

Customer Survey Insights



Presentation for EWR Collaborative
September 2022

DTE



Introduction



Methodology Comparison



Consumers Energy

- **Survey Population:** Residential general population (participants and nonparticipants)
- **Fielding Date:** August 2020, six months into the pandemic; Refresh of this survey planned for fall 2022
- **Responses:** 712 responses

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Consumers Energy

- **Fielding:** Both utilities sent up to two emails inviting participation in the online survey
- Fielding **timelines** for both utilities represent a snapshot in time
- Pandemic affected both utility's program offerings

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- **Survey Population:** Residential and Commercial nonparticipants
- **Fielding Date:** February 2021, 11 months into the pandemic
- **Responses:** 1,218 responses

Consumers Energy Survey Approach and Method

Approach

Survey residential population to identify trends and current concerns around:

- Observe trends in EWR and DR program
Awareness
- Participation **barriers and motivations**
- **Opportunities** for new or enhanced offerings
- **Response** to 2020 COVID-19 restrictions

Method



- Proportional representation by geography
- Oversampled rural customers
- Included both participants (in EWR and DR programs) and nonparticipants
- Weighted final data on geography and income to match customer population and census data, respectively

	Survey Population	Survey Completes
Non-participants	30,000	560
Participants		152
Total		712

DTE Survey Approach and Methodology

Approach

Survey EWR program nonparticipants in February 2021 to provide insight into the following topics:

- **Barriers to participation**
- **Opportunities for new offerings**
- **Engagement with nonparticipant customers**

Methodology

Survey Population

- The survey targeted **program nonparticipants**.
- Those who participated in a DTE EWR program in the last 3 years were excluded.
- Survey targeted both residential and commercial customers.

Questions and Fielding

- Questions were designed to probe satisfaction and trust, program awareness, and barriers to participation.
- Commercial customers received questions about residential programs under the theory that businessowners are also homeowners.
- Questions about COVID-19 were minimized.
- Customers received an email inviting them to complete the survey.

	Survey Quota	Survey Completes
Residential	600	592
Commercial	600	626
Total	1,200	1,218

Awareness of Energy Efficiency Programs and Utility Satisfaction

Customer Awareness of Energy Efficiency Programs

Consumers Energy

- Awareness remained high, but declined slightly in mid-2020 (81% compared to 86% in 2014)
- The Smart Thermostat and Dynamic Peak Pricing programs had the highest customer awareness
- Satisfaction with Consumers Energy higher among customers aware of EWR and DR programs.
- COVID-19 pandemic was a key factor in customer awareness and interest.



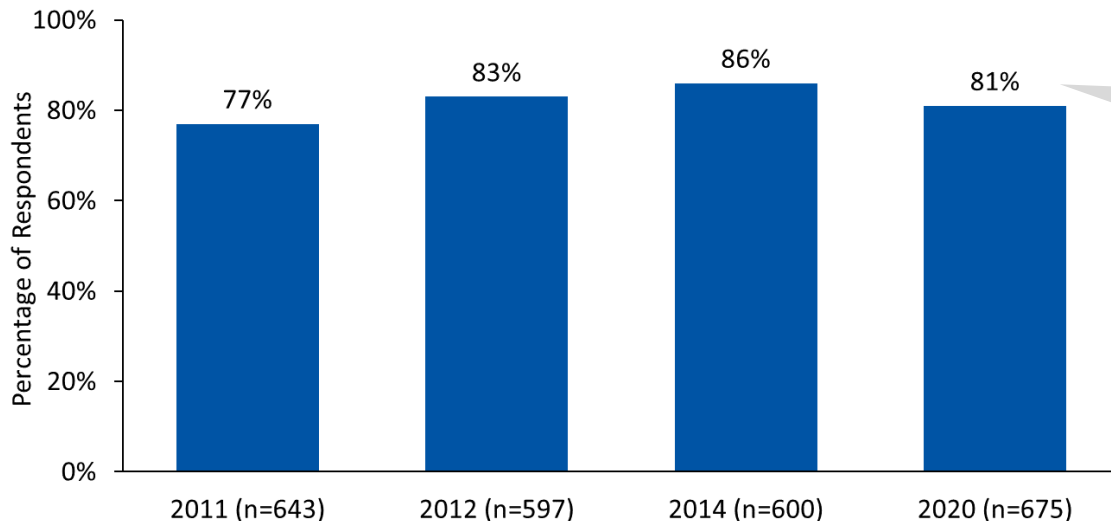
- Residential customers are almost twice as likely to be aware of DTE EWR programs compared to Commercial customers.
- Of the top 10 programs customers reported being familiar with, nine were Residential programs.
- The Commercial program customers were most familiar with the Business Energy Consultation program.

