

PUTTING A SMILE ON HOUSEHOLD ENERGY BILLS



PROPERTY & CONSTRUCTION

Earlier this month, we spotted [MyEex](#) and [Earth Aid](#), two initiatives that reward consumers for reducing household energy use. Taking a different approach is US-based [Positive Energy](#), which compares households' energy consumption, adding a social twist to being green. The company works with local utility companies, which use its software to add persuasive information to customer bills. Instead of just listing their own energy use, it adds information for households on the same street or block, showing how the consumer measures up in comparison to all of their neighbours, as well as to the energy efficient ones. Households with low energy use are encouraged with smiley faces beside their usage. Positive Energy's approach combines technology, marketing and behavioural science, based on the idea that social pressure is more effective than enforced pressure from far-off governments and regulatory agencies. By changing the customer's mindset, long-term changes in consumer behaviour are likely to be brought about, saving both energy and money. While MyEex and Earth Aid use money as motivation, Positive Energy works on a transformative level by comparing individual practices against normative values, making low energy use a societal norm. Utility companies in other parts of the world: time to add some Positive Energy to your billing process? (Related: [Energy meters get tweeting](#).) Spotted by: Jenny Lau

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