



Innovative Thinking for Recycling Programs: How to Teach an Old Hog New Tricks

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Program Year 1

Where are we and where do we go from here?

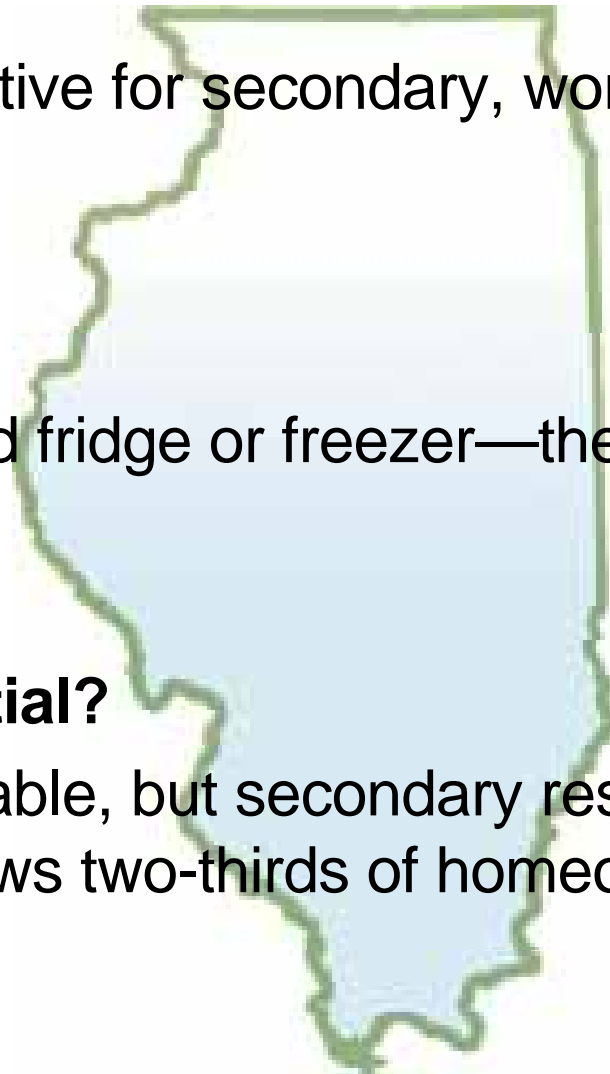
Program Rules: \$35 Incentive for secondary, working units manufactured before 1993.

Who is our audience?

Anyone who owns a second fridge or freezer—the basement or garage units.

What is the market potential?

No solid numbers are available, but secondary research in other Midwest markets shows two-thirds of homeowners may be harboring a second unit.



Program Year 1 Messaging

Tried attention-grabbing, outside-the-box marketing messages like this humorous bill insert.

No consistent campaign focus was agreed upon.



So why is there a **REFRIGERATOR** parked in your garage?

Whether it's in your garage or basement, that second refrigerator or freezer is taking up valuable space and using up to \$100 a year in energy costs!

The **Act On Energy**® Refrigerator Recycling program will haul away your old appliance for free and send you **\$35**, just for being a smart recycler.

To qualify, your old appliance must be manufactured before 1993 and in working (cooling) condition. The program is only available to electric customers of the Ameren Illinois Utilities (AmerenCIPS, AmerenCLCO and AmerenP).

Call **866-899-9088** now to schedule your **FREE** pick-up.

Ameren
Illinois Utilities

ActOnEnergy

Program Year 1 Results

Media

Bill inserts; direct mail.

Results

Program goals were achieved and exceeded by 148 units.

Goal: 3,700 units

Actual: 3,848 units

That was easy, now on to Program Year 2!



Recycle that old fridge
or freezer and get **\$35!**



ActOnEnergy.com



Call **866-899-9088** to schedule your **FREE** pick-up.
You can also schedule your pick-up online at **ActOnEnergy.com**

You must be an Ameren Illinois Utilities residential electric customer to participate in the program. Your appliance must be in working (cooling) condition; manufactured before 1993; and 10-27 cubic feet in size.

Program Year 2 Messaging

In the second year we created simple, straightforward messaging in hopes that our target customers would easily understand the program's value proposition.



Program Year 2

So where is all the low-hanging fruit anyway?