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Consumers Energy Program Awareness

General awareness of Consumers Energy's EWR and DR programs decreased slightly from 2014

Customers who had heard something about Consumers Energy programs in the prior 12 months



Awareness remained high, but declined slightly in mid-2020

Source: General Population Survey question B1. Over the past year, have you heard anything about Consumers Energy programs or rebates that help customers reduce their energy use and save money on their energy bills? **Note: Survey fielded after programs had been shut down or limited for three months.**

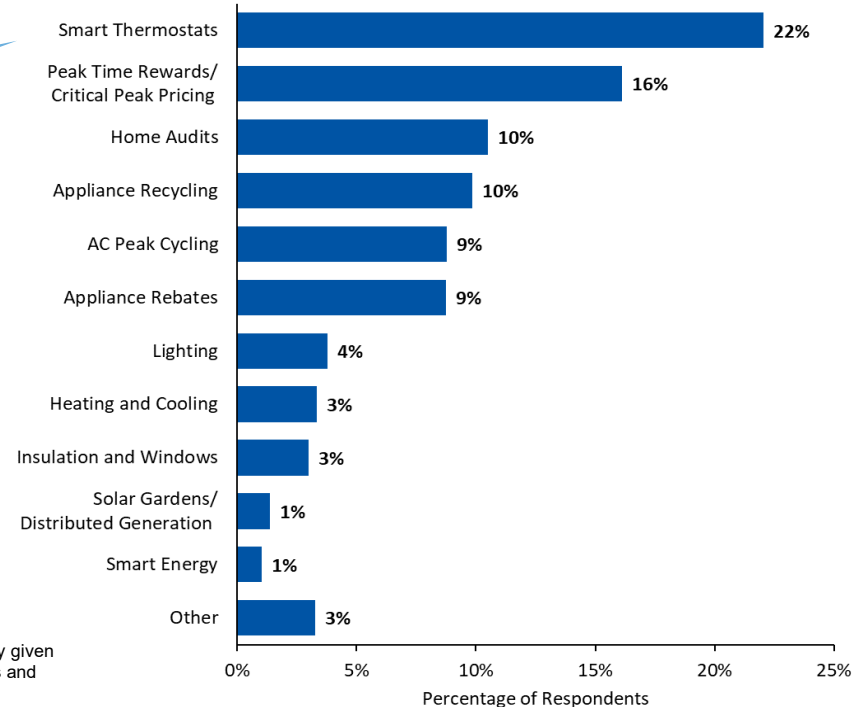
Awareness of Consumers Energy EWR and DR Programs

The Smart Thermostat and Dynamic Peak Pricing programs had the highest customer awareness

High Smart Thermostat awareness was likely driven by Consumers Energy's **Smart Thermostat Giveaway** promotion (gave away 47,000 thermostats) and **strong marketing efforts** in the months leading up to the survey fielding period

Source: General Population Survey questions B2 (n=546)

Question B2 was asked as an open-ended question, so some programs are combined due to the lack of clarity given by respondents. These percentages do not total to 100% because respondents could name multiple programs and some respondents could not name specific energy-efficiency programs or services.



Satisfaction with Consumers Energy

Customers are generally satisfied with Consumers Energy.

SATISFACTION

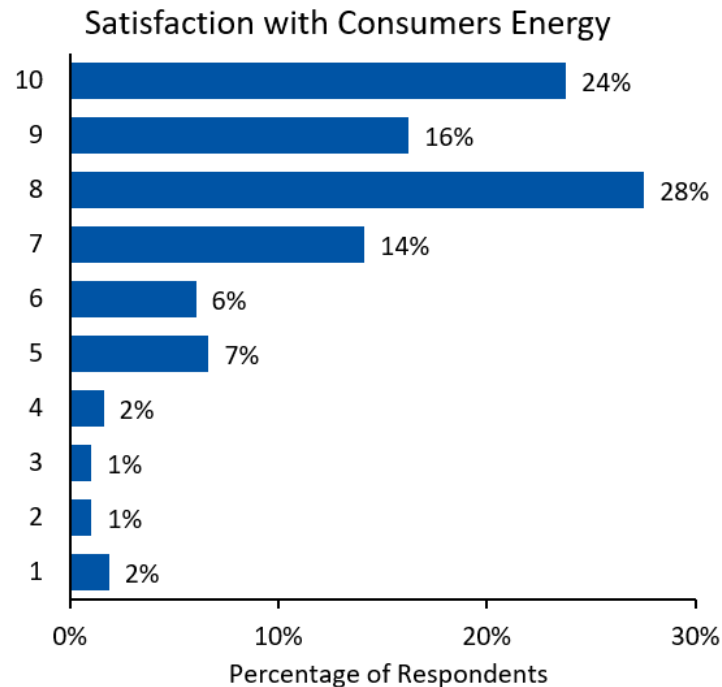


Mean: 7.9/10

68% rated '8' or higher

Significantly higher mean for customers who are **familiar with Consumers Energy's programs** (mean of 8.3 vs. 7.7)

