

# Thought Leaders Speak Out 2021

ENGAGING CUSTOMERS WITH TECHNOLOGY

## Key Takeaways: Empowering Customers with Awareness and Control Over Their Energy and Carbon Footprints - DTE Insight App

### A Fireside Chat with DTE and Powerley (July 2021)

The Institute for Electric Innovation's *Thought Leaders Speak Out 2021: Engaging Customers with Technology* series brings together electric company executives with customer responsibilities to share lessons learned and the results of successful customer engagement strategies.

The fourth dialogue of the series focused on empowering customers with awareness and control over their energy and carbon footprints with the DTE Insight App and features a discussion between Dave Meador of DTE and Manoj Kumar of Powerley. Today, more than 300,000 DTE households use the Insight App as a home energy awareness and management tool, interacting with it more than one million times per year. By year-end, Powerley anticipates an increase in users as DTE expands the Insight App to support customer participation in a TOU rate pilot. Mary Kipp of Puget Sound Energy moderated the discussion, Lisa Wood of IEI provided opening remarks, and Phil Dion of American Electric Power provided closing remarks. Key takeaways are summarized and highlighted below.

[Click Here for the Agenda and Speaker Bios](#)

[Watch PSE's Opening Remarks Here](#)

Mary Kipp provides an overview of how the DTE Insight App is a digital solution that provides detailed insights to customers on their energy use.

**Providing a utility-branded app is critical to gaining customer trust, and providing personalized energy use insights enables customers to significantly reduce and save.**

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Powerley explains the importance of electric company-branding for both the software and hardware solutions. The DTE Insight App, combined with the Energy Bridge (the hardware connection that enables a real time data stream), unlocks a three-second interval smart meter data stream that DTE uses to provide insights directly to customers in real-time.

 [Video Clip Here](#)

Powerley details how combining the DTE Insight App with the Energy Bridge hardware enriches the customer experience and energy use insights for different end uses. In addition, customers are willing to pay for this enhanced offering. DTE now charges customers \$1.99/month for use of the Energy Bridge. The retention rate for the DTE Insight App plus Energy Bridge solution is 98% after 90 days – extremely high!

**DTE’s Insight App improves customer stickiness, increases customer engagement, and delivers Aha! moments.**

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Powerley emphasizes their secret sauce to keep customers engaging 14 times per month for more than 2 minutes at a time. Personalized insights on bill and budget management, advanced rate coaching, and disaggregated load management for different end uses keep customers engaged.

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DTE explains how they are using the DTE Insight app to support a Time-Of-Use (TOU) rate pilot at a fraction of the cost compared to programming the TOU rate into the DTE billing system. DTE used the mobile Insight App for under 2% of the cost. This is especially important in a pilot situation.

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DTE highlights how they actively encourage low-to-moderate income customers to download the Insight App and use the tool to understand and manage their electricity use during the summer and winter months when weather can be extreme. This reduces bill surprises.

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Powerley shares how the tool helps both DTE customers and DTE’s customer service representatives (CSRs). The Insight App is a self-serve tool for customers – customers can see what they are using on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis and compare it to their energy budget. This has a direct impact on reducing call center volumes because a high percentage of calls are related to high bills. The Insight App also enables the CSRs to see what is happening inside a customer’s home (e.g., your space heater was running all day) and provide specific information to customers. The result is much more effective resolution of customer issues.

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DTE describes how customer service reps use and promote the Insight App and how DTE is cross-selling its voluntary renewable program, MIGreenPower, via the Insight App. Customers that use the Insight App are offered the opportunity to sign up for MIGreenPower and vice versa.

**Closing Remarks**

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AEP summarizes how the DTE Insight App has many things we like: utility-branded; meets cyber requirements; the customer data stays with us; and we (as utilities) get to be the trusted energy advisor to our customers. Importantly, the DTE Insight App is helping us give customers choice and control and shows how we are unlocking customer benefits using smart meter data.