- Increased marketing efforts
- Cohesive multi-media campaign
- Increased unit pickups by 190%
- Still didn't meet program goal



Program Year 2 Results

Media

Billboards, inserts, direct mail, posters, radio, flyers, print, truck wraps, PR to promote the 10,000th pickup.

Results

Program goals were missed by **3,816**.

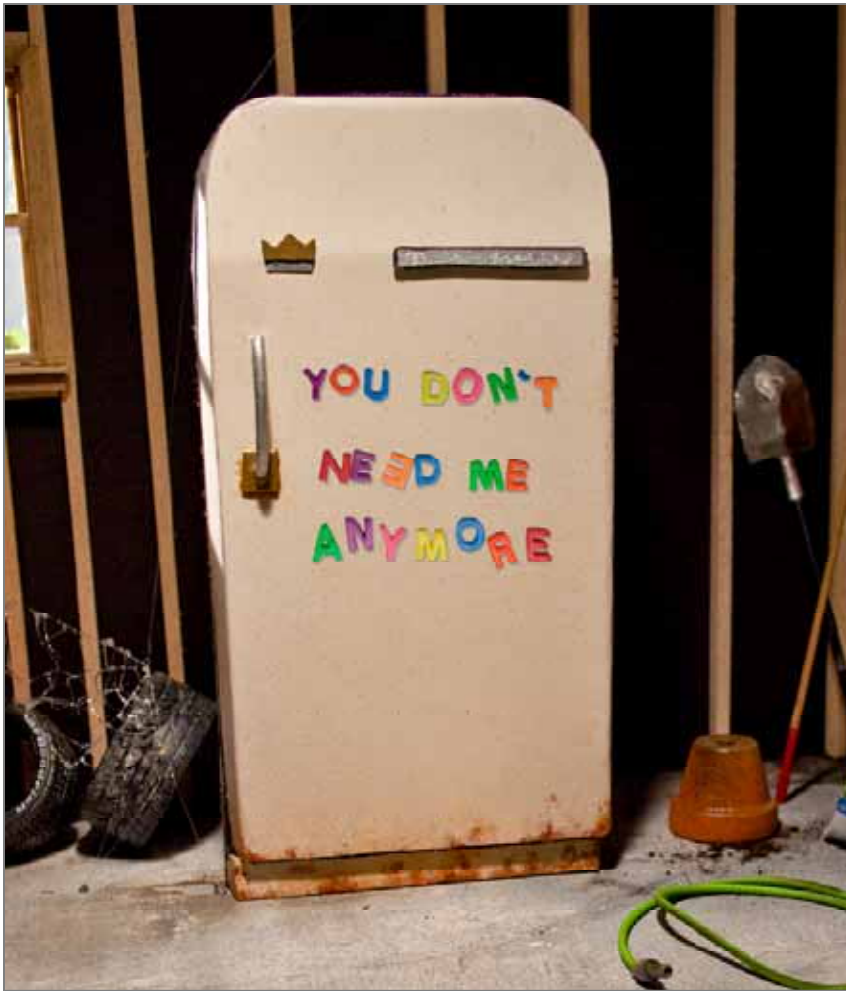
Goal: 15,000 units

Actual: 11,184 units

How do we improve the marketing for PY3?

Program Year 3 Messaging

The “Please Let Me Go” theme. Is keeping that second fridge an emotional decision?



Program Year 3 Messaging

An aggressive multi-media campaign was implemented.

- A TV campaign with a stop-action, puppet animation style was created.
- Print, billboards, radio, direct mail, bill inserts in the same visual style .
- The messaging was aimed at empty-nesters through visual style and magnet letters that gave voice to the refrigerators and poked fun at people's emotional attachment to their second refrigerators.

Program Year 3 Messaging

Back to the drawing board:

1. We loosen the age restrictions to units manufactured before 2001.
2. A short time later we institute the non-profit bonus program, which enabled nonprofit groups to get \$10 per unit for helping us market the program.

We also conducted a survey of non-participants in the key market areas.

Survey Results

1. 19% of those who had not participated in the program had a qualifying second fridge or freezer (and therefore would be eligible to participate).
2. 50% of these had heard about the fridge recycling program—71% named television as their source. Mass media was doing what it does well—create awareness.
3. When asked why they hadn't participated, most (65%) couldn't give us a reason. The ones who could, gave answers that reflected the "Letting Go is Hard to Do" theme of our program advertising: "I'm still using it," "There's nothing wrong with it," and "It comes in handy."

