

Flex Alert Campaign Evaluation

Program Years 2006-2008

November 10, 2009

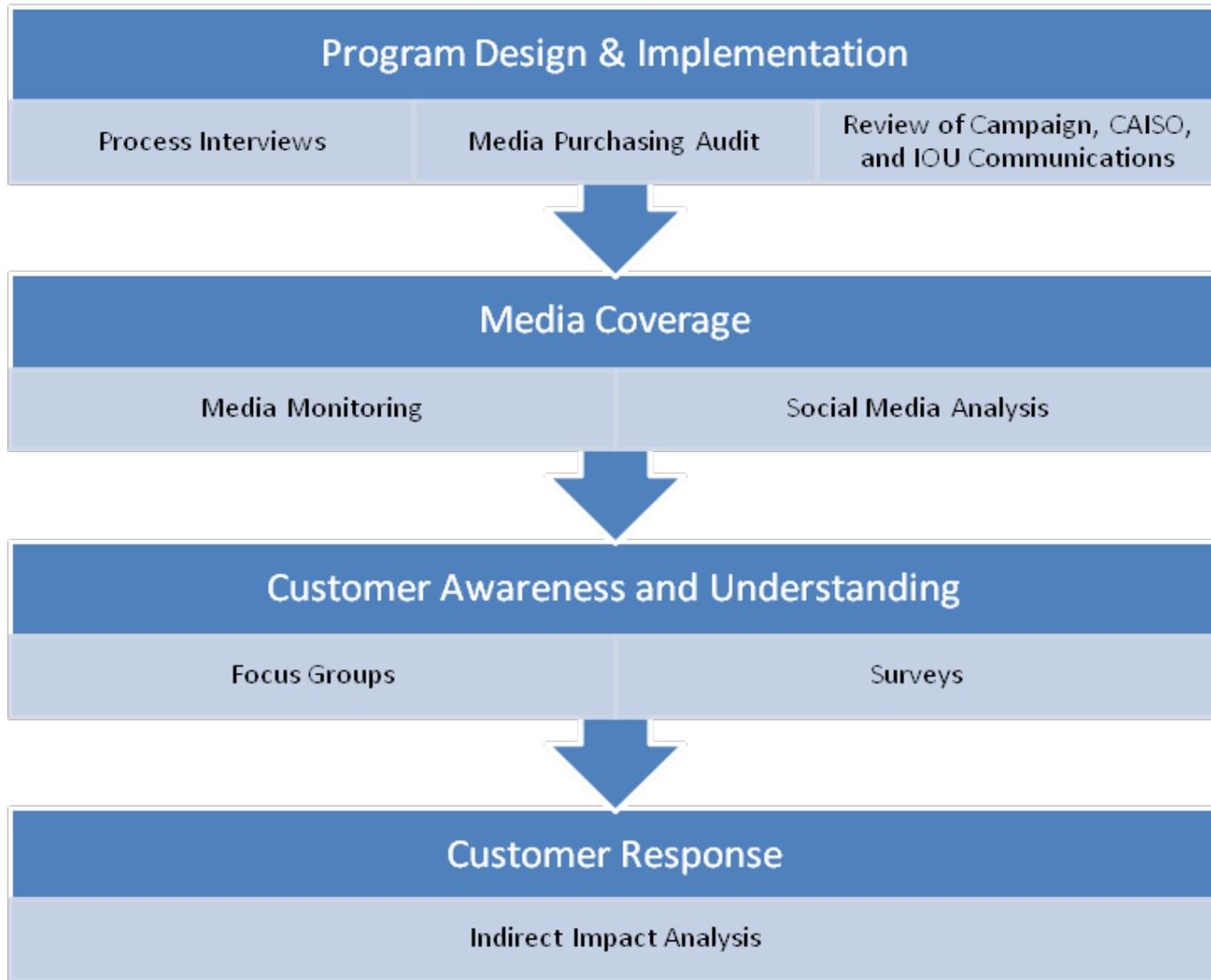


Program Background

- The Flex Alert campaign (previously known as Flex Your Power NOW!) focuses on achieving voluntary peak demand reductions on days when CAISO determines that there is a risk that electricity supply may not be sufficient to meet demand
- Campaign uses a mass media implementation strategy to encourage Californians to take three basic energy saving/shifting actions during hot summer afternoons, especially during Flex Alerts



Overarching Evaluation Approach



2006-2007 Evaluation Activities

- Process interviews
- Media purchasing audit
- Focus groups
- Tracking of campaign communications and media coverage of August 2007 Flex Alert event
- Website traffic analysis
- Baseline, post-event, and post-summer customer surveys
- Indirect impact analysis

2007 Process Interviews

- Overall, interviewees indicated that the campaign's **coordination has improved greatly** over previous years
- Still **room for improvement in terms of calling alerts**, getting the ads on the air, and notifying the media in a timely manner
- Some disagreement among stakeholders over whether the **campaign's primary focus** should be seeking significant impacts or raising general awareness of the peak demand issue
- Similar mixed feelings exist about whether the campaign should be **more regionalized and utility-branded** with regional alerts rather than a statewide campaign
- **CAISO staff are grateful for the campaign** and indicate that they can observe actual load relief at the system level on Flex Alert days

Media Purchasing Review

- Expert media purchasing review of 2006 Flex Your Power/Flex Alert media buy was conducted by MoGo Marketing
- Campaign **achieved its planned goals** in terms of reach, frequency, target audience, and cost-effectiveness in 2006 campaign
- Flex Alert media buy is **linked to Flex Your Power buy** to increase buying power; FYP spots are swapped out for Flex Alert spots when needed
- Flex Alert ads **only aired on nine out of 15 alert days** in 2006 due to inflexible purchasing terms

Media Purchasing Review

- **Combining media buy with FYP** brings excellent purchased value, but **limits the market segments** reached to those targeted by the FYP campaign, not necessarily those most willing and able to conserve in response to alerts
- **Lower weight levels for FYP** general advertising combined with **higher weight for Flex Alerts** could minimize message burnout and emphasize the urgency of the alert
- **High viewership summer programs** such as major sporting events (e.g., Wimbledon) and first-run cable programs were not purchased, and many programs identified as high priority for the target audience (e.g., Grey's Anatomy) are in reruns during the summer campaign

August 2007 Flex Alert Communications

- Flex Alert called August 29-31, 2007
- Evaluation team tracked all communications related to the event

California ISO
Your Link to Power

Today's Outlook / Calendar / Contact Us
Google Custom Search Search

CALIFORNIA ISO
POWER IN AN INSTANT

ENTER THE PUBLIC & MEDIA CENTER
Resources for consumers and the media about California's electrical power system.