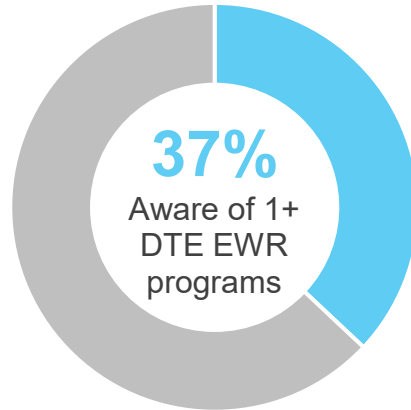
Consistent with 2014 survey (mean of 7.7), which also found **higher satisfaction among engaged customers**



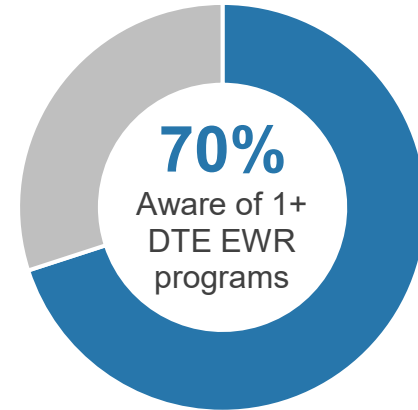
DTE Nonparticipant Program Awareness

Residential customers are almost twice as likely to be aware of DTE EWR programs compared to Commercial customers.

Of the customers who were aware of at least one program, the average Residential and Commercial customer were aware a similar number of total programs (3.1 and 2.9, respectively).



C&I
N = 232



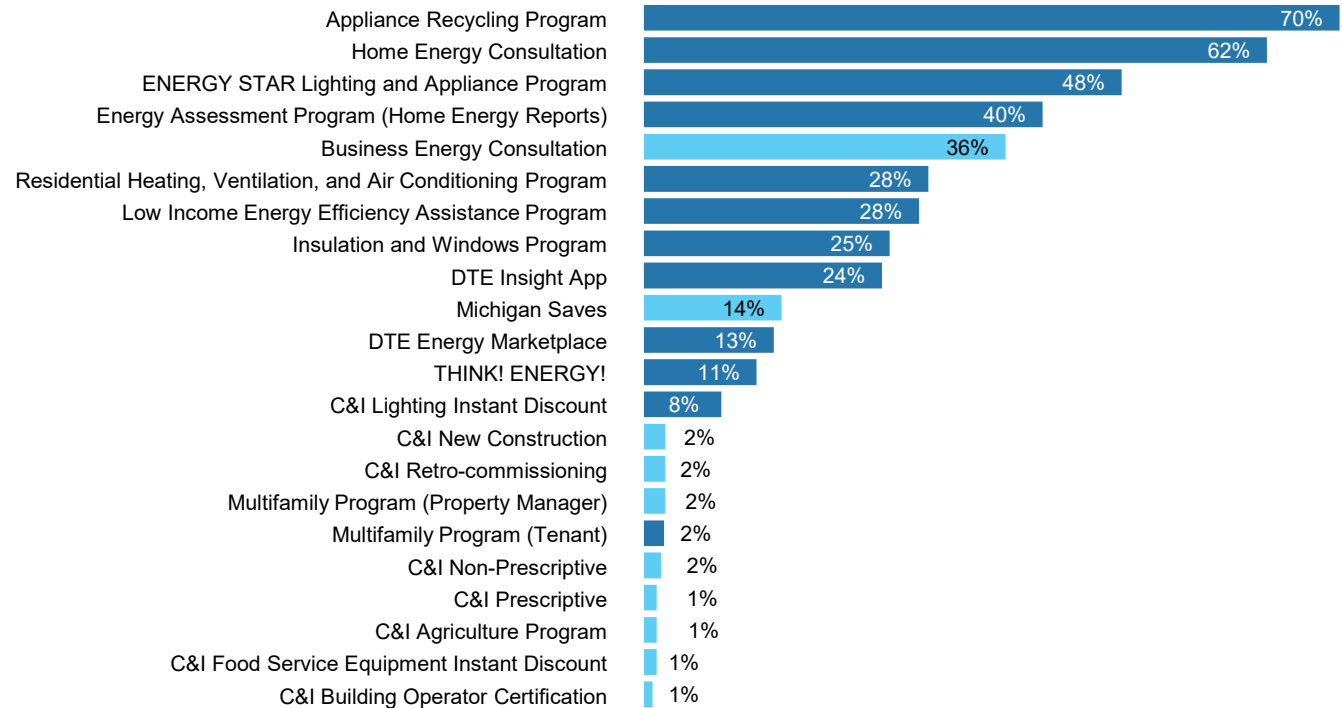
Residential
N = 414

Nonparticipant Awareness of DTE Program Offerings

Customers who reported being aware of DTE EWR programs were **most likely to be familiar with Residential programs.**

Of the top ten programs customers reported being familiar with, **nine were Residential programs.**

The Commercial program customers were most familiar with the **Business Energy Consultation** program.



