

Off. Really off? - Eco-marketing as energy efficiency approach

Klaus Wortmann and Werner Möhring-Hüser, Energiestiftung Schleswig-Holstein

1. SYNOPSIS

The electricity saving campaign „Off. Really off?“ using stand-by as vehicle to transport the message of energy efficiency is presented and discussed.

2. ABSTRACT

Which role should Eco-marketing play for the future of energy efficiency? A state-wide public awareness campaign, directed mainly to private consumers is currently carried out by the Energy Foundation Schleswig-Holstein with support of a professional advertising agency, and accompanied by pre- and post-campaign-surveys. The goal of the campaign "Off. Really off?" is to reduce stand-by-consumption in households and offices as illustrative example for electricity savings in general. Much of the stand-by-consumption is a good symbol for pointless energy use. The communication strategy, target groups, the marketing mix and results of the campaign are presented. The communication strategy for consumers, for instance, appeals to the need for personal control (instead of money savings or environmental moral), and the marketing mix includes cinema and radio spots, newspaper advertisements, internet presentations and information material at the point of sales. A discussion on the potential and future role of such campaigns directed to private consumers follows: Are those campaigns “blaming the victims”? Or are they although not sufficient, but necessary to influence market processes in deregulated energy markets? A systemic approach is recommended here by not only creating but also using the campaign within a more comprehensive strategy: Sometimes contrary to their earlier statements, sellers, producers, state-institutions and other co-operation partners are often willing to support the campaign in order to benefit from it, too. Thus, new opportunities emerge for the energy efficiency-marketer additional to the more traditional strategies like negotiations, pure information material or mere expert opinions.

3. INTRODUCTION

One communality between ecologists and traditional representatives of utilities in closed markets (especially hardcore nuclear advocates) has been until now: There is no – or at least a rather limited - role for the end-user. Both parties share a common fear for different reasons: The liberalisation of the energy, resp. electricity markets will strengthen the importance of individual consumer decisions. As a consequence, both parties expect negative effects: the consumers have the freedom now to choose the utility or energy provider they want. Many “old” providers must fear to loose their customers. On the other hand, environmentalists may fear that consumers will decide against their own long term environmental interests and only follow their egoistic or hedonistic personal goals as described, f. e., in the “commons-dilemma”- approach (see Ostrom *et al.*, 1999).

But there is also a new chance when one looks from another angle: What are the opportunities for energy efficiency advocates on liberalised markets? – One answer could be: The tools of professional communication can be used to make people aware of the many advantages of saving energy. To present mere facts is not enough. What is needed, then, is to find and to communicate a link between strong personal benefits and energy efficiency, which is often in itself a personal (but only monetary) benefit. And as money is normally not the strongest emotional motive, the following question directed at professional marketers comes up: Are there practical and effective solutions how to communicate well known facts (among experts) in a way that the awareness, and may be even the demand of the market for energy related products and services can be influenced

into the direction of more energy efficient products and services? The in Western societies obviously strong motives of individual control and autonomy, for example, could be used, then, for energy efficiency instead of fighting against them.

Eco-Marketing seems to become a field of growing interest, not only, but also for energy efficiency advocates (see Villiger *et al.*, 2000). After some more or less in terms of budgets or regional spread limited activities of different actors (Universities, small utilities, some examples have recently been collected in a behaviour - directed SAVE-project ¹) the preparedness of political or semi-political institutions is currently growing in order to support climate protection and energy efficiency goals by professional campaigns with respective budgets (see for example the “Are-you-doing-your-bit-campaign” in Great Britain², or the Danish campaign, see Karbo *et al.*, 2001). The Energy Foundation Schleswig-Holstein is one of those semi-political institutions between the state and energy companies acting as a trust for energy efficiency projects. The “Off. Really off?”-campaign takes place all over Schleswig-Holstein (the most Northern German state) and is the biggest pilot project of the foundation. It will have a path-finding function for Germany. Therefore, the impact of the campaign will be measured by a pre- and post-campaign-survey financed by the National Environmental Foundation (the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt) in preparation of their nation wide activity.

This paper presents the campaign as a case for recently growing activities in the field of climate protection and energy efficiency measures. It draws a line from strategic research (next section) how the potential of reducing Stand-by-consumption can be realised via the description of how to “catch” the awareness of ordinary people (with average ecological consciousness and energy knowledge), towards first results of the campaign. The approach in Schleswig-Holstein is described, and, finally, the role and preconditions for marketing campaigns in the future of energy efficiency policy are discussed.