ENTER THE OPERATIONS CENTER
Information for Market Participants and Stakeholders regarding the Grid, Markets and ISO Services.

Quick Connects
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Recent Documents
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Flex your POWER

Saving Energy. It's a Way of Life.

About Us | Frequent Questions | Partner Resources | Español | 中文

HOME | ENERGY NEWS | RESIDENTIAL | COMMERCIAL | INDUSTRIAL | INSTITUTIONAL | AGRICULTURAL

This is an official Flex Alert!

FLEX ALERT Save Energy Now!

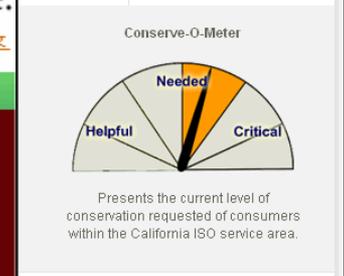
Please turn off all unnecessary lights.

Use appliances after 7 p.m.

Set your air conditioner to at least 78°F.

Energy Saving Tools & Information
Flex Your Power's website is your resource for energy efficiency and conservation information. Find

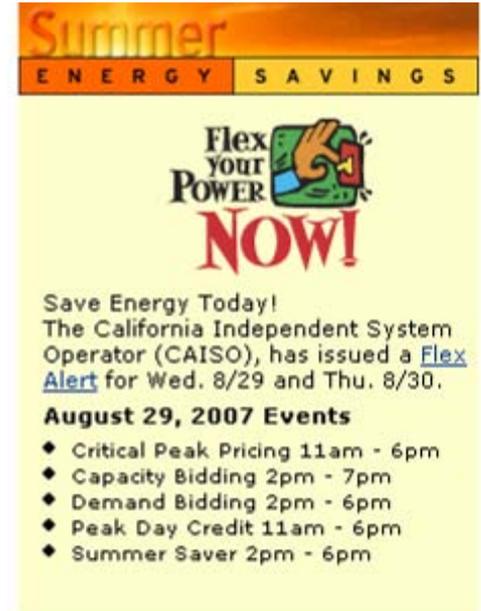
Flex Alert Network
Join the Flex Alert Network to receive and spread notifications of potential energy shortages during the



IOU Websites



SCE



SDG&E

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

your home | your business | CUSTOMER SERVICE | REBATES | SAFETY | FIELD WORK & PROJECTS | ABOUT US

ESPAÑOL | 中文

MY ACCOUNT View/Pay Bills & More

Now accepting Visa

User Name:

Password:

Remember me

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NEWS & INFO PG&E Receives Approval for Cow Power

your HOME save energy and money

- Rebates >
- Understanding Your Bill >
- Brochures & Forms >
- Financial Assistance >

your BUSINESS manage energy and costs

- Business Tools >
- Rebates and Incentives >
- Power Watch >
- Brochures & Forms >

Environmental Leadership

PG&E's commitment to the environment >

Save Time and Trees

Go paperless with Visa at pge.com.