Survey Results



So our messaging, it turns out, was right on target.

Further PY3 Modifications

- By the end of Program Year 3, although the nonprofit referral program had not significantly influenced participation, we decided to keep it going indefinitely.
- It was still growing (slowly) and it reflected positively on the utility among community nonprofits and their donors.
- We also made the decision to remove all age restrictions in an effort to increase participation.

Program Year 3 Results

Media

TV, billboards, inserts, direct mail, posters, radio, flyers, print, truck wraps,

Results

Program goals were missed by **13,667**. The worst year yet!

Goal: 23,000 units

Actual: 9,333 units

With all that advertising and the addition of the nonprofit program, participation was worse than the previous year!

Program Year 4 Messaging

The only thing we had not changed about the program was the incentive amount. So, we decided to increase the incentive to \$50 going into PY4.

We kicked off PY4 with an insert that featured the Energy Hog. We received so much positive feedback, we decided to keep the hog as the main marketing focus.

WANTED
Energy Hogs Posing as Refrigerators and Freezers

WANTED
Energy Hogs Posing as Refrigerators and Freezers

\$50 REWARD

Recycle your full-size, working (cooling) refrigerator or freezer — any age, from anywhere in your home — and get a \$50 Reward!

Schedule Your FREE Pickup at ActOnEnergy.com or call 1.866.899.9088.

Ameren ILLINOIS

A.E.S.P.
ASSOCIATION OF ENERGY SERVICES PROFESSIONALS

Program Year 4 Messaging

The Energy Hog is featured in direct mail, posters, print ads, community-based promotions, retail brochures and online display advertising.



Program Year 4 Messaging

The Energy Hog takes on another dimension—3D!

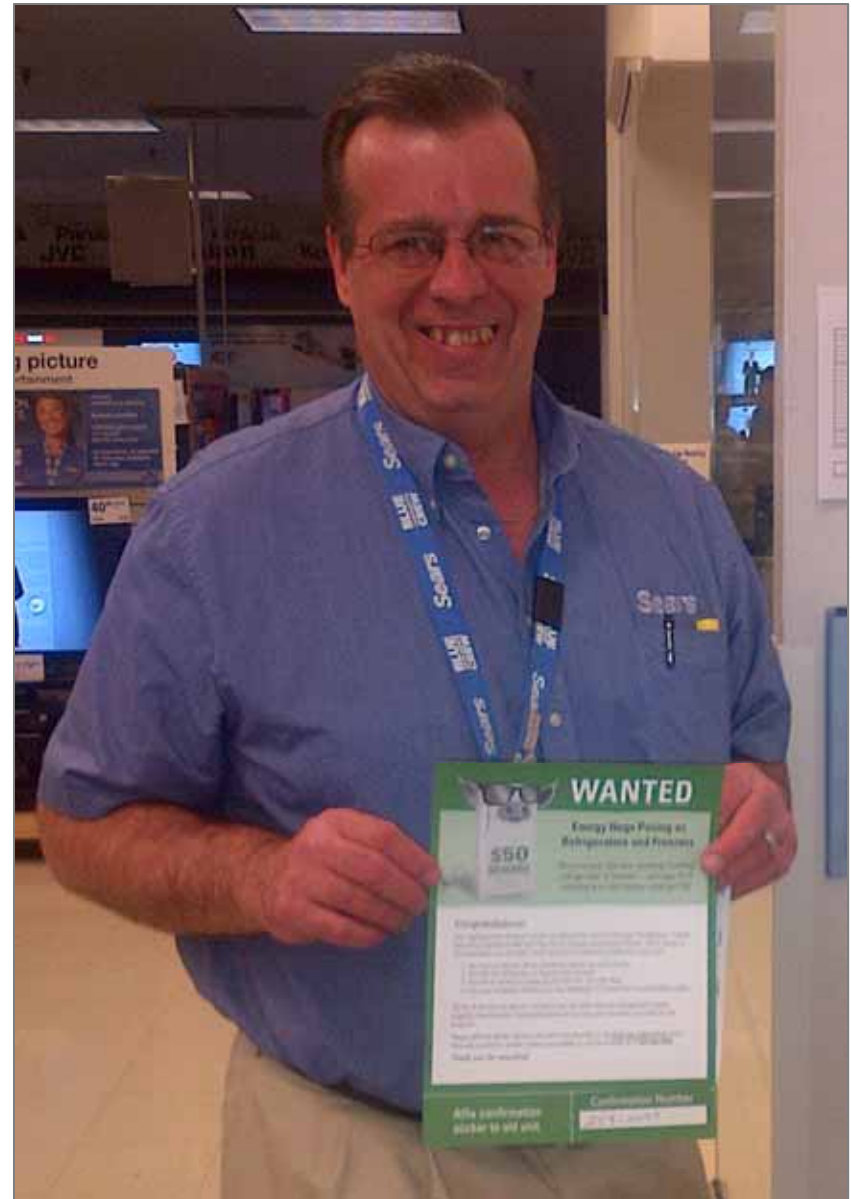
The Energy Hog mascot is born and begins to make appearances at events.