4. STRATEGIC ROOTS

Technical and Social Background

In a study performed on behalf of the German Federal Environmental Agency (Umweltbundesamt, see Rath *et al.*, 1999), the stand-by consumption of electric appliances and equipment in private households and the office sector in Germany was examined. These so-called no-load losses create some 14.4 million tons of CO₂ emissions per year. No-load modus is defined in this context as an operating modus of appliances and equipment when energy is wasted without any clear or considerable benefit, e.g. excessive use of energy for TV sets in stand-by position to receive remote-control signals, fax machines in ready position or transformers which cannot be disconnected from the power supply system due to their particular design as is the case with numerous printers or audio systems, for example.

The basis for the need for action is the calculated annual stand by consumption of 100 TWh in the European Union in private households and offices. In the order of the German Federal Environmental Agency the Energy Foundation and the engineering office ebök have developed a strategy to reduce the stand by consumption in these fields. Relevant groups of actors were surveyed asking for their assessment of useful instruments to reduce the no-load consumption. Actors of initiatives to reduce emissions are political representatives at all levels, the administrations of their committees, manufacturers, distributors, public utilities as well as ultimate consumers.

An analysis of the results obtained in this survey as well as a sociological evaluation against the background of the technical opportunities formed the basis for the elaboration of a strategy proposal. The essential results are: It is necessary to clearly emphasise the government's will to improve efficiency in the use of energy. But there is also need to create market pressure that will promote more efficient appliances and equipment.

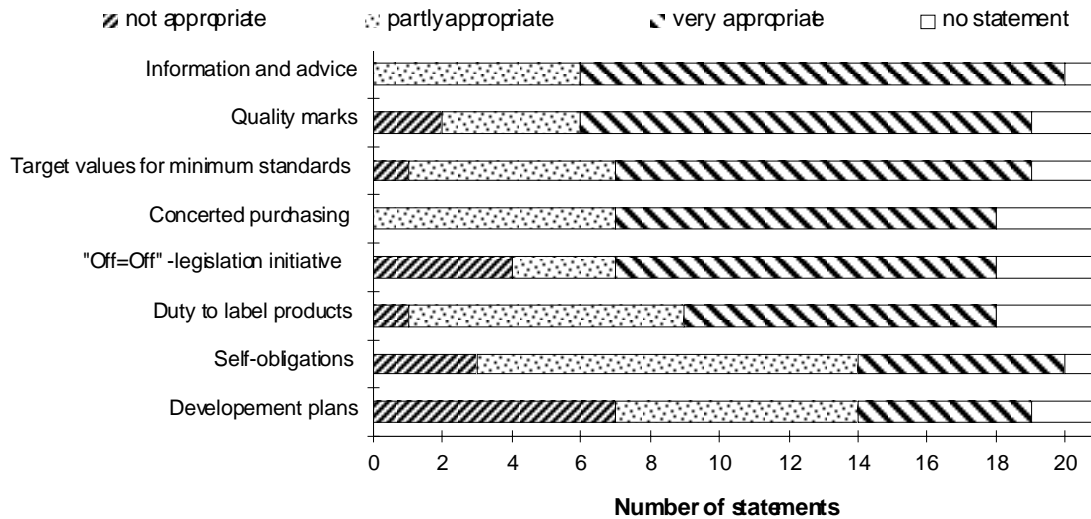
The following recommendations were made in this context:

- Improving the information base for the consumer by introducing the obligation to label entertainment and office equipment with relevant information, including their no-load losses,
- Creating market pressure toward more efficient devices through selective purchasing by major procurers,
- While at the same time negotiating solutions with the manufacturers,
- Involving the numerous players in this field in the implementation of savings measures, preferably within the framework of a comprehensive climate protection programme,

- Provision of an appropriate organisational and financial framework.

Relevant actors like manufacturers, consumer organisations, sellers, environmental initiatives and others have been asked to give their opinion about this problem field by brief questionnaires in the course of the study. 21 answers of the 32 representative persons questioned could be taken into account leading to the following estimation of different strategic approaches to reduce stand-by-consumption.