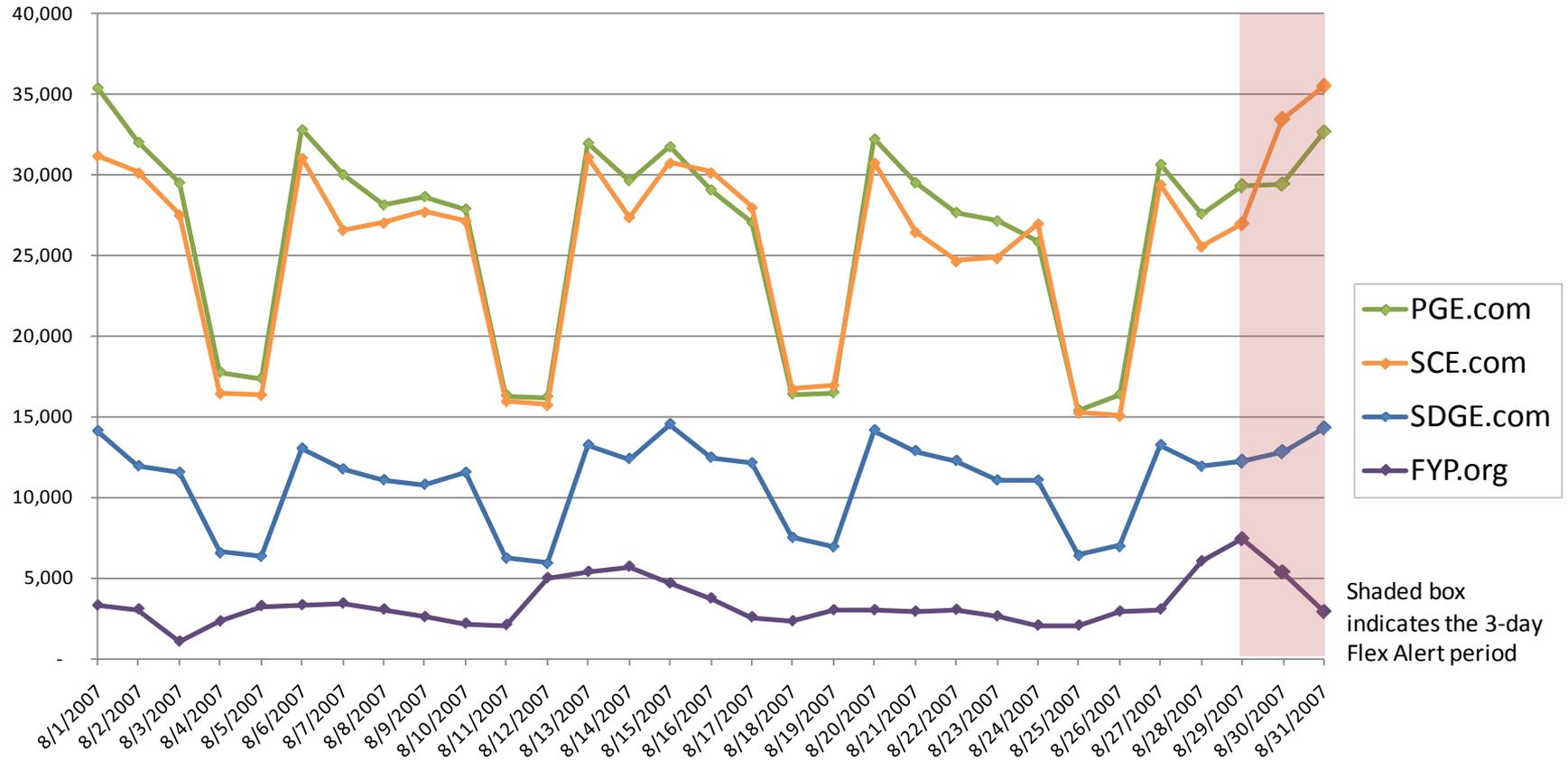
Conservation Alert

Tips to conserve energy on hot, high demand days.

PG&E

Website Traffic Analysis

Daily Website Visits, August 2007



Shaded box indicates the 3-day Flex Alert period

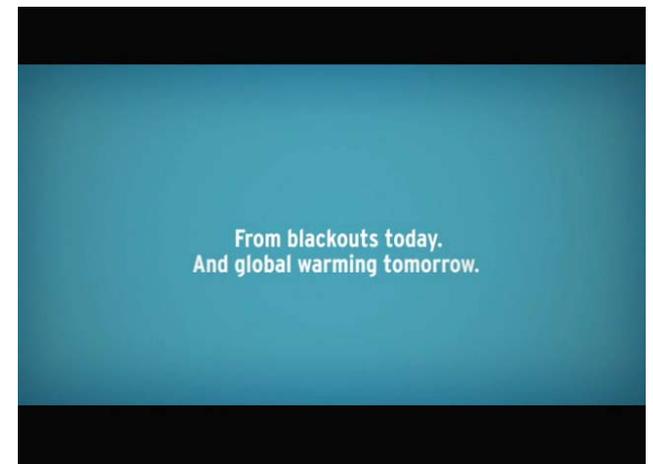
News Media's Mixed Messages

	NBC	ABC	CBS	FOX	Newspaper
San Diego	<i>"power alert"</i>	"stage 1 alert" possible	"power flex alert"	<i>"power alert"</i>	<i>"power alert"</i> , "stage 1 emergency"
Los Angeles	<i>"power alert"</i>	"Flex Alert Day"	"stage 1 alert" possible	<i>"power alert"</i>	"electrical emergency", <i>"stage 1 power alert"</i>
Sacramento	"stage 1 power emergency" expected	"stage 1 Flex Alert", "Flex Your Power Day"	"Flex Alert Day"	<i>"power alert"</i> , "stage 1 emergency"	"stage 2 emergency"
San Francisco	<i>"power alert"</i> - "the entire state is under a power emergency"	"stage 1 alert"	"minor power emergency", "stage 2 power emergency"	"minor power emergency", "stage 2 power emergency"	"stage 2 emergency"

Message from Governor Schwarzenegger: "...Flex Your Power is very important because we only have a certain amount of energy, because we haven't built all the generators and all the power plants yet that we need. So...it is very important that California people have been very, very helpful in flexing their power..."

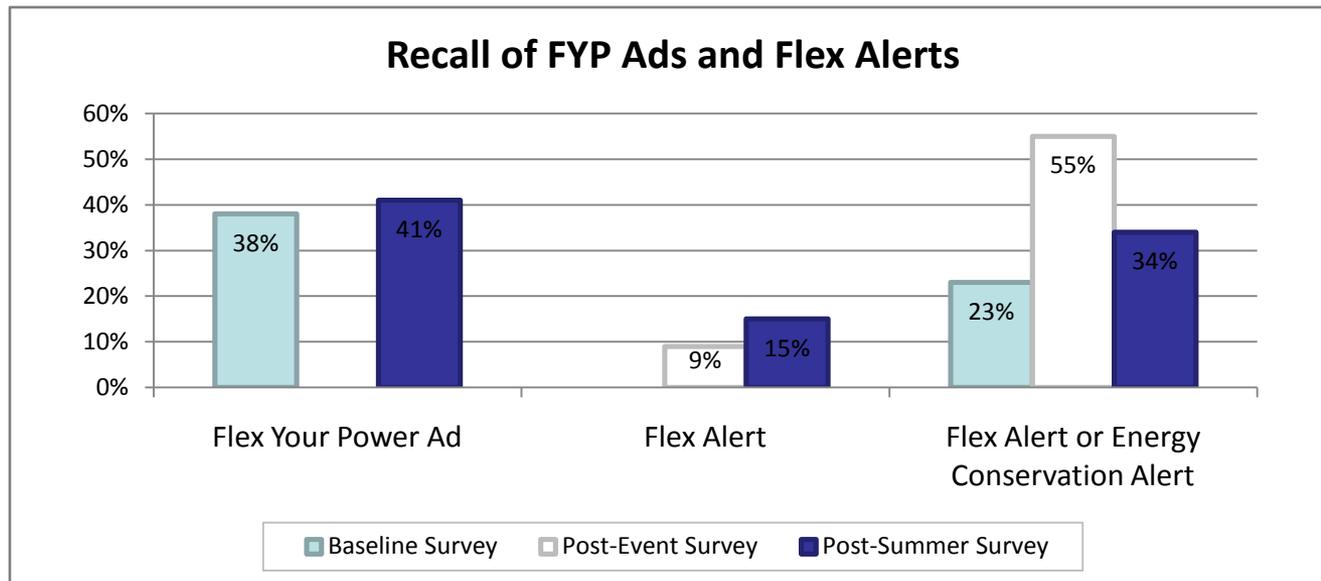
Customer Understanding of Alert Messaging