Program Year 4 Messaging

To our surprise, and without the benefit of mass media, we started to achieve our monthly program goals!

In December we add another marketing channel to the program: an ongoing promotion with 13 Sears stores in our territory.



Program Year 4 Messaging

We doubled the nonprofit referral bonus during November and December and were able to avoid the usual drop in participation during the holiday season.



Help a Good Cause — Get \$50!

For every residential fridge or freezer you recycle through the *ActOnEnergy*[®] efficiency program, you'll receive \$50 and the nonprofit group named below will receive a \$20 referral bonus if you call by Dec. 31, 2011.

**\$20 HOLIDAY REFERRAL BONUS
LIMITED TIME ONLY!**



Recycling is Easier Than Ever!

Program Year 4 Results

Media

Bill inserts, posters, flyers, community “grass-roots ads” (grocery stores, gas station fillboards and mall posters), direct mail, print ads, online ads, e-blasts (to online bill pay customers), and retail brochures.

Results

We are just wrapping up PY4 and will hit or surpass our goals!

Goal: 13,679 units
(March to-date) **Actual: 12,939 units**

Historical Summary

PY1 – We got our hooves wet and we learned enough to be dangerous.

PY2 – We had all the makings of a prime producer, but our results smelled like a pig sty.

PY3 – We did it all—TV, Radio, Print, Direct Mail...just to prove that the marketing wasn't the problem—but we still didn't bring home the bacon.



PY4 – Eureka! We're making our goal and hogging the limelight!

In Conclusion

We learned some lessons along the way:

1. Time is on our side

A brand new program, no matter how much you promote it, takes time to catch on. In a new market, there *is* such a thing as program maturity.

Key Takeaway: Even as you try new marketing strategies, keep in mind that your marketing will have a cumulative effect as time goes by. New marketing ideas should build upon previous ones, not completely change direction.

In Conclusion

2. Don't blame the messaging

There are many ways to sell the value of a recycling program—headlines don't make or break programs.

Key Takeaway: Consider all the pieces—program design, marketing, incentives, audience feedback, additional marketing channels—when looking to make program improvements.

In Conclusion

3. Keep it real

Temporary benefits shouldn't be your main focus— make sure your key message is energy efficiency.

Key takeaway: By staying focused on efficiency, it's a natural segue into the next program you want your customers to participate in.

The Energy Hog is not a new concept, but it reminds everyone that old fridges are wasting energy, therefore strengthening the energy efficiency message.

In Conclusion

4. Never stop innovating

Your team will work better in a collaborative atmosphere. Great ideas don't always come from the “creative” people and strategy isn't the sole territory of program designers.

Key takeaway: Every team member should feel comfortable bringing ideas to the table.

Our success in PY4 is due to a combination of fine-tuning the marketing, incentive amount, program guidelines and “plain old” program maturity.

Thank You!





Save the Date

Jul. 30-31, 2012

AESP's Summer Conference
Toronto, ON (Canada)

Oct. 15-17, 2012

AESP's Fall Conference
Long Beach, CA

Jan. 28-31, 2013

AESP's 23rd National
Conference & Expo
Orlando, FL

For more information - www.aesp.org