Figure 1. Acceptance of individual instruments



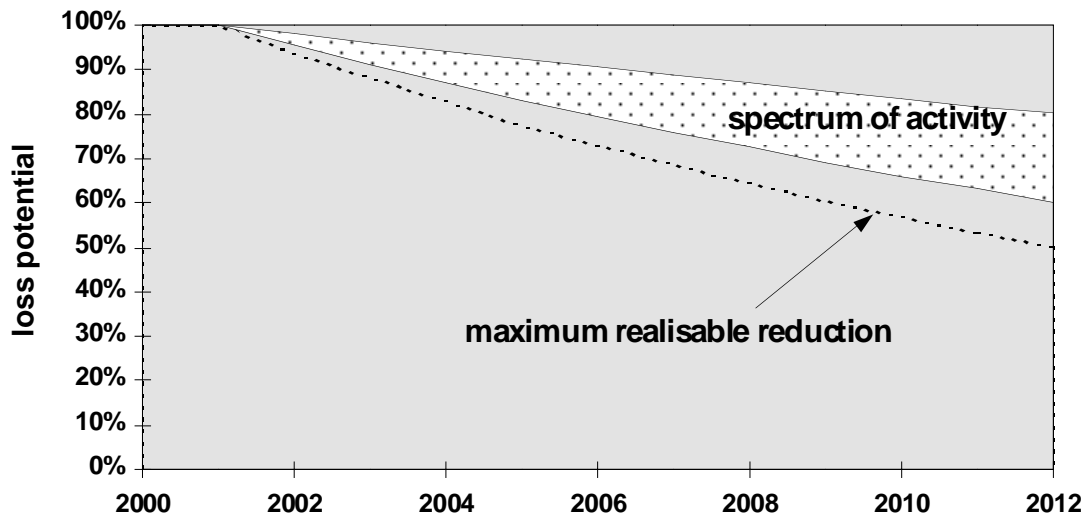
The highest acceptance is seen at the instrument „information and advice“ as the figure shows. Also the acceptance of the instrument „concerted purchasing“ shows, that the measures at the demand side are seen suitable.

Utilisable Potential

It has to be noticed that always more small equipments come onto the market. They show apparently low stand by electricity consumption, looked at one by one. Altogether the number of the equipments with stand by consumption will rise clearly. On the other side the technical progress leads to more efficiency of the single equipments. By using different possible instruments the stand by electricity consumption can be reduced to a remarkable extent. It is the most effective, if all new equipments are in the future provided with a very low stand by consumption. However, it has to be taken into account that a complete equipment change takes several years and therefore no large consumption reductions can be expected at the beginning. Behaviour measures and “first aid action” lead already for the short term to a reduction of the stand by consumption.

Depending on the effect of the instruments used a definite quota of the stand by consumption can be reduced. Therefore a spectrum of activity results above the range of the maximum realisable reduction. Figure 2 announces schematically the possible development of the potential exhaustion. When the various instruments used are co-ordinated with each other, mutual reinforcement can be reached.

Figure 2. Estimation of opportunity to influence stand by consumption in private households and offices



Liberalised Electricity Markets and Market Economic Instruments

Energy efficiency advice still was or is a typical area of a municipal utility. But there has always been a contradiction between saving advice and profit goals, i.e. enhancement of kWh-sales. In the course of the liberalisation the market acceptance of energy consultation done by energy providers will additionally suffer from the increasing competition. If this kind of utility-related energy advice isn't offered (at least in the same quality) in the future any more, then other, possibly new authority must announce the energy saving message.

An increased competition arises from the liberalised market, i.e. supply and demand get more weight. In the market economy, information and clearing up using definite means of advertising and marketing is one of the fields to influence the market. It is important to excite the attention of the consumer as the first step by using all tools of professional communication including iridescent and entertaining spots, ads and events. Campaigns, in this context, have the aim to sensitise and to speak to the target group positively.

It is important that the transmitter of the message, especially if it is a social one like climate protection, can appear as independent authority. Otherwise the information given can easily be discounted as not trustworthy and therefore useless, since it serves – may be hidden – goals of the sender, and not of the recipient. However, relatively high financial volume must be found for an effective campaign. Only if these prerequisites exist, such an authority can expect to initiate a market transformation. Already two national facilities of this kind have been established in Denmark and Great Britain. Both the British "Energy Saving Trust" and the Danish "Electricity Saving Trust" are equipped with the necessary financial means to carry out marketing campaigns. The Energy Foundation Schleswig-Holstein satisfies the necessary conditions to proceed like an efficiency trust in the context of a demonstration project.

The Value of a Campaign for Stand-By-Consumption Reduction

From many different perspectives, a campaign became a very attractive option for the Energy Foundation as it's biggest pilot and demonstration project on the demand side:

- Such an activity supports the energy political proposal by the Foundation for Germany, namely to follow the British or Danish example in building up an Energy Saving Trust (see Wortmann & Menges, 2000). At the same time, a political debate about establishing a national energy agency could be supported³.
- The discussion of different instruments to reduce stand-by-consumption (see "Technical and social background") showed the high consensus potential for such a campaign: Environmentalists as well as the manufacturing industry stated to support or at least to react positively to a campaign directed to consumers to reduce their stand-by-consumption. Given the consensus-building task of the Energy Foundation (mainly between the state and energy companies), this was another attractive feature.
- By the campaign, attempts on the European and National level to set target values for low stand-by-consumption of new equipment could be additionally promoted.

- Even the “Negawatt costs” were supportive for a campaign as can be demonstrated by the following calculation: A stand-by-consumption of approx. 700 million kilowatt hours per annum is registered in Schleswig-Holstein. Nearly half of the consumption is approximately reducible. If the demand-side campaign with a volume of about 1 million Euro (covering all costs) affects successfully about 10% of the population, then the costs amount to 3 cent (0,03 Euro) per kilowatt hour. This value is within the range of electricity production costs.