N = 646

Residential Program



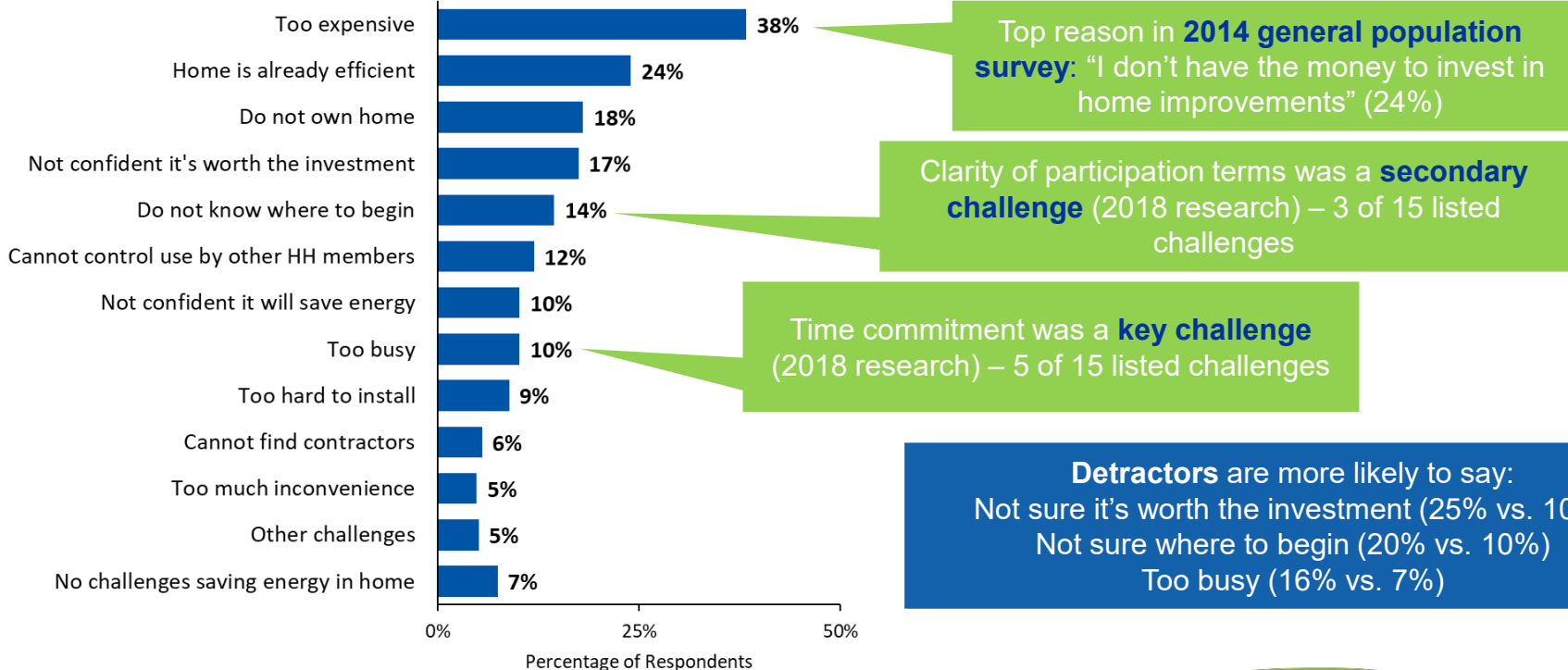
C&I Program



Challenges and Motivations

Challenges to Saving Energy (Consumers Energy)

The most common challenges customers face are that **upgrades are too expensive** and that they think their **homes are already efficient**.



