

If a Picture is Worth a Thousand Words, What are a Thousand Pictures Worth?

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Introduction

A primary component of the promotion of energy efficient products in the retail space has been the use of display material to direct consumers to energy efficient products and to explain their benefits. Many regional energy efficiency programs invest substantial program resources in the development and placement of display materials in the retail space. Additionally, the EPA has developed material in cooperation with retail partners to improve the visibility and consumer awareness of the ENERGY STAR[®] brand. Some of this EPA sponsored material has specifically been developed to coordinate with EPA's seasonal campaigns (Change a Light, Change the World, and Cool Your World), while other material has been for general use.

Methods and Results

To understand the inherent value of ENERGY STAR display material, this poster quantifies trends in the amount of ENERGY STAR display material available in major Do-It-Yourself retailers in several metropolitan areas across the US. Since 2001, EPA has undertaken research to evaluate the consumer shopping experience with ENERGY STAR in the retail channel by visiting several major retailers and lighting showrooms in various metropolitan areas throughout the country.¹ This project, called the ENERGY STAR Retail Store Level (RSL) Assessment addresses three core research goals and is completed, on average, twice annually. The product mix varies in each round of the assessment and includes products such as appliances, CFLs, interior and exterior fixtures, programmable thermostats, home electronics equipment, office equipment and home sealing products. In 2004, a detailed, quantitative inventory of all ENERGY STAR display material present in retail locations became a core element of the data collection for the RSL Assessment. This display check inventory (DCI) quantifies the type, amount, and placement of display material in each retail location. The types of display material assessed are general signs, product specific signs, displays, shipping cartons, and collateral. The location of material within each store is recorded according to department and the branding of material (in addition to ENERGY STAR) is also identified for each type of display material encountered.

In this poster, we compile annual and seasonal trends in the availability of various types of ENERGY STAR display material in DIY retailers in several metropolitan areas across the US. These trends detail the amount of material and breakdown the amounts of material relative to placement, type, and sponsorship/branding. We further correlate these trends in display material to other developments in the energy efficiency industry to better understand the role of display material in the retail space for retailers of this type. This research makes use of a detailed, comprehensive, and relatively long time series of useful data on the availability of ENERGY STAR display material to characterize the value retailers place on this type of material.

¹ Snell, et al. (2003) "ENERGY STAR[®] Retail Store-Level Assessment: A Look Across the Nation." *In Proceedings of the 2003 International Energy Program Evaluation Conference – "Evaluation: Meeting Diverse Needs,"* Seattle, WA, IEPEC.