Therefore, the Energy Foundation decided to spend a budget of 1.5 million DM (0.75 million Euro) for a professionally designed campaign, which was attractive enough for different advertising agencies to apply for this budget.

5. THE “OFF. REALLY OFF”-CAMPAIGN

Initial Position

At first glance, the initial position to execute such a campaign is unfavourable. To save electricity is a topic in which only some are particularly interested. But there is a label which indicates efficient equipment concerning stand-by-consumption but this is more or less unknown among retailers and consumers. Finally, the Energy Foundation as independent authority is so far also only known among energy experts.

The Briefing for the Advertising Agency

Figure 3. “The little e”, the campaign logo



It is the aim of the campaign to sensitise the wide public to a meaningful, effective and thrifty electricity application. To this the focus shall be on the stand-by-consumption of household and office equipment. The public has to be informed and activated with respect to the stand-by topic. The campaign finally shall contribute to a higher market share of efficient equipment. The existing GEA-label should be promoted to reach this goal. However, in the course of discussions with the agency, which finally won the budget, this objective has been modified. Only a few producing companies use this GEA-label⁴. The GEA label could therefore not be used to lead consumers to the good devices at the point of sale. The label, therefore, was replaced by the “the little e”, the campaign’s logo, a variation of the logo of the energy foundation. An evaluation of the success was also part of the briefing.

Target Groups

The campaign is tailored to the people who pay attention to individuality and self-determination. The advertising is designed to have an effect mainly on those preferring an entertaining advertising with even a certain “cult factor”. People, who are already environmentally aware and “notorious savers” as well as the elderly people (i.e. the “learned conservers”) are not the core target group of the campaign, they should, however, not be deterred by the advertising either. Instead, new and hard-to-get segments of the population like young people from 16 to 40 years with often low environmental consciousness are in the focus of the publicity campaign.

There are other important target groups which must be solicited besides the consumers:

- At first the sellers are important for the campaign as the translation of the information into action has to be secured. When the purchase decision is made, the essential information and consultation will take place in the shops. A high participation and involvement of sellers is therefore of decisive meaning.
- The manufacturers who can produce efficient equipment should feel the increased demand, if possible. At least some of the manufacturers should be won for the campaign as sponsors (for example for give-aways to be used for PR-activities) with the argument that they can distinguish themselves against their competitors. By participation of manufacturers the campaign can win further attractiveness, especially for the retailers.
- The experts from climate protection and energy research, from the electricity industry and energy politics must as well be motivated since they strengthen the effect of the campaign as multipliers.

Means of Advertising

The means of advertising can be divided into two groups: The ones draw the attention, the others inform. Cinema, radio and newspaper advertisements excite the attention with commercials and eye-catching pictures. The further information sources are pointed out to the public simultaneously. In the advertisements always striking motives from the daily life which are not in a direct context with the topic are used. The accompanying text and the campaign sign point to the topic and further information. The cinema and radio commercials are built up similarly: After a surprise effect of an "everyday" event the topic is mediated by a few sentences, the campaign's logo and the information on the web-site www.wirklich-aus.de.

Figure 4. An advertisement



The second group of the means of advertising contains the information passing on. A brochure which is displayed at the distributors is one of the media for deeper information. The sellers in addition get material with which they can refer to efficient equipment at the point of sale. For telephone inquiries, a hotline is established. An extensive multi-media internet presentation offers further information including a list for recommendable equipment following the GEA-guidelines. Thus, this efficient equipment can directly be requested from a data base. The distributors who participate in the campaign are mentioned in the internet presentation, too.

