

Bringing them Home: Rebate Agents Score Contracts for Utilities!

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What Is a Rebate Agent?

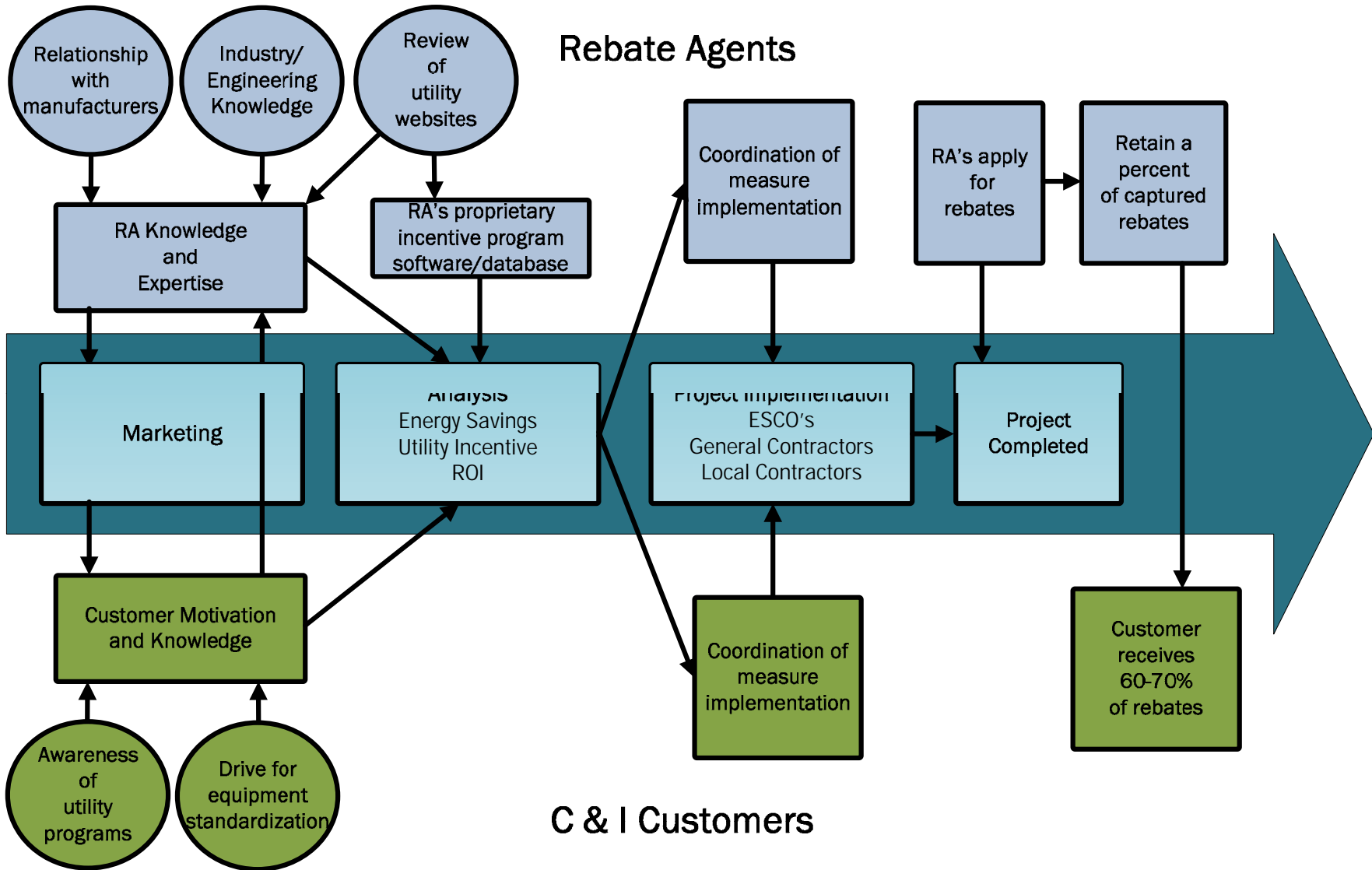
- Locate, apply for, and collect utility incentives for commercial clients
- At least seven large national firms

Who Hires a Rebate Agent?

