ARE WE SEEING WHAT THEY'RE SEEING: CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS ON ENERGY

MPowerMaui: An Energy Conversation – Results

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Maui Economic Development Board
Building Pathways…to innovation, jobs, and opportunity

MPower Maui

An Energy Conversation

Goal

To engage a cross section of the Maui Island community and bring their voices to this Energy Conference.

To determine community perceptions, support, concerns, awareness of potential directions, and perceived impediments related to energy goals and utility strategies.








Challenges

- Short time to prepare/implement
- Limited financial resources
- Complex topic; lots of opinions; lots of misinformation and misunderstanding
- Unexpected simultaneous energy-related changes, e.g. merger with NextEra
- Presenting neutral/objective info
- Designing process that could work simultaneously with residents who know a lot about the topic and residents with minimal information

Decisions (after 35+ one-on-one interviews)

- Initial focus on residents of Maui Island
- Small group sessions (12+/-)
- Facilitators go to participant location
- Process to enable data collection
- “Brand” process, strong graphics; active hands-on participation
- Not “scientifically random” sample
- Utilize ‘employer’ locations and employee participation
- Utilize Maui Fair as initial starting point
- Provide “facts” and short education
- Reach 400+/- residents in 5 weeks; 40+ identical sessions (one-time participation)

Structure of the Sessions (4 active components)

- Introductions (10 min)
- Conversation "Kick-off":(same survey as at Fair; compare results of session with 1,400 from Fair) (10 min)
- 1. Refresher Course: Review of energy terms, energy landscape; large panels of information around room (10 min)
- 2. Prioritize Critical Issues: 24 cards, one issue per card; select 4 cards (most important); pair with neighbor- reduce 8 cards to 4; two pairs merge; reduce 8 cards to final 4 (25 min)
- 3. Tradeoffs: In pairs, complete sentences, fill in blanks ("I would support… if…") and report back (25 min)
- 4. Messages: Groups of 3, draft "messages" to government, utility, community; report back (8 min)
- Wrap-up and Questions (10 minutes)

Demographics

- 435 participants (in 5 weeks) in 90-minute sessions (8-15 people per session)