- Focus groups revealed that most viewers did not understand that conservation is especially needed *on specific days*; ads are interpreted as requesting long-term behavioral changes. Invoking the global warming message likely contributes to this confusion over long-term vs. short-term actions
- Survey responses confirmed this confusion; just 20% of post-event survey respondents said that the alert they saw requested conservation *on a particular day*, although 48% knew that conservation was needed during *a particular time of day*
- The requested conservation actions are widely understood and recalled by a significant portion of survey respondents
- Focus groups indicate that the most compelling messages are delivered by serious sources such as news anchors or strong authority figures (i.e., the governor), not advertisements



Customer Recall of FYP Ads, Flex Alerts, & Energy Conservation Alerts

- Aided recall of Flex Alert TV ad is 9% in post-event survey, 15% in post-summer survey
- Over half (55%) of post-event respondents recalled a Flex Alert or some other type of energy conservation alert

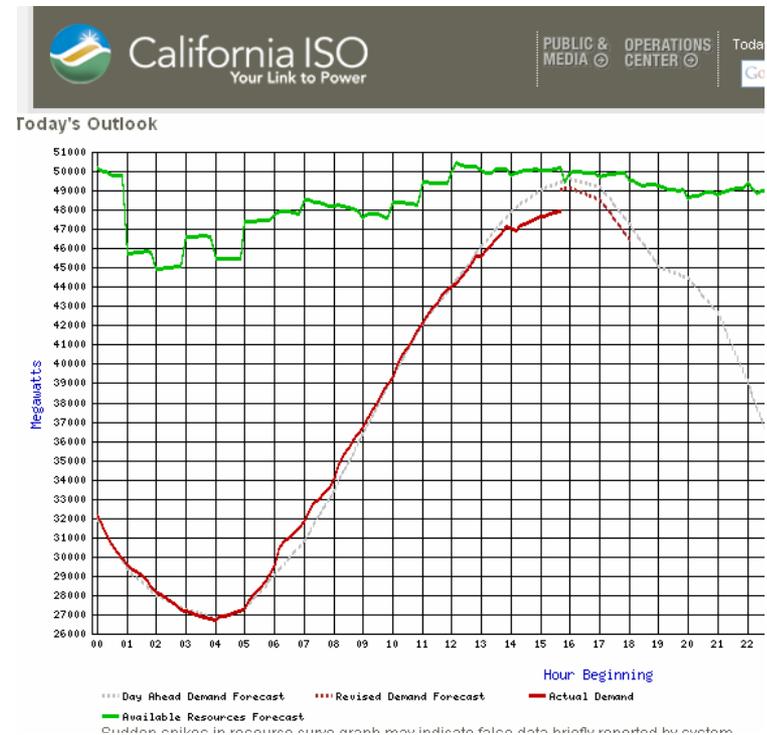


Customer Response to Flex Alerts & Energy Conservation Alerts

- 74% of post-event respondents who recalled a Flex Alert or other energy conservation alert reported taking conservation actions in response (7% of *all* respondents)
- Most common actions taken were using appliances after 7 PM (32%), setting thermostat to 78 degrees (30%), and turning off unneeded lights (18%)
- Renters were significantly more likely than homeowners to report taking conservation actions in response to an alert message seen (74% of renters and 61% of homeowners conserved in response to an alert, based on post-summer surveying)

Indirect Impacts of 2007 Flex Alert

- Analysis of the difference between CAISO forecasted and actual load data on non-event days and Flex Alert days indicated that total system-wide demand response on Flex Alert days ranges from 200 to 1100 MW; Flex Alert campaign impacts would be some fraction of this total impact
- Engineering-based analysis of the post-summer survey responses results in an estimate of between 43 and 166 MW based on self-reported AC turn-down behaviors; this approach has limitations but provides an order of magnitude impact estimate



Key Recommendations from 2007 Evaluation

- Expand target audience to include those segments most likely to be home during summer weekday afternoons
- Negotiate more flexible media purchasing terms to ensure that ads run on all Flex Alert days
- Increase use of cost-effective online advertising and social media channels such as text messaging and emails; can be geo-targeted to most load-constrained regions
- Coordination between FYP, CAISO, the IOUs, and the media should increase
- Additional media outreach should occur prior to the summer season so that graphical elements and talking points are prepared
- The Flex Alert message must continue to emphasize that conservation is especially needed *today*

2008 Evaluation Activities

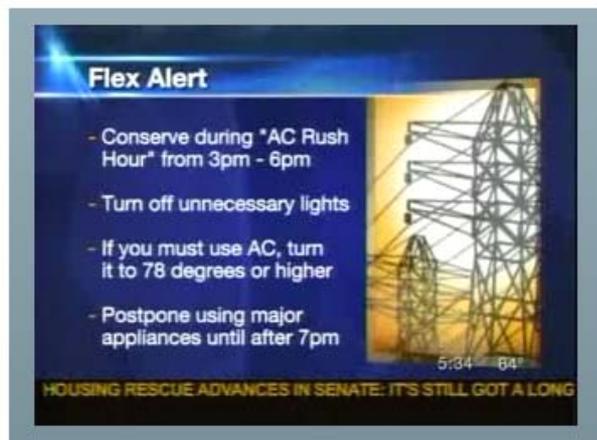
- Process interviews
- Focus groups
- Review of communications from campaign, CAISO, and IOUs
- Website traffic analysis
- Tracking of media coverage of July 2008 Flex Alert
- Social media analysis
- Post-event customer surveys
- Indirect impact analysis