Reasons for Participating in Consumers Energy Programs

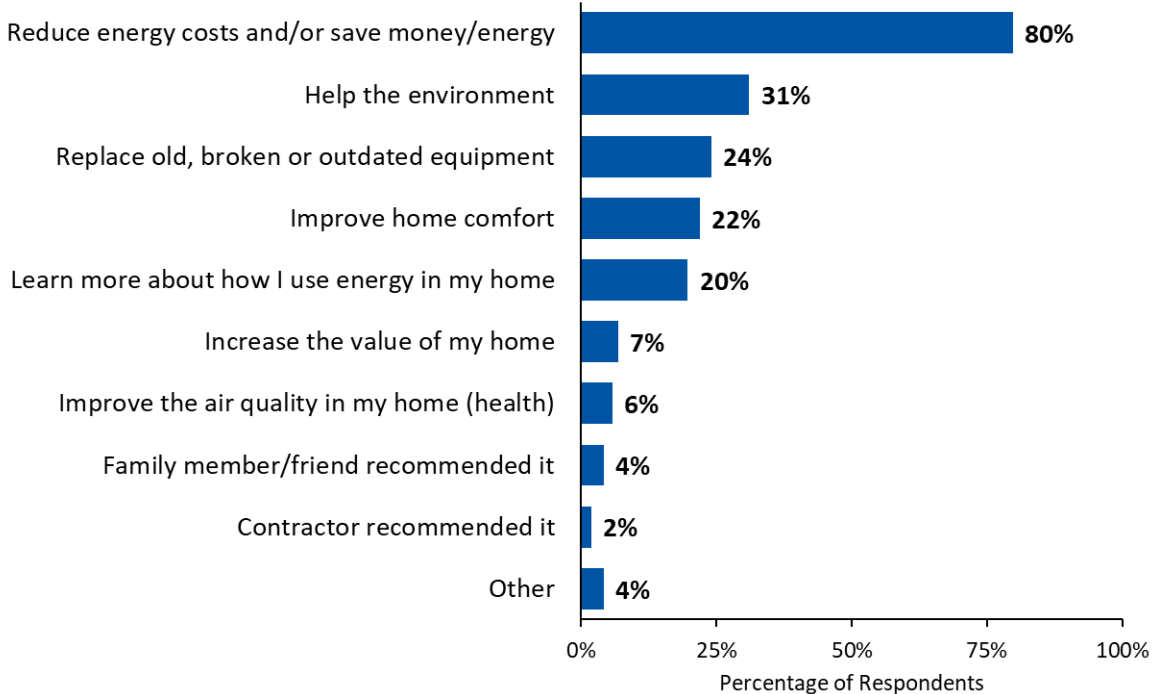
Most program participants cited **reducing energy costs** as a reason for participating

Top reasons are consistent with results from prior research:

64% of customers cited **saving money** (2014 general population survey)

6 of 13 factors related to **cost and/or energy savings** (2018 research)

2 of 13 factors related to **helping the environment** (2018 research)



Source: 2020 General Population Survey questions B5 (n=712) and B6 (n=199 respondents who participated in a Consumers Energy program in the past 3 years, multiple responses accepted).

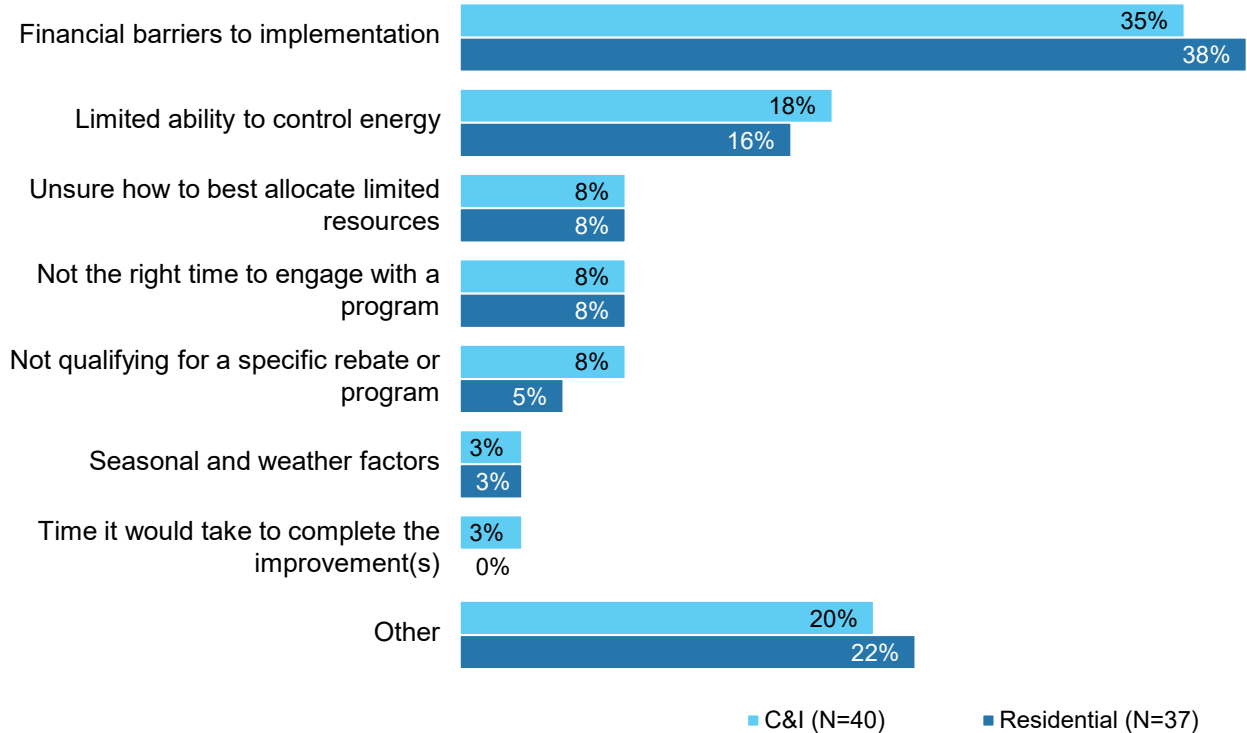
Strategyn 2018 Residential Outcome-Driven Innovation qualitative research; 2015 Marketing Effectiveness and Awareness research

Barriers to Nonparticipant Participation (DTE)

What Prevents Customers from Making Upgrades?

