

Design a program that provides value for contractors and considers their seasonal business cycles

Many residential energy efficiency programs run into challenges maintaining an appropriately sized, well-trained workforce from program launch through maturity, as well as through the fluctuating demand of the seasons of the year. Some programs found that their contractors preferred a smooth annual workload in order to avoid layoffs during the slow off-season months, while others found that they benefited from seasonal fluctuations in demand. By understanding your contractors' schedules and capacity, you can schedule campaigns to generate demand for their services when they want it and pursue innovative strategies to help them manage their workload accordingly. Coordinate with your contractors to identify their needs and preferences and explore ways that you can help drive demand or increase the number of available professionals.

- [Austin Energy](#) [1] acquired an extensive understanding of the existing contractor workforce and gathered key insights into local contractors' schedules and capacity. Austin's hot weather keeps contractors busy dealing with home cooling issues during the warm months of the year. Austin Energy purposely launched its Best Offer Ever promotion in fall 2010 to take advantage of contractor availability and provide more work during otherwise slow contracting months. This approach increased the likelihood that upgrades would be completed in a timely manner, while also helping Austin-area contractors avoid seasonal layoffs.
- [NeighborWorks of Western Vermont](#) [2] realized that fluctuating seasonal demand for home energy efficiency upgrades posed challenges for contractors. Contractors were reluctant to hire additional technicians during peak season because they knew that demand would ebb in the spring and summer. The result was a backlog of projects. The program created a pool of temporary employees to help contractors in need of home performance professionals, including small contractors. This approach helped participating contractors weather the changing demand for home performance upgrades by offering them the flexibility to grow and shrink their workforce as needed. Many contractors expressed enthusiasm for the temporary employee pool, and the extra staffing helped reduce the number of backlogged projects throughout the community.

```
(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){(i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o), m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m)})(window,document,'script','//www.google-analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-43507104-20', 'auto', {'name': 'BBNP0'}); ga('BBNP0.send', 'pageview');ga('BBNP0.send', 'pageview'); var _gaq = _gaq || []; _gaq.push(['BBNP0._setAccount', 'UA-43507104-20']); jQuery(document).ready(function() { jQuery('body a[href$=".pdf"]').each(function() { jQuery(this).click(function() { var title = jQuery(this).attr('text'); _gaq.push(['BBNP0._trackEvent', 'PDF', 'Download', title]); }) });});(function() { var so = document.createElement('script'); so.type = 'text/javascript'; so.async = true; so.src = 'https://rpsc.energy.gov/sites/all/modules/custom/pnnl_google_analytics/js/eere.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(so, s);})();
```

Source URL: <https://rpsc.energy.gov/tips-for-success/design-program-provides-value-contractors-and-considers-their-seasonal-business>

Links

[1] <http://energy.gov/eere/better-buildings-neighborhood-program/austin-texas>

[2] http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/betterbuildings/neighborhoods/pdfs/laborworks_focus.pdf