Focus Groups

- Focus groups explored possible new segmentation strategies and messages that resonate with these new segments:
 - The Choir (San Diego): key message is “do a little more of what you are already doing.” Already appreciate the seriousness of the alerts.
 - Reluctant Converts (Irvine): “Even business and governments are doing their part to prevent blackouts.” Need to overcome resentment, make the seriousness of the alert concrete by providing data.
 - Financially Driven Converts (Fresno): “Cost savings over time and at the state level.”
- Consumers expressed clear preferences for messages that are more “relatable” and that better convey the quantified impacts of conservation (or the consequences of inaction)
- Some thought that the term “Flex Alert” implied that response was “optional”; they interpreted “flex” as flexible, not flexing muscles

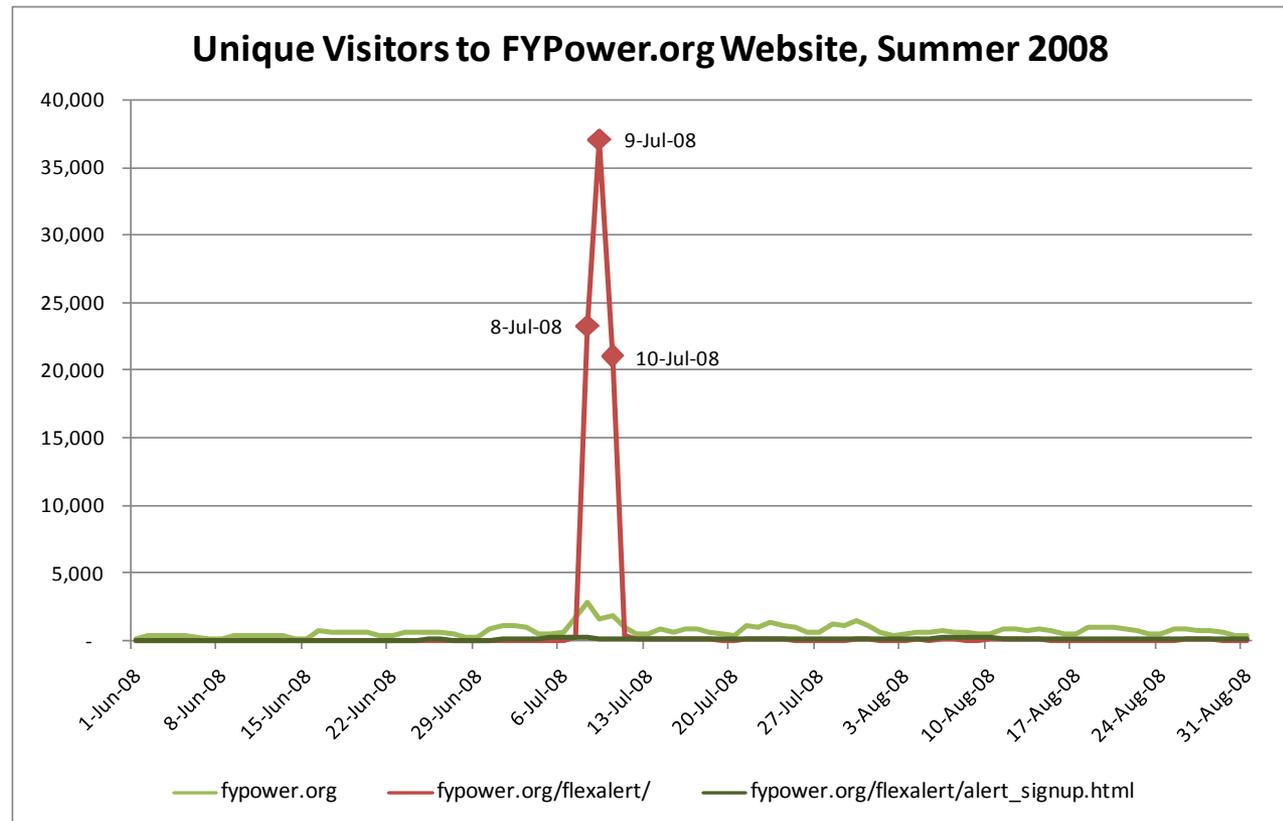
Campaign Communications during 2008 Flex Alert (July 8-10, 2008)

- Noticeable improvement in consistency of message and logos used on FYP and IOU websites and in the media compared to 2007 event
- No text messages were received by subscribers; nor did a email go out to corporate Flex Alert Network subscribers
- FYP website incorporated an effective new mechanism for sending the alert on to friends and family



Website Traffic Analysis

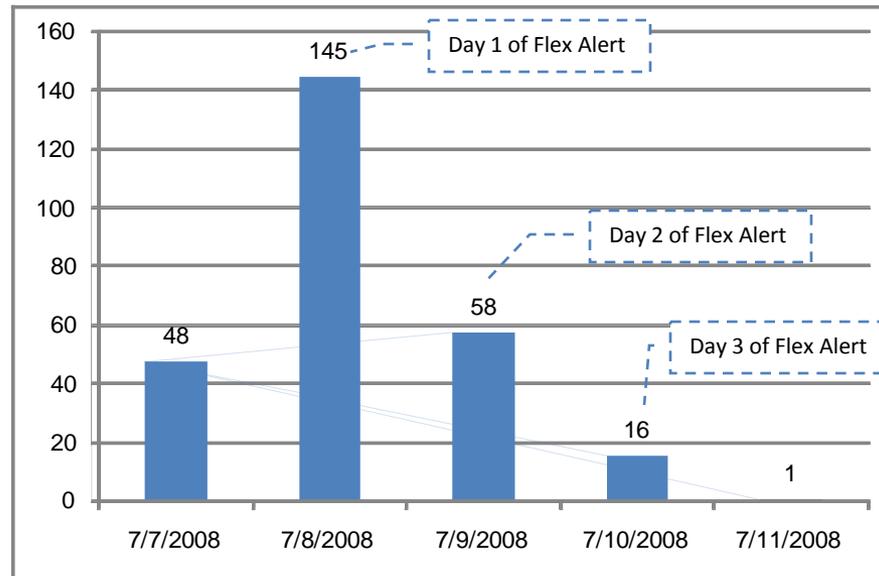
- Flex Your Power website was not accessible during critical times, suggesting higher traffic than the website could handle; over 35,000 unique visitors went to the FYP website on July 9th
- CAISO website receives significantly higher traffic than the FYP website; a link from CAISO's site to the FYP site could help drive up traffic on Flex Alert days