The **top two barriers** both Residential and Commercial customers face are **financial** (lack of resources) and lack of ownership:

- For customers who responded “other,” most of the residential customers state that **renting their home** is the main barrier.
- Commercial customers who responded “other” said **financing** was the main barrier.

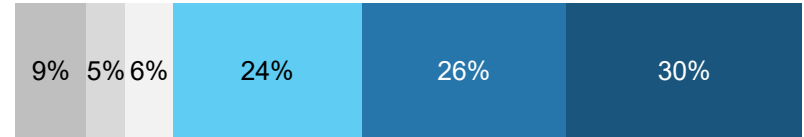


Values Influence DTE Nonparticipant Motivations

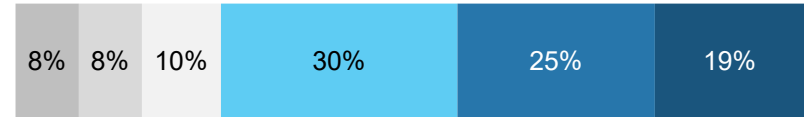
How Do Customers Rate the Importance of Values?

- Approximately **74% of customers** were at least somewhat interested in learning about the **economic impacts** of DTE's energy efficiency programs.
- Approximately **71% of customers** were at least somewhat interested in learning more about the **environmental impacts** of DTE's energy efficiency programs.

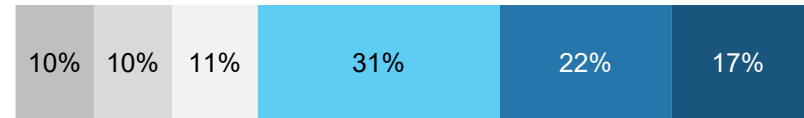
It is important to me that brands align themselves with community service
(N = 1,171)



I would like to know more about the economic impacts of energy efficiency programs that DTE offers
(N = 1,218)



I would like to know more about the environmental impacts of energy efficiency programs that DTE offers
(N = 1,217)

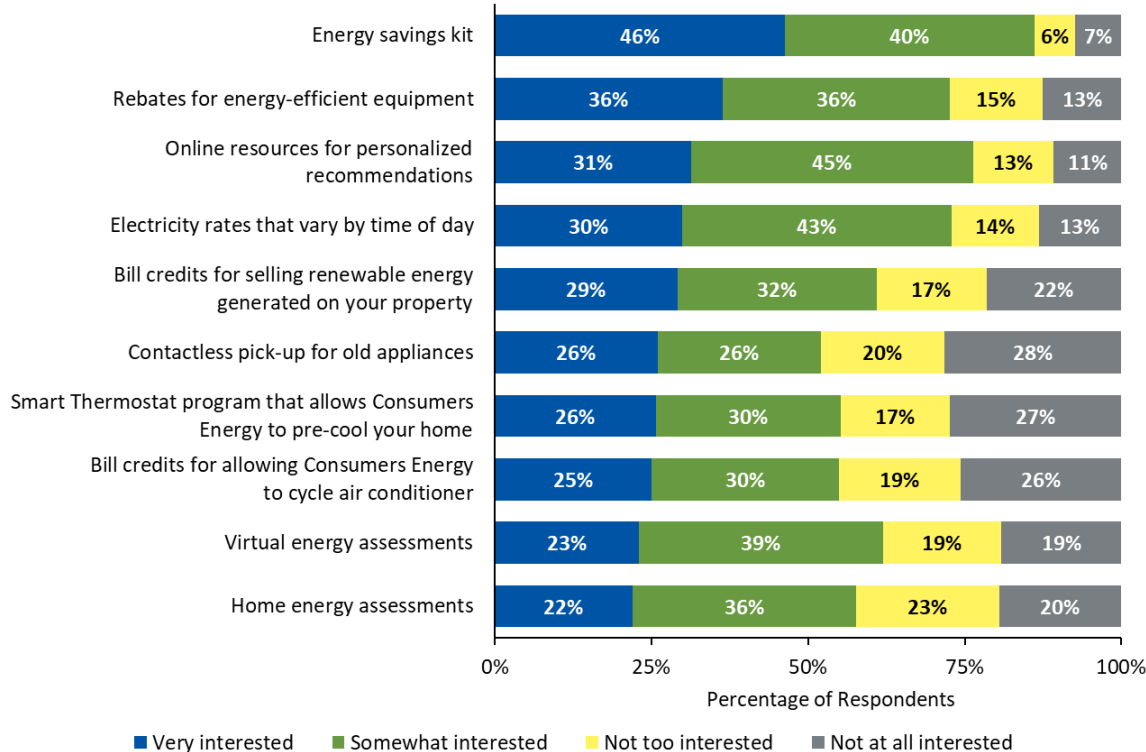


■ Strongly Disagree ■ Moderately Disagree ■ Slightly Disagree
■ Slightly Agree ■ Moderately Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Interest in Efficient Upgrades