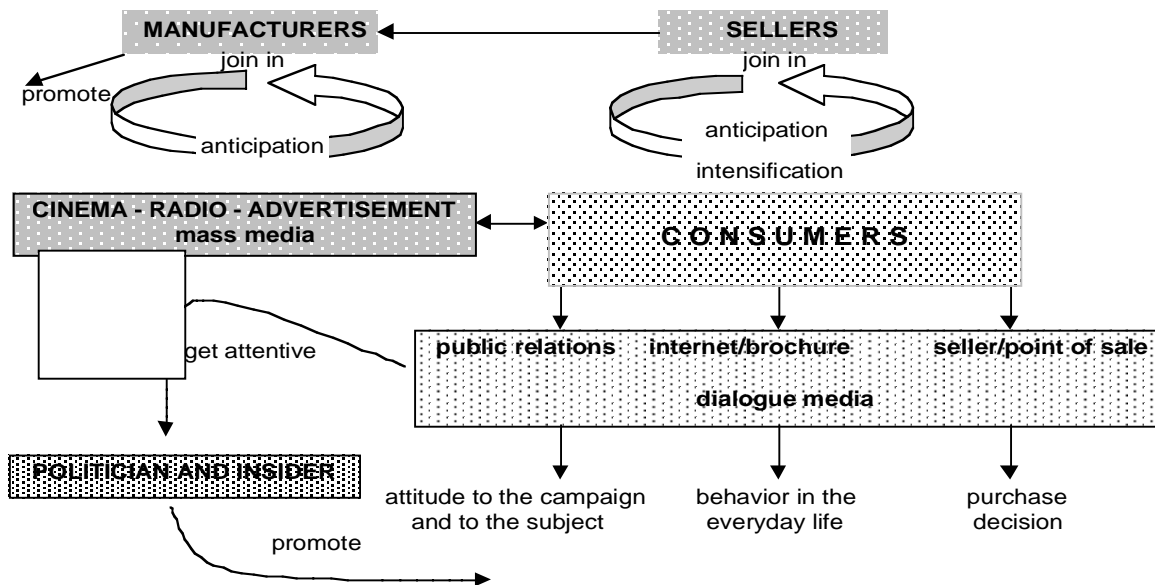
Strategic Approach of the Campaign

As main element the consumers are in the centre of the campaign. But this part of the whole system of “producing” high or low stand-by-consumption is then used to exert influence also on other parts. The path of influence of different parts of the campaign is shown in Figure 5:

- The organised public awareness campaign takes place in the print media, in cinemas and in the broadcast. The advertisements, the cinema spot and the radio commercials are co-ordinated with each other in temporal waves.
- The increased demand of the consumers and the advertising effect of the mass media shall exert influence on the behaviour of the sellers and manufacturers. Manufacturers whose devices have good efficiency values should be likely to support the campaign positively, e.g. by sponsoring.
- A positive reporting supported by PR-activities – as one of the dialogue-media - promotes the engagement of the consumer for the campaign.
- By internet and brochures more detailed information is passed on. This together with the mass media influence should help to improve the everyday behaviour of the consumers. A behaviour modification is often sufficient to reduce the electricity consumption of different equipments ("Really off!"). The comparison of the transmitted information with the conditions in the household influences the sensibility beyond the topic "stand by", e.g. for low consumption of white goods etc.
- Another important path of influence is the advice by the seller at the point of sale. The decision to buy an energy-saving equipment is finally made here. A seller informed and interested in the topic and as well supportive for the campaign is, therefore, a prerequisite of the campaign's success. Therefore, all retailers in the state have been contacted before the official start of the public campaign. They have been invited to join a special "sellers' event", where they have been informed about their possibilities to profit from the campaign (free point of sale-material, "go to your electrical shop for more information" as a central message of the campaign).

The dialogue media, particularly the PR-work also exert an effect on politicians and energy professionals. This effect is still strengthened by the representation in the mass media. Positive assessments of the politicians and "insiders" create a good base for further actions or campaigns of this kind.

Figure 5. The Strategic Approach of the Campaign



Slogan

The slogan "Off. Really off?" points to the central sales argument: Decide when you want to consume electricity and when not! The slogan puts a previous comprehensibility ("Off") in doubts ("Really off?").

The consumer reacts to the topic "switch off" emotionally and experiences an appeal to the autonomy of the individual. The slogan is in a direct connection to the scenes of the commercials and picture. Everyday events in which something is "off", "out" or "over" are represented here. In German it means a pun: The one word "aus" describes these three words in English. Further arguments like money savings or climate protection are not in the centre, but are also mentioned.

The campaign backs on fun instead of morals for an entertaining advertising. This is a contrast to the traditional pro-environmental communication. Such way to communicate with the consumer on the basis of his or her personal advantage even for ecological goals is necessary to reach many segments of the population and not only those who are already convinced. This attempt is therefore a novelty and a pilot project in which a new approach how to communicate a "dry" topic to a fun-seeking public is examined in a reality test.

Time Schedule

The campaign was planned during summer 2000. The official start was November, 8, 2000 with the so called retailers' "event". The advertising in newspapers, cinemas and the radio started in January 2001, and the campaign will run until June, 2001. It's prolongation depends on the results - in any case: at least a reminder campaign is planned at the end of this year.

6. PRELIMINARY RESULTS

As the campaign as described here is currently running while this paper is written, only preliminary results can be presented here. In this section, first reactions of the different target groups will be described qualitatively (first part) and the conception of the „impact-control“ of the campaign will be outlined briefly (second part).