News Media Coverage of Flex Alert

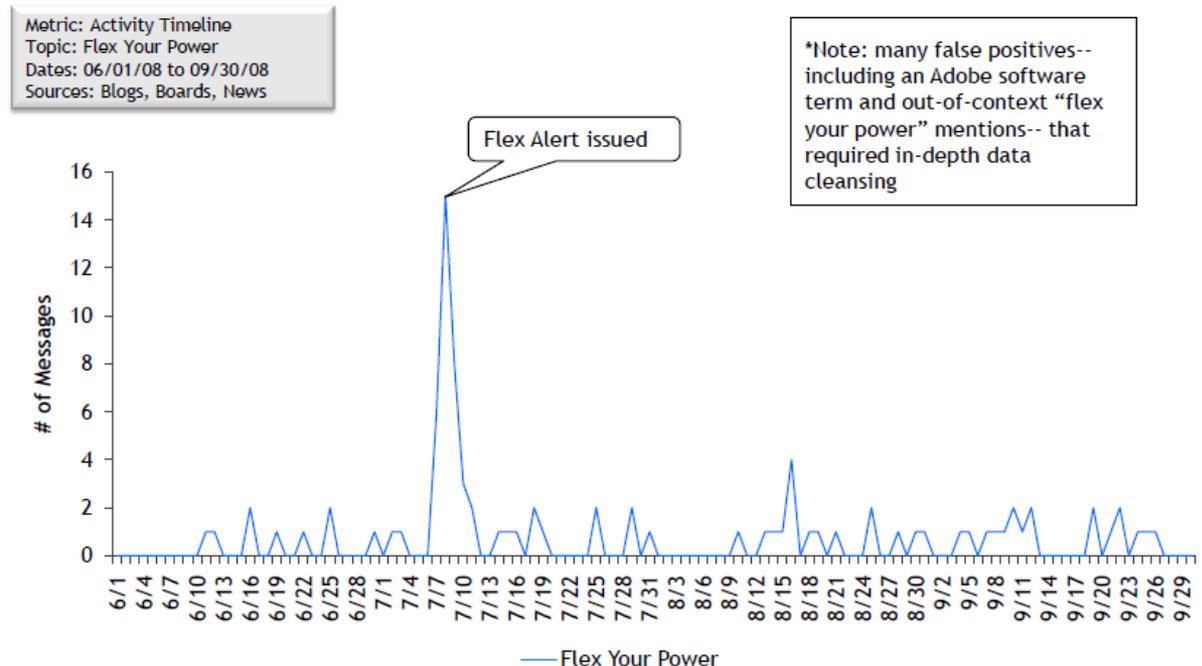
- The news media coverage of the July 2008 Flex Alert was noticeably more accurate in terms of terminology, definition of peak times, and conservation actions promoted when compared to coverage of the August 2007 Flex Alert
- There was a significant decrease in the number of TV news stories devoted to the Flex Alert over the course of the multi-day event, possibly due to lower than forecasted temperatures in many regions

Number of TV News Stories Per Day



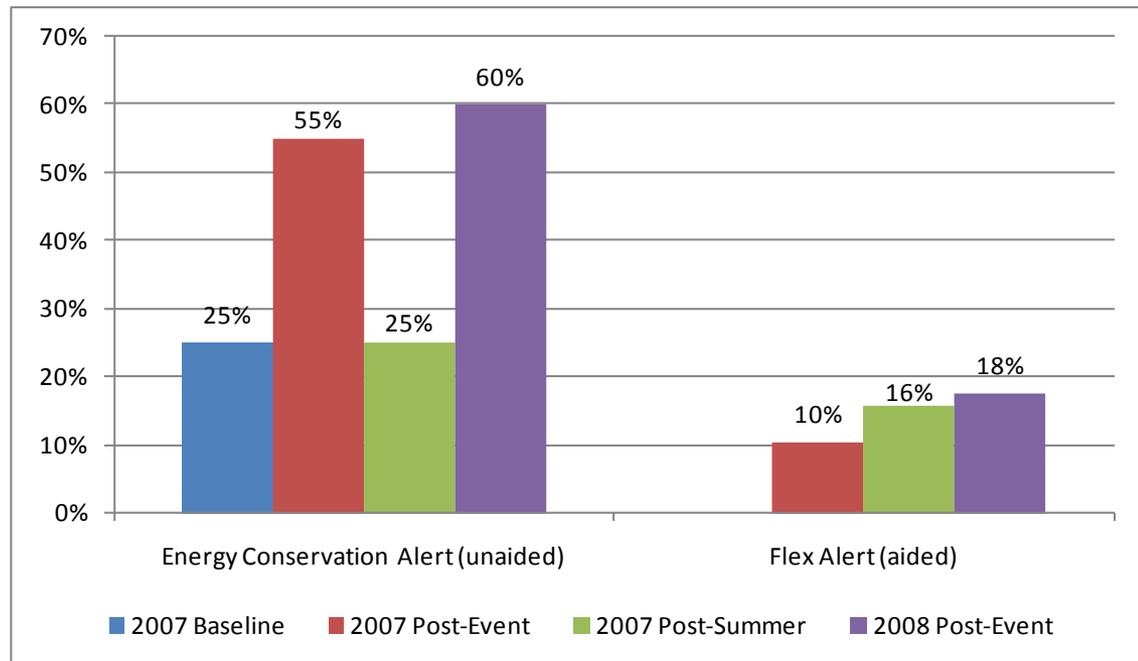
Social Media Analysis

- Online activity (e.g., blogging) related to the Flex Alert concept increased dramatically during the Flex Alert as expected, but remains relatively insignificant for a large, statewide event.
- Many of the postings were news stories or simple repostings of the Flex Alert announcement without much commentary, but a few blog posts started a dialogue about FYP/Flex Alert and energy policy.
- This type of online activity represents an opportunity for engaging with “citizen journalists” to humanize the event, e.g., sharing success stories