Interest in Consumers Energy Offerings

A majority of customers were “somewhat” or “very” interested in all programs mentioned



Highest interest (70% or more) for:

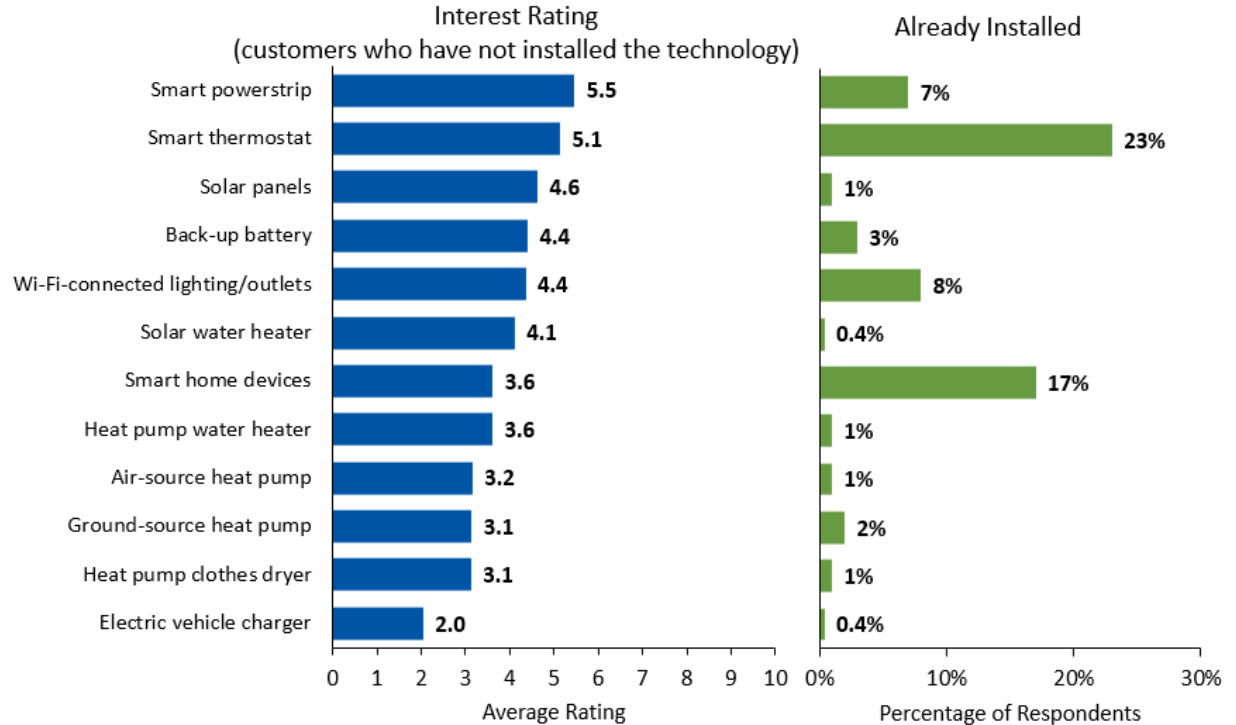
- **Energy Savings Kits**
- **Equipment Rebates**
- **Online resources for personalized recommendations**
- **Electricity rates that vary by time of day**

Consumers Energy Interest in New Energy Efficiency Technologies

Respondents were somewhat likely to have already installed **smart thermostats** and **smart home devices**

Homeowners with higher incomes were more likely to have already installed the listed items

Note: Smart Thermostat installations were reported just after Consumers Energy's 2020 smart thermostat giveaway promotion.



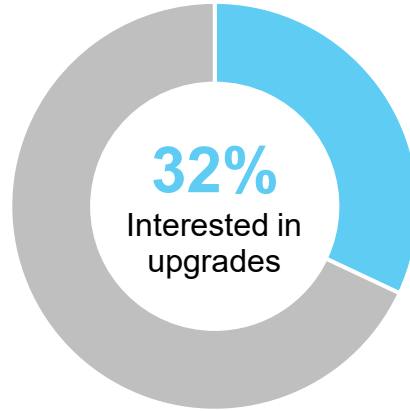
Source: General Population Survey question D6 (n=514 to 649, varies by item rated).

Respondents could give a rating or indicate they already had the item installed. The number of valid responses varies by item because respondents who answered "don't know" are not reported. The most "Don't know" responses were for "ground source heat pump" (170), "Air-source heat pump" (165), "Heat pump clothes dryer" (149), and "Heat pump water heater" (147).