First Reactions

Concerning the manufacturers of the electronic devices and appliances their first reactions on letters and phone calls have been positive, but as well reserved. Many companies argued that such a regional campaign would not be of high relevance for globally acting firms. On the other hand, three companies have been willing to support the retailers' event by lending out products with low Stand-by consumption as models for the retailers how to place and highlight the good products at the point-of-sales using material of the campaign. As well three companies were found to be willing to support the campaign by donating their good (in terms of low Stand-by-consumption) devices in order to use them as incentives, f. e. for PR-activities: Sharp, Lexmark, and Loewe were active in this respect. Sharp announced additionally to inform their sales agencies with a mailing expressing support for the campaign. However, the average reaction can be said to be slightly positive, especially when the producers found out that the campaign has its focus on the consumer advantage and not – at least not first of all – on political matters. As the producers have not been the main target group, these reactions were acceptable for the further development of the campaign. Anyway, more reactions (positive or negative) could only be expected when a campaign will be launched at the national (or even European) level.

The retailers, mainly for brown goods, participated to a surprisingly high extent. Nearly 400 retailers (out of about 700 in the whole state) ordered the point of sale-material of the campaign. About 150 people (representing about 70 shops) from the retail branch in Schleswig-Holstein had been present at the „retailers' event“ in the beginning of November 2000. The retailers reacted very positive on the conception of this, in their eyes, „modern“ campaign. They found that this campaign could bring more customers into their shops, which is, as some stated clearly, their main motivation to support the campaign. The reactions observed so far confirm the hypothesis underlying the whole campaign that the consumers are the critical point in the whole system of buying and selling electronic equipment. They build up the existence basis for the retailers. Consequently, the more professional the impression of the campaign is from the perspective of the retailers, the more consumer reactions are anticipated and the more willingness to support the campaign can be found among retailers.

Concerning the private end consumers, an expert telephone line by one of the most important newspapers in the state, the „Kieler Nachrichten“, revealed that it was surprising for many of the more than 60 callers that a washing machine frequently consumes electricity while being on the mains, even in the off-mode (as well as many other devices like hi-fi-equipment, PC a.s.f.). Some feared that even toasters could cause no-load losses. Many of the callers stated that they had family discussions on the basis of a newspaper article the day before, which appliances are responsible for no-load losses and by which means these losses could be prevented. A woman was keen to hear that screwing out the red lamps showing Stand-by-consumption was not the ultimate solution to lower Stand-by-consumption as her husband had told her earlier. She already had her doubts about it and was happy about the expert support for her position. However, as this first telephone line has been installed a

day before the campaign started with cinema spots and newspaper ads, only the more traditional target groups (elderly people, pensioners, house wives, mostly learned energy conservers) reacted, and most of them positively. In another activity during the campaign initiated by another state-wide newspaper, a special electricity-saving-competition took place between 80 households willing to invite journalists into their homes to measure and report about stand-by-losses of their electronic devices. Generally, the campaign caused many different media within and beyond the state to report about the campaign and the stand-by-problem as an example for pointless energy use.

„The public“, finally, means other co-operation partners important for multiplication effects. The most important co-operation partner during the preparation and starting phase of the campaign has been the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt. This National Environmental Foundation was in the planning process of a nation wide Stand-by initiative, when the activities of the Energy Foundation started. Both partners agreed upon the common goal and came up with an unusual, but for both partners very interesting conclusion: a well-known survey institute should carry out a pre- and post-campaign public opinion poll to evaluate the outcome of this activity (see below). Another very important supporter has been the consumer organisation, especially on the regional level. The recently established German Energy Agency (DEnA, Deutsche Energieagentur) has in the meantime also signalled it's intention to learn from the campaign for it's future activities on the national level.

Representative Survey

The second part of the evaluation consists of representative survey data of the population of Schleswig-Holstein (representative sample of the population with an age of at least 14 years) and a sample of about 100 retailers (about 15 % of all relevant retailers in this state). This quite comprehensive evaluation took place because of the high interest of the National Environmental Foundation to learn from this national campaign for their own national Stand-by initiative (which may be a follow up and national extension of such a consumer oriented campaign). Interestingly, the survey was carried out not only in Schleswig-Holstein, but as well in Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony), another state in Northern Germany, which is in many aspects (rurally structured) comparable to Schleswig-Holstein in order to get not only a pre- and post-test of the effects of the campaign, but also the comparison to this “quasi-control group”. The results of the whole evaluation are expected in June, 2001. Therefore, only first results of the first survey can be presented here and the approach can be shown.

The public opinion poll was carried out using the computer-aided-telephone-interview (cati)-method with N = 1000 individuals in each population sample and N = 100 retailers in each state. The following results are selected from the “first wave” of the survey, carried out in October, 2000. The second wave takes place in March, 2001. As expected for the first inquiry, the figures for Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony differ not much from each other. Only the results for Schleswig-Holstein are presented here.

