Gusset Beard LLC

Writing Sample #1

*Blog post that says utilities and their customers value data and will value it more. **The client helps utilities gather and provide data to their customers.***

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One safe energy prediction for 2016 is that the amount of data available to utilities and their consumers will continue to increase exponentially.

Utilities know the importance of data. Two years ago, Oracle Utilities published a white paper (PDF) in which they said that utilities were already aware of the advantages of data analytics. "Data analytics is providing utilities with an opportunity to better manage the enterprise based on data-driven decisions," and realizing substantial return on investment. Oracle's study, along with others, found that businesses were getting $10.66 for every $1 spent on analytics, and finding that the number of utilities reporting that they were prepared for the, "influx of big data," had almost doubled (17% up from 9% the previous year).

Utilities **and their customers** value customer data. All this data promises gains in efficiency and reductions in cost for utilities and their customers, and there are additional reasons that both value it.

Utilities value customer data

Customer data is an important piece of that pie, as we blogged here last year [writing sample note: this post is not my writing]. In a nutshell, we said, "Combining consumption data with two-way communication creates opportunities for exceptional customer experiences, which create long-lasting relationships." These relationships matter to customers and utilities because they provide value to both. We said, utilities value these relationships financially because more customers are more likely to, "go with the utility in new directions with new products, services and rate structures."

Customers value their own data

Personal data is intrinsically interesting to people. People value interesting information about themselves and they are willing to pay for it. The proliferation of wearable tech demonstrates this even as the Quantified Self movement becomes ever more mainstream. From the Garmin through the FitBit and the Apple Watch and beyond, the trend shows what happens when people have the opportunity to combine gaming and social sharing with quantified self data.

This data-driven socially connected, comparison-enabling effect of technology and culture transcends the human wrist encompassing personal surroundings, too. Social networks like Pinterest and Instagram are full of examples showing rooms, kitchens, offices, homes, and yards that people have or aspire to have.

The degree of alignment between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations is already changing behavior of both utilities and their customers.

In the short term, gadgets like smart thermostats, smart doorbells, smart outlets, etc. (think Nest, Ring, Skybell and Belkin's Conserve line) seem set to weave themselves into every dimension of almost every utility customer's life. As long as Moore's law applies to technology, proliferation of devices and their accompanying streams of data looks all but inevitable in 2016 and beyond.

Beyond 2016, Beyond Devices

The smartness of homes, right now, mostly resides in a small, loose collection of devices tied together by a smart phone with different apps for each, and sometimes with a base station involved (like the Philips Hue light bulbs). Kitchen appliances (video) look set to come online next with some connected appliances already available. Even more recently, technologies like Apple's HomeKit and Amazon's Echo, are beginning to integrate these devices.

As more parts of the home and its assorted appliances, devices, and systems come online, smarter integration will become possible and the term "smart home" will become more apt. Smart homes promise to make this year's, "influx of big data," look like just the beginning. For instance, Honda has had a demonstrator smart home, the Honda Smart Home, at the uc Davis since late March 2014. They recently opened 200 *data streams updated every minute*.

Oracle's white paper, called it a, "seismic shift," and, at the end of 2015, that is looking like an accurate description.