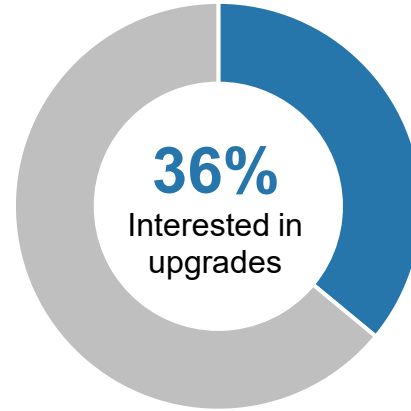
DTE Nonparticipant Interest in Upgrades

How Many Customers Are Interested in Upgrades?

- Similar numbers of **Residential (36%)** and **Commercial (32%)** respondents said they are interested in upgrades in their homes or businesses.
- **Residential** customers were more likely to indicate interest in **multiple upgrades (3.8)** vs. Commercial customers (**1.5**).



C&I
N = 199



Residential
N = 211

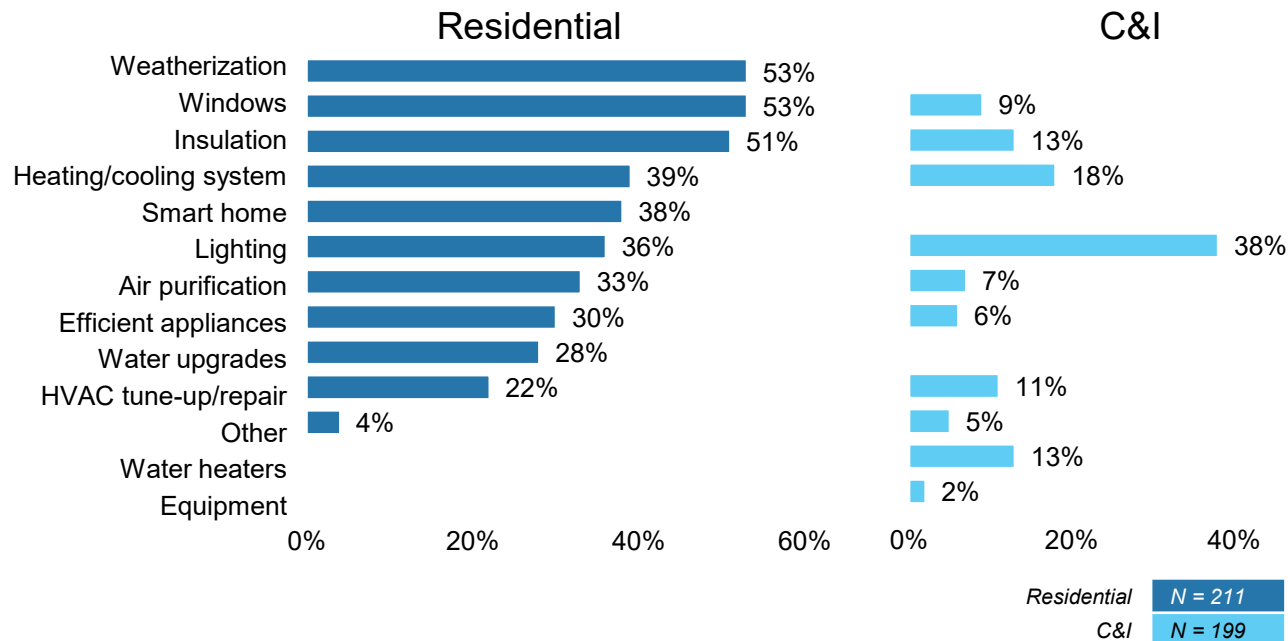
Average Number of Upgrades by Customer Interest



Interest in Energy Efficiency Upgrades by DTE Nonparticipants

What Upgrades Most Interest Customers?

- **Residential** customers reported being interested in **weatherization measures**, including **windows**, **insulation**, and **general home weatherization**.
- **Commercial** customers most frequently reported **lighting upgrades** as the energy efficiency upgrade their business was interested in.



Note: Questions about some specific efficiency upgrades were only asked of C&I (equipment upgrades) or residential (weatherization, smart homes) customers. Customers were able to list more than one upgrade when submitting a response.

Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways



Consumers Energy

- **Knowledge:** While many customers are motivated to save energy, many indicated a need for understanding practical steps they could take that result in bill savings.
- **Interest:** Customers expressed interest in lower-cost smart technologies.
- **Affinity:** Customers familiar with Consumers Energy's programs are more satisfied and more likely to recommend Consumers Energy to a friend.

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Consumers Energy

- **Awareness:** Both utilities have strong customer awareness of programs
- **Barriers:** Customers for both utilities cited financial concerns and lack of ownership as primary barriers to making upgrades

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- **Knowledge:** Customers expressed understanding of potential benefits of savings energy and express an interest in taking action to save energy. Fewer customers say they are willing to sacrifice comfort to do so.
- **Upgrade Interest:** Residential customers have greater interest in/need for weatherization measures, whereas Commercial customers are interested in lighting upgrades.