

Smooth Customer Journey & Targeted Marketing Combine to Increase Sales

When a large Midwest utility was struggling with an underperforming online store, they turned to AM Conservation for a full overhaul and redesign, marketing and promotional support, resulting in a significant sales increase and drastically increased enrollment in their demand response program.

THEIR STORY

A major midwestern utility, that serves over 1.2 million electric and 130,000 natural gas customers, has been in operation for more than 100 years. With electric rates among the lowest in the nation, their service area covers 64 counties and more than 500 communities.

THEIR GOAL

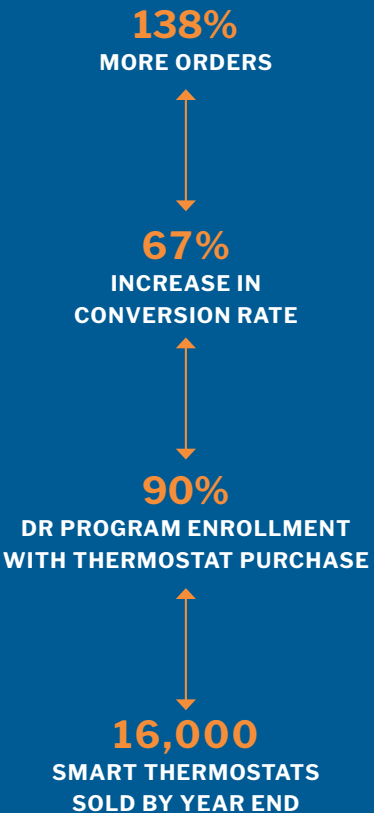
The utility was struggling with an underperforming online store that provided minimal savings tracking capabilities and couldn't drive lighting and smart thermostat sales. An updated design of both their online store and customer journey was needed in order to generate sales, promote the widespread use of energy-efficient products, and encourage demand reduction amongst their customer base.

Due to the complicated price structure and additional rebates for smart thermostats as part of their demand response program enrollment, the final price and benefits to the customer needed to be clearly displayed during non-promotional and promotional periods.

Better clarity of the products and program benefits was also necessary to gain more enrollments and increase overall sales.

THE SOLUTION AND RESULTS

AM Conservation proposed a complete overhaul in the design, function and features of the utility's online store, combined with an aggressive integrated marketing campaign and monthly promotions. The new store, launched in March 2020, puts the focus on three different brands of smart thermostats, with instant rebates in the form of reduced prices, and the option to enroll in the demand response program for an additional rebate taken off the total price in the cart. In addition, other desirable products were added to the store offering such as smart LEDs, advanced power strips and other connected home devices and accessories.



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The initial success of this new strategy prompted the utility to increase their target smart thermostat sales goal twice during the same year. The increased goal was met prior to the 2020 winter holidays with a grand total of over 16,000 smart thermostats sold.

THE SOLUTION AND RESULTS (CONTINUED)

The enrollment, store validation, and account creation process features an easy step-by-step screen with simplified language and user-friendly infographics to better demonstrate how the demand response program works and what the benefits are. To further streamline the enrollment and account creation process, AM Conservation is building a Single Sign-On (SSO) solution that will allow customers to use the same credentials as set up with their utility account in the online store to complete purchases. The online store is also integrated with the utility's energy saving's microsite and customer engagement platform, designed and implemented by our sister company Franklin Energy, to further streamline the overall customer experience.

With this new online store, program managers and marketers can see real-time tracking activity on the site, including conversion paths and tactic-level conversion rates. In addition, AM Conservation added features to enable sophisticated tracking and reporting templates that merge into the utility's own database to summarize energy and demand savings for all program activities.

To improve the overall customer experience, the site was designed from a promotion-first perspective, allowing the site to effectively position store promotions and sales throughout the entire customer journey.

To promote the new online store, the utility relied on AM Conservation for e-commerce marketing support to supplement their portfolio-level marketing. They began utilizing integrated digital marketing campaigns and time-bound promotions to raise awareness and drive traffic to the store, while increasing order conversions. The first integrated marketing campaign resulted in 138% more orders, 140% more customers, a 114% increase in the add-to-cart conversion rate, and a 67% increase in the order conversion rate. Ultimately 104% more smart thermostats were sold over the same period in the prior year and more than 90% of customers enrolled in the demand response program during the checkout process.



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