First of all, sociodemographic data showed a much higher number of mobile phones in Schleswig-Holstein as compared to the 1995 assumptions for 2000. 65 % of the households in Schleswig-Holstein possess already mobile phones, one can roughly estimate that about 48 million mobile phones are on the German market today as compared to 3 million estimated for 2000. This shows the dynamic of the market and gives another argument for the importance to intervene here, where minor potentials for each appliance sum up to a remarkable potential when multiplied by the huge number of users, respectively owners.

Other figures underline the importance of the retailers as the main source for information in the purchase planning process before buying electronic devices. Information given by retailers is much more important for the potential purchasers (78 % use this information source) than tips of friends and acquaintances (43 %), special interest magazines (30 %), ads or reports in newspapers (28, respectively 22 %), radio and T.V. (14 %) and internet (9 %) – these figures are related to the purchase of the T.V., but the ranking is the same also for PC, videocassette recorder or hi-fi-equipment. Among different purchase criteria, environmental friendliness ranks on the fifth place among five criteria (1 = most important, 5 = least important). The value is (for T.V.) 3.8 compared to 2.0 for price, 2.5 for the function of the device, 3.1 for brand and 3.5 for the running costs. For electronic devices with lower energy consumption, the consumers are willing to pay only slightly higher prices (58 %). 84 % of the consumers expect electricity consumption when a device is put off using the remote control. 22 % think there will be electricity consumption even when the power off switch is used. At the same time, many of the questioned people expect that electric devices do not consume electricity in the “off”-mode. 84 % in Schleswig-Holstein say they pay at least some attention to this. On the other hand easy to do or low cost meas-

ures like switchable contact strips which allow to easily switch off many devices together and “Powersafers” are not so much in use (35 %, respectively 8%).

Interestingly, one question checked the communication strategy of the campaign. Nearly two thirds of the population (64 %) agreed fully to the statement „I am disturbed when appliances can not really be switched off.“

Concerning the retailers of electronic equipment most of them think that their customers regard the stand-by-consumption of these gadgets as not very important (19 % very important, 36 % rather important, 41 % rather not important, 2 % totally not important). 8 % of the retailers have been frequently asked by their customers about stand-by-consumption of the devices, 21 % from time to time, 29 % seldom and, after all, 42 % never! This figure is reflected by 23 % of the retailers which gave frequently, 29 % from time to time advice concerning the stand-by-topic. Their own knowledge about the stand-by-issue estimate the retailers as quite good (60 % say good or very good). However, also the retailers (83 %) think that the personal advice for their customers is a very important factor for the purchase decision. The retailers regard customer nearness and advice as key factors for their business before the price. Additionally, 48 % would very much like to get information material of the campaign for their sale.

Taken together these results reflect the assumptions underlying the conception of the campaign: The retailer is a potential bottle-neck between the energy efficiency campaigner and the customer. He or she should have at least some advantage from the campaign to take part in the action. Most consumers as well as most retailers consider themselves informed and will without additional motivation not undertake further efforts to save energy. On the other hand, the figures show that some information will be new for the population, f. e. that a hi-fi-set consumes electricity even when switched off using the power-off switch and many people want to keep control about their energy consumption and would feel disturbed when made aware that without their agreement many devices consume energy which costs their money.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The role of the consumer for energy efficiency measures has been underestimated in the past from our point of view, mainly due to the traditional roles in the energy sector, which are challenged not only for the former energy utilities, but also for energy efficiency advocates. Energy saving becomes a product to be sold effectively to the end consumer, when one follows the described approach. There are signs that Eco-Marketing in general has to overcome it's “traditional” role as niche marketing for niche products. Instead it should attempt a mass marketing approach as described here (see Villiger *et al.*, 2000). Criteria to distinguish pro-environmental marketing “beyond the eco-niche” are, for example:

- Overall good quality of the product, not only environmental friendliness,
- Products as cheap as possible (not high prices as signal for ecological value of this product),
- Using all tools of professional persuasion, not only moral appeals or mere facts,
- Compete with the conventional range of products, this leading, as a result, to
- Attempts to reach market shares worth mentioning.

The idea of the individual as passive victim of powerful pressure groups is as misleading as the opposite idea of “only the free market solves any problem”. The promising path (and further development of this path in terms of it's conception, including marketing and other approaches is certainly needed) runs between these two extremes.

Some conditions, however, have to be observed to be successful in selling energy efficiency in the way demonstrated above:

1. Real products should already exist.

Earlier approaches (including the first authors') argued in favour of social marketing (mainly the idea of energy conservation is communicated). Now, a shift towards product-related-marketing makes it much easier for the average consumer to understand a campaign for energy efficiency as supportive for his/her personal advantage. Secondly, because something is or can be sold as part of the activity, it is also much easier to bring together new alliances with other economic actors outside the climate protection or energy conservation field (for example, the manufacturers).