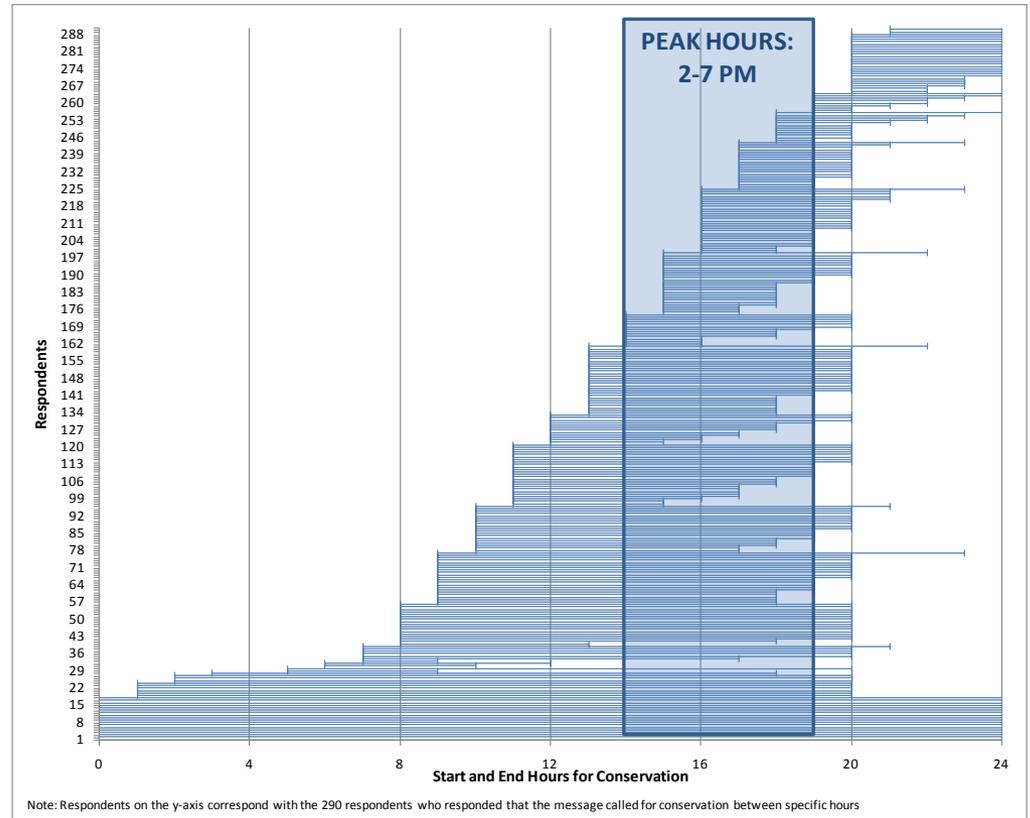
Customer Recall of Flex Alerts & Other Energy Conservation Alerts

- 17% aided recall of Flex Alert TV ad; 11% aided recall of Flex Alert radio ad; overall, 67% recall seeing some kind of energy conservation alert or Flex Alert
- Respondents who specifically recalled Flex Alert ads had significantly higher recall of the three major conservation actions
- 23% of those who recalled an alert or message associated the phrase “Flex Alert” with it (prompted); another 19% associated “Flex Your Power” or “Flex Your Power NOW!” with the message that they saw



Customer Understanding of Alerts

- Customers continue to interpret the Flex Alert ads as long-term requests for conservation
- 15% of post-event survey respondents who specifically recalled a Flex Alert ad said that conservation was requested for a particular day; just 9% of those who saw a generic energy conservation alert said the same
- More respondents know that conservation is needed at specific times of day, but have a fuzzy understanding of when that time of day is (see graphic)

