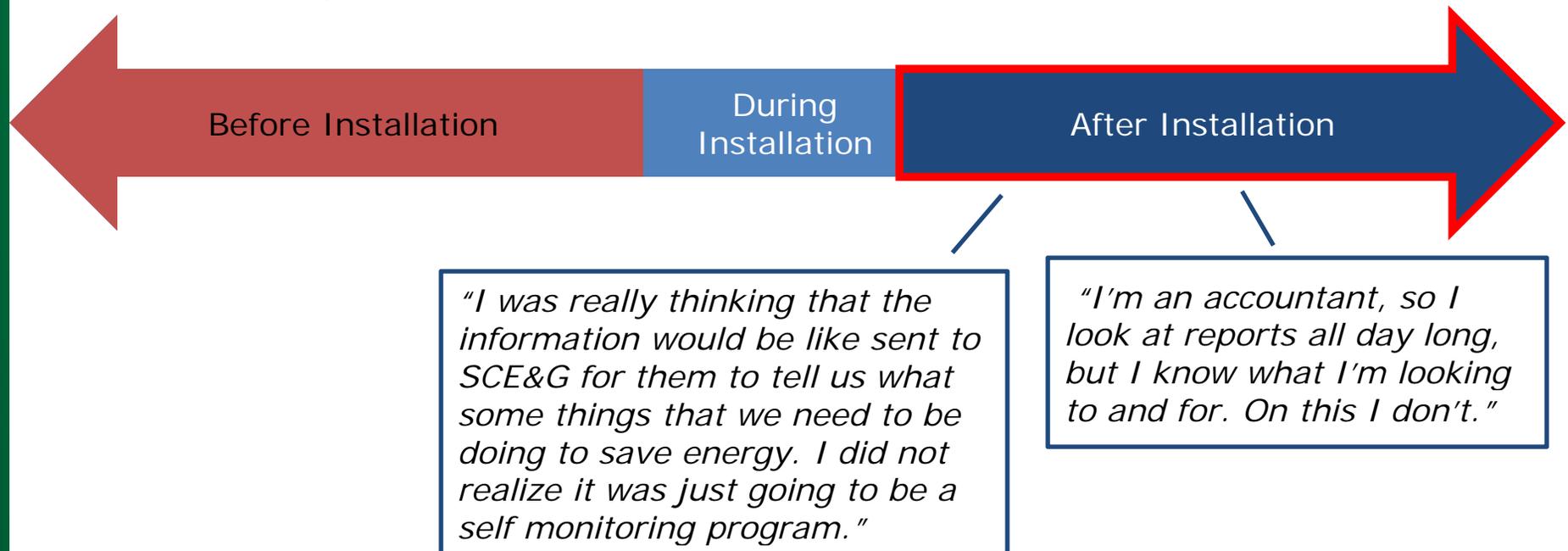


*"My problem is I just don't understand the data. It was kind of a big letdown. I was kind of disappointed. It's like I'm a pretty smart guy. I'm computer savvy. Why don't I understand this data?"*

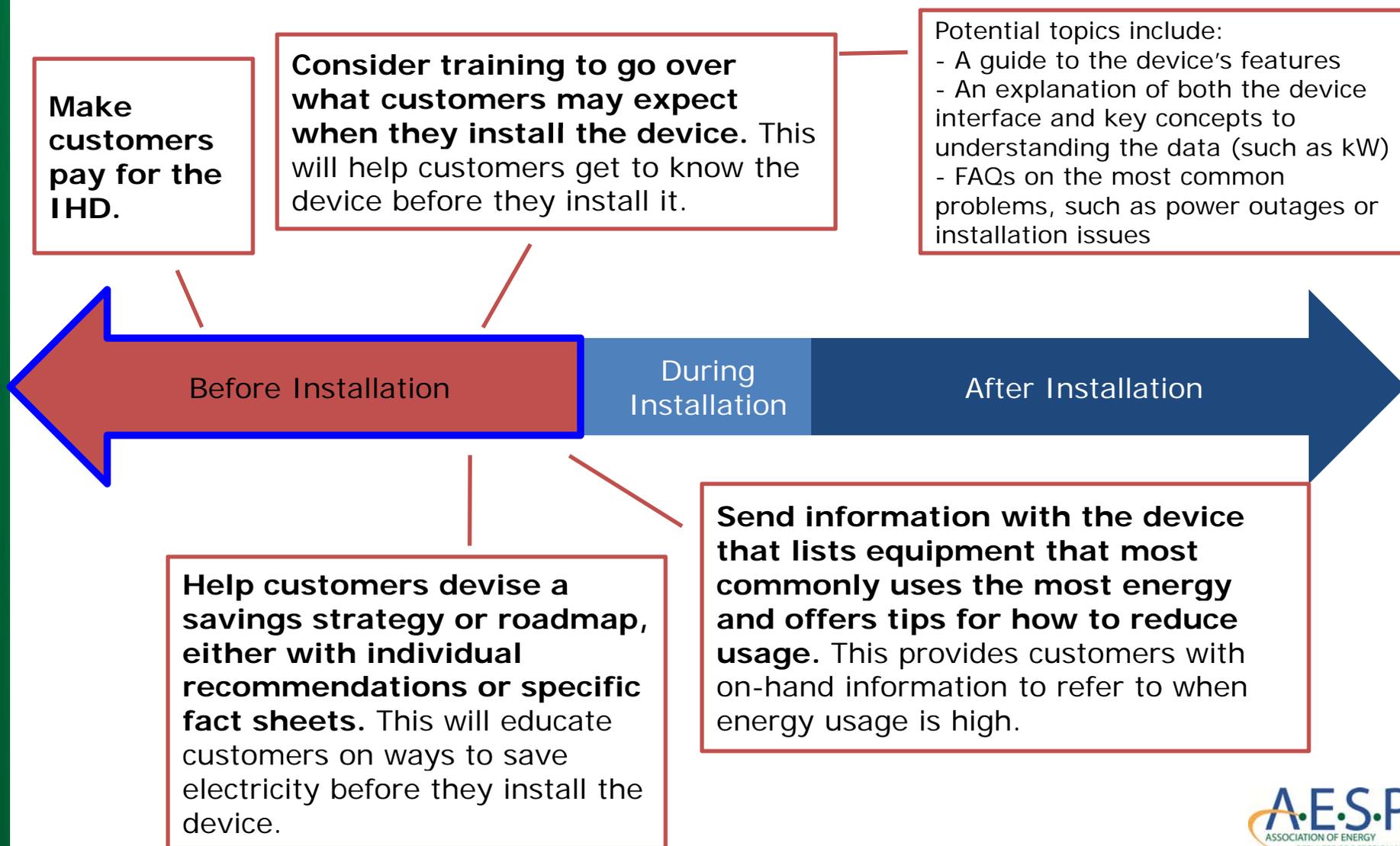
*"I was trying to find out how many kilowatt hours like my air conditioning uses and obviously it's not real helpful in that regard. ... I mean it's something that you can look over time, but when I first got it, it's more I played with it a lot when I first got it. I'm still not sure what like all the little light bulbs are."*