2. A definition of “good”, respectively “bad” products is needed.
This condition makes clear that such a marketing activity is no stand alone instrument. It was and is worthwhile for our campaign that there is a European, and as well a national group (Group for Efficient Appliances, GEA, and Gemeinschaft Energielabel Deutschland, GED), providing the campaign with guidelines to distinguish good and bad devices, setting the limits for the maximum energy consumption for different modes of appliance use and so forth. This will remain to be an important task for policy or institutions acting very close to policy.

3. The information source has to be an independent and trustworthy organisation with clear and obligatory goals.
Only out of this relatively independent and transparent position, a persuading marketing approach will work. The Energy Foundation, for example, acts like a consumer protection organisation preventing the consumer to lose energy and money when not informed about no-load losses. As not only the consumer is important, but also the institutional framework for the campaign, this issue shall be considered in more detail. Based on our experiences so far, the following important framework conditions should be considered to secure real outcome:
 - Relative independence of the institution
That means in it's core that a good campaign is hard to be carried out when many different interest groups try to secure their influence on the activity (that is and will be the normal case for most of the campaigns we know about in Germany).
 - Clear institutional goal
The task of the institution or at least this specific campaign has to be defined in a clear and transparent way in order to secure the trustworthiness of the communicator within the communication process, which is the most important variable of a successful persuasion or communication process as is well known from social psychology. A strict energy efficiency, respectively climate protection orientation of the institution and the obligation to follow this goal (and not many others at the same time) is therefore an important factor.
 - Budget autonomy
It will be difficult to lead a campaign over more than a year when it is unclear which budget can be spent for the purpose of the campaign from year to year - this is the normal situation for publically funded institutions. An advantage for the energy foundation is it's foundation status which allows for self financing of the own activities.
 - Appropriate (sufficient) budget for the task
A campaign costs money and no professional advertising agency will submit proposals when there is no fit between the task and the budget to solve it.

Under these preconditions it will be possible to build up new alliances on the market and by this, that is the whole activity, not only the communication approach, a real impact on the market is possible.

This is also important as argument against two objections: Such campaigns are a typical end of the pipe approach (1) and as consumers act voluntary, there will be no guarantee to reach the targets (2). But from a systemic view point, the end of the pipe may as well be regarded as the beginning of the pipe: Without buyers no production and no sales of products. This connection can be used to persuade also other market actors like producer companies and retailers that their customers' expectation will change. Therefore, they anticipate at least some market pressure and will be willing - besides political considerations - to react positively and maybe even to support the campaign. However, the precondition for this is that they see at least in the long run a profit for themselves. The second objection is of course true, but has to be complemented to see the whole picture. If an energy efficiency organisation spends money for technical projects with a certain guarantee to get the outcome needed, there will be a next step that an energy efficiency technology not only works in a technical sense, but that it can also be sold in one way or another to people demanding this technology. To reach the market and market shares, that is to persuade consumers to buy this new technique is in many cases a necessary step within the energy efficiency innovation process.

Finally, the costs of such a campaign in relation to it's benefits are more than justified, shown by the calculation above: If only 10 % of the households in Schleswig-Holstein reduced their stand-by-consumption to the half as a consequence of the campaign, the costs for each kilowatt per hour electricity saved amount to only 3 Cents (0,03 Euro). This is a remarkable value in comparison to many subsidies including those for renewable energies.

We argue therefore, within a medium time horizon, strongly in favour of more professional efficiency campaigns on liberalised energy markets.

Insofar as communication is always a dialogue, this will change not only the consumers, but also the campaigners. If one looks at the wording of many in a technical sense good energy efficiency measures (low energy house, passive house and so forth), one can have the impression that ecological measures are poorly “sold” up to now. Therefore, we hope that when considering in the future communication aspects more, the quality of many of the pro-ecological measures will be better disseminated for many more people than only the traditional pro-environmental-targets groups, representing not more than 20 (attitudes) or 2 (behaviour) per cent of the population - not enough to realise ambitious climate protection goals⁵.

For the future, we recommend also on the European level an institution with the features mentioned above acting as an energy saving trust. Concerning stand-by-consumption, only then the producers could be expected to play a more active role in the campaign as the market share of Schleswig-Holstein within Germany is much too small for European or even world-wide acting companies.

8. REFERENCES

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9. END NOTES

¹ See under <http://www.novem.org/behaviour-research/home.htm>

² See under <http://www.novem.org/behaviour-research/home.htm>

³ Note that since October 2000 the Deutsche Energieagentur (DEnA) has been established.

⁴ See under www.gealabel.org and www.energielabel.de

⁵ The figures come from an early investigation into the “green electricity”-approach 1996 showing that about 20 % of the consumers are willing to pay more for green electricity, but only 2 % who will actually do this. This gives a rough estimation of what will happen when Eco-Marketing remains niche Marketing