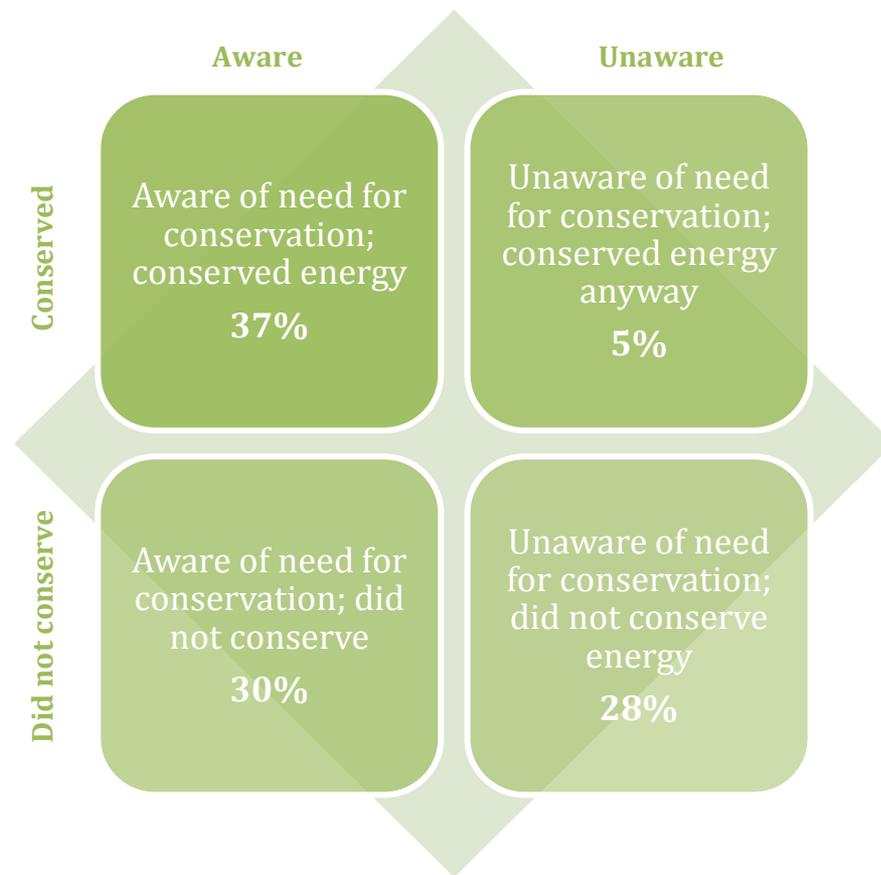


Customer Response to Flex Alerts & Other Energy Conservation Alerts

- 55% of those who recalled a Flex Alert or other energy conservation alert took action in response, most commonly using appliances after 7 PM
- Significantly more respondents in hotter climate zones (those with an average temp over 90 degrees during the Flex Alert) took action; many cited concerns about high utility bills as reason for taking action
- Respondents who saw an alert but did *not* take conservation actions commonly explained that either they were “already doing all we could” or they did not have AC and therefore there was “nothing I could do”

Summary of Awareness and Response to 2008 Flex Alert

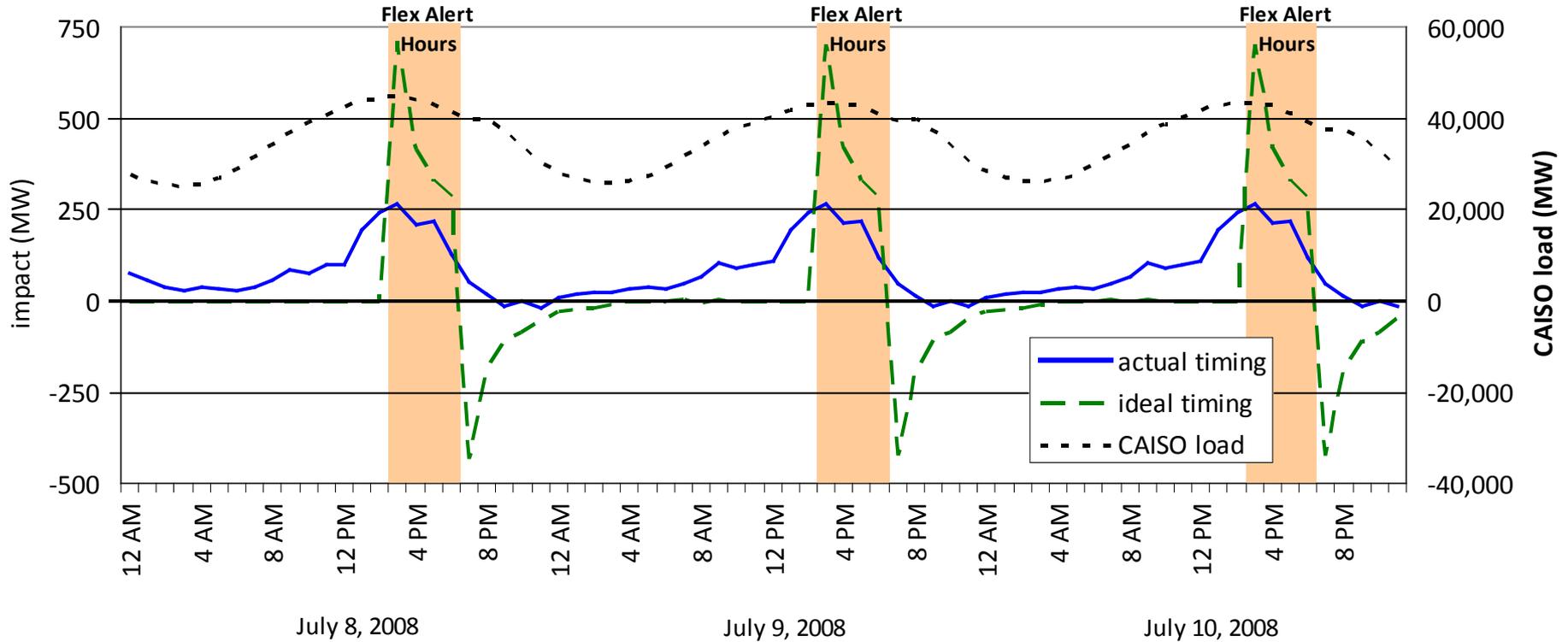
- Of all post-event survey respondents, 37% recalled a Flex Alert or another energy conservation alert *and* conserved energy
- 30% recalled an alert, but did not conserve
- 33% were unaware that an alert was in effect



Indirect Impact Analysis

- Impacts from self-reported air conditioning and lighting conservation actions were estimated to be 222 to 282 MW; lighting accounts for approximately 1/6th of the total impact.
- Impacts vary significantly by climate; respondents who took conservation action in regions that had averaged high temperatures of 90+ degrees had twice as large a kW impact as those in relatively cooler climates
- Timing of conservation actions has a significant effect on impacts; the peak demand reductions would be significantly higher if people reduced their air conditioning usage *only* during the 3pm to 7 pm window

Importance of Timing



Key Recommendations from 2008 Evaluation

- Prepare media kits and conduct outreach to network news affiliates to encourage accurate coverage of the Flex Alert concept and continued interest in multi-day events
- Make use of cost-effective social media (e.g., Twitter) and text messaging channels; both have an immediacy which is desirable for an alert-based campaign
- Ways of incorporating a mix of personally relatable consequences and proactive positive behaviors should be considered for future advertising messages; also, place more emphasis on the times of day that conservation is most needed
- Avoid focusing too heavily on air conditioning behaviors because many survey respondents reported that they didn't do anything in response to the alert because they don't have AC
- Consider developing a true segmentation strategy with differing appeals and media buys, to reach segments which may not already be conserving

Questions?

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 - > www.summitblue.com

- Evaluation reports are available on CALMAC:
 - > http://www.calmac.org/publications/Flex_Your_Power_Now_2006-2007_Evaluation_Report_-_Summit_Blue.pdf
 - > http://www.calmac.org/publications/2008_Flex_Alert_Final_Report_12-18-08.pdf