# Service-Related Findings: After Installation

- The device alone does not prompt customers to take action; customers need guidelines on how to act on the information
  - Some were interested in making changes but said they did not know what to do based on the data received
  - Several customers expected to receive more information from SCE&G about next steps



# Recommendations: Before Installation



# Recommendations: During Installation

## **Develop Customized Instructions for the Device.**

The instructions included with the device are “engineer” like. Add personalized, regionally-appropriate instructions in plain English.

**Contact customers close to the day that they receive the device.** Confirm that they received the device and walk them through any immediate issues. This is the period when customers get their ‘first impression’ of the device, and they often do not know what to do on their own.

Before Installation

During Installation

After Installation

**Repeatedly follow up with customers who indicated having technical issues in the initial contact.** Customers who have problems are not always going to contact SCE&G about them. Customers with continued technical issues may need SCE&G to install the device for them.

# Recommendations: After Installation

## **Expand outreach and guidance:**

Customers may already have plans in place, but more outreach here will help them identify new opportunities for savings, sustain their motivation, and ensure their follow-through

Before Installation

During Installation

After Installation

## **Dovetail with other informational programs (such as audits or benchmarking):**

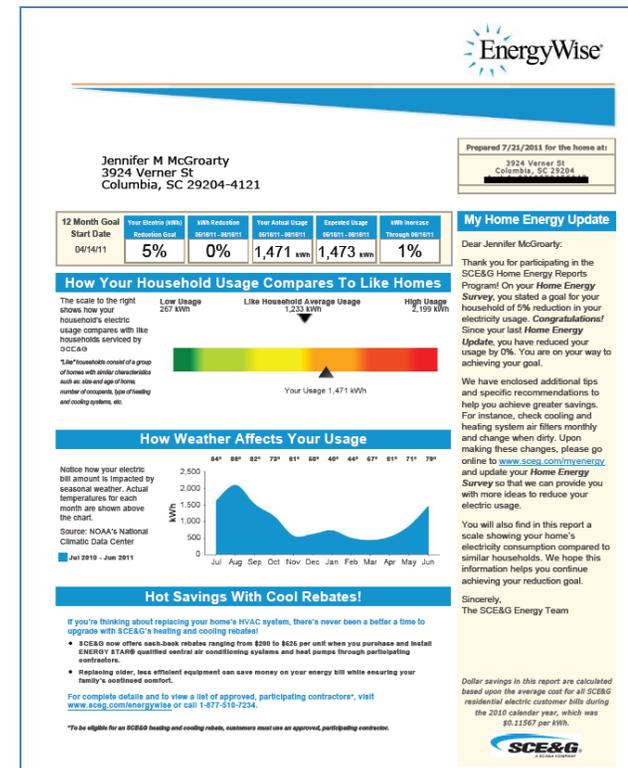
The device can be used to show immediate and ongoing impacts of other SCE&G programs

## **Use targeted EnergyHub push notifications:**

The notifications can offer specialized savings recommendations and offer advance notice of events or other promos

# Adapting the program to better serve SCE&G customers

- Before Installation
  - Focus on recruiting customers who have existing knowledge
    - Received an audit
    - Receive home energy reports
- During Installation
  - Enhance communication
    - Customize instructions
    - Email communication
    - Repeated follow-up
    - Intensive contact center training
- After Installation
  - Send regular push notifications to keep customers engaged



# Adapting the program to better serve SCE&G customers

- Moved to a new device to provide a better customer experience
- New unit offers more benefits:
  - For SCE&G
    - Visibility into device registration and activity
    - Push notifications
    - Ability to update rate information
  - For Customer
    - Simple and modern interface
    - Web portal



# How do we move from novelty to necessity?

- There is more to market adoption than giving out interesting devices
- Services are a central component to IHD program success, including
  - educational services
  - technical services
- On-going support and encouragement is needed



Save the Date



## 22<sup>nd</sup> National Conference & Expo

February 6-10, 2012  
Hilton San Diego Bayfront