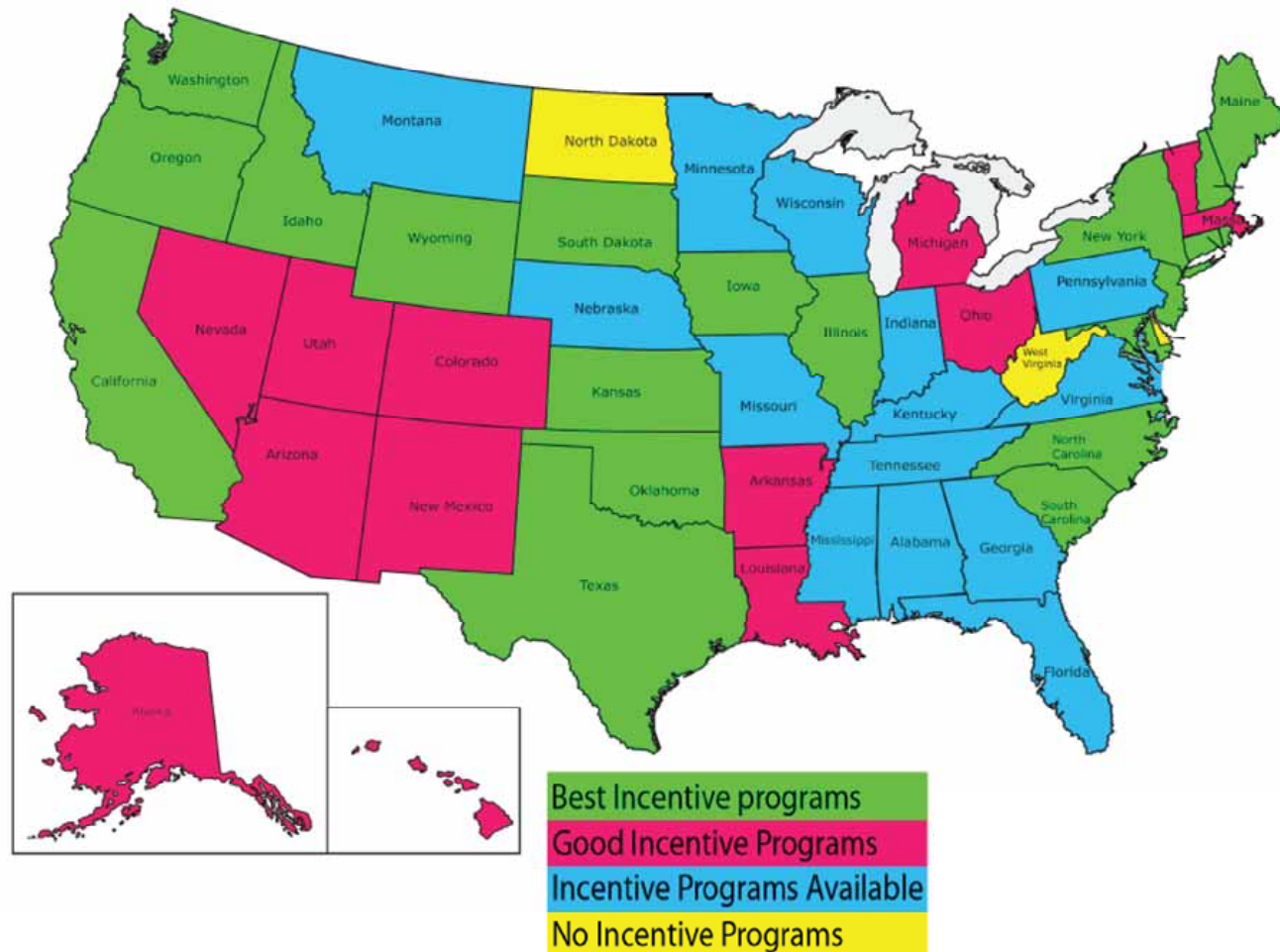
- National companies, often retailers

Why Hire a Rebate Agent?

- Engineering and financial analysis:
 - Know measures
 - Energy savings
 - ROI
- Closely track the utility market
 - Coordinate nation-wide measure implementation
- Submit program applications



Rebate Agents focus on the incentive market.



Found at <http://www.optimumlighting.com/utility-rebates/utility-mapping/> 2/1/2011

Rebate Agents are conduits for a significant portion of utility C&I program participation.

Region	Program Type	Percent of Participation	Percent of Ex Ante Energy Savings
Midwest	Custom	48%	14%
Southwest	Prescriptive	20%	11%
Eastern	Prescriptive	14%	19%

Rebate Agents provide insights into new construction decision-making.

- National companies often use prototypical building designs for new construction
 - Designs may be flexible to respond to variability in local utility incentive programs
 - Rebate Agents sometimes inform the prototype design

Rebate Agents provide insights into retrofit decision-making.

- National companies like to standardize equipment across sites.
 - Consult Rebate Agents to determine which equipment will qualify for the most rebates nation-wide.
 - Will pilot test equipment in the regions with the highest incentives.

Rebate Agents provide insights into retrofit decision-making.

- Standardizing equipment vs. site-specific ROI
 - ROI in high incentive territories can increase nationwide average ROI (*indirect influence*)
 - When standardization is less important, incentives have more of a *direct influence* on equipment choice.

Evaluation Challenges

- Identifying rebate agents (appear as participants)
- Rebate agents generally don't recall specifics of a particular program
 - True participant may not recall program if rebate agent coordinated incentive application
- Evaluators need to plan ahead to determine evaluation strategy.

Evaluation Opportunities

- General understanding of customers' decision making processes
- Able to compare across utilities
- Good at identifying how to improve programs

Collecting Feedback from Rebate Agents

Area of Interest	Ask the Rebate Agent?
Training Effectiveness	NO
Customers Decision-making Process	YES
Detailed Process Feedback	NO
How Incentives Compare to other Territories	YES
Local Contractor Market	NO
NTG Battery	MAYBE

NTG Concerns for Evaluators

- Recall for specific projects
- National and Local Influences:
 - Proto-typical store design
 - Pilot-testing
 - Mix of *direct* and *indirect* influences, not discrete
 - Determining appropriate algorithms

Considerations for Program Managers

- Program Development
 - Relationship with Rebate Agents can grow program quickly.

“If there is a good incentive, we'll sell that program, in hopes of getting that business.”
 - Rebate Agents often have strong connection to vendors
 - Rebate Agents can offer program design advice to program managers

Considerations for Program Managers

- Freeridership
 - A well-designed program will withstand Rebate Agent-derived net impacts
 - But Rebate Agent can act as “rebate hunters” or “freerider enablers”

Questions?

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