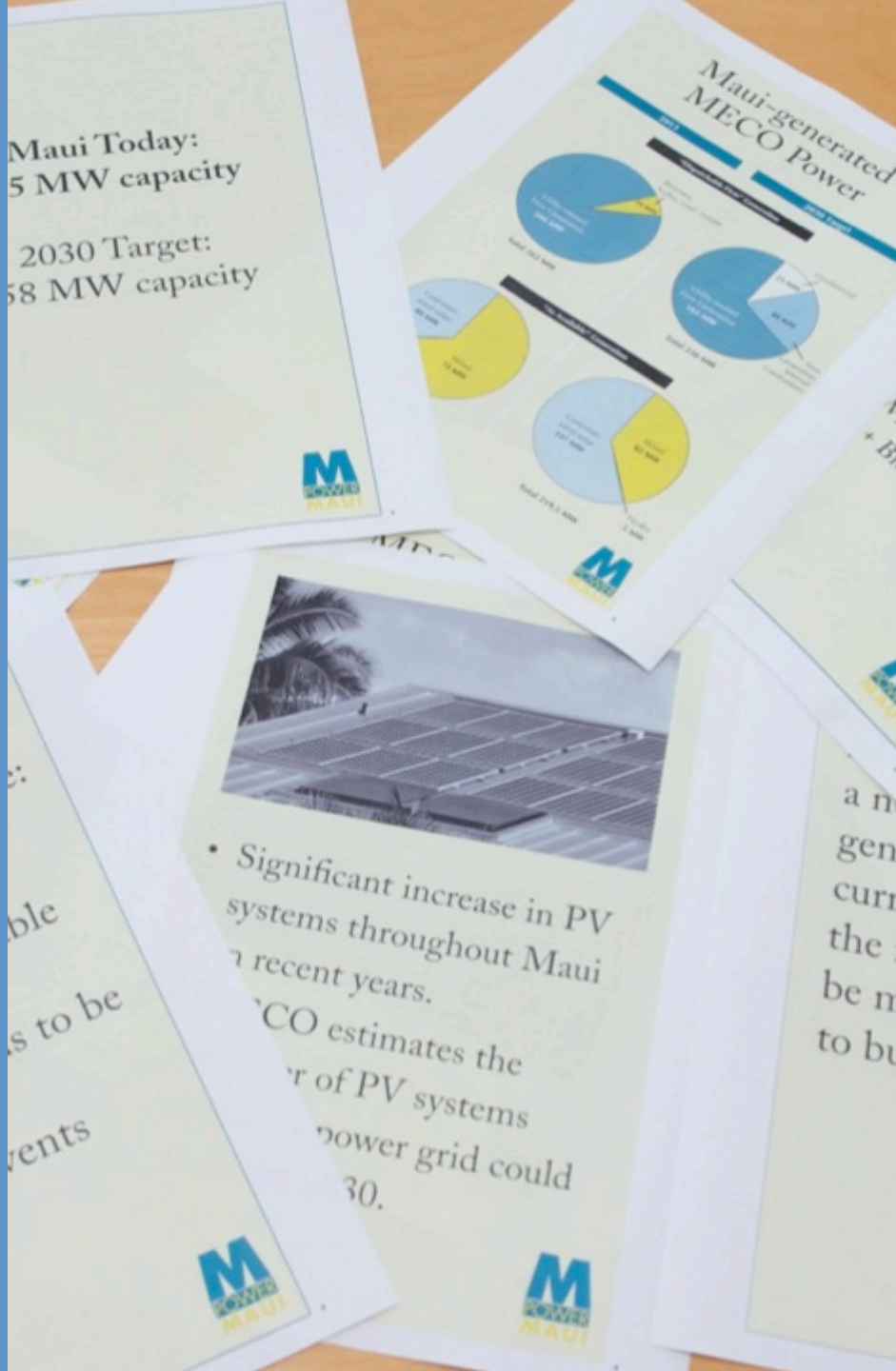
  + 1,477 County Fair survey respondents
- Reflective of Maui Island population (age/ gender)
- 98% of participants were full time residents of Maui
- 11% lived in Maui whole life; 44% have lived in Maui more than 20 years
- Only 11% rated themselves as "knowledgeable" (well-informed) about energy issues

1. Survey/Questionnaire
(10 minutes)

- Nearly 1,900 respondents; 75% at Fair; 25% at M-Power
- Three greatest motivations to save energy at home:
  - "Saves money" – 87%
  - "Health of planet" – 54%
  - "Good for Maui" – 40%
- M-Power participants grade Maui and self lower than participants at Fair; grades for self higher than for Maui
- Overall, majority grade Maui "C" (9% more Ds at M-Power)

2. “Refresher Course”
(10 minutes)

- Review energy “terms” and facts about “energy landscape”
- Facts: peak demand time; HCEI goals; current capacity on Maui; “dispatchable energy;” amount of “firm” and “as available;” number of PVs; amount of renewable energy; possible future energy sources; etc.



3.Prioritize Issues
(25 minutes)

- "Deck" of 24 M-Power cards for each participant (one blank)
- Each card reflects one energy "issue"
- Each participant selects the four "issues" they feel are most important for them, for Maui (5 min)
- Individuals pair cards with neighbor, narrow 8 cards to 4 (4 min)
- Pair teams with other table pair; narrow 8 to final 4 (4 min)
- Tape each set of 4 to wall; analyze and discuss

3. Prioritization Results (by sessions)

- Cost (93% of sessions)
- Dependence on imported fuels (88% of sessions)
- Environmental impacts (84% of sessions)
- Changing lifestyles to conserve energy (70%)
- Improvements to electrical infrastructure (56%)
- Write-in examples (remained to end):
  - *Social will to move forward together;*
  - *New tech innovations; Community-based values;*
  - *Financing solutions for renters;*
  - *Hydro power; Energy storage; True smart meters;*
  - *Community economic cost from "utility obstruction"*

4. Tradeoffs

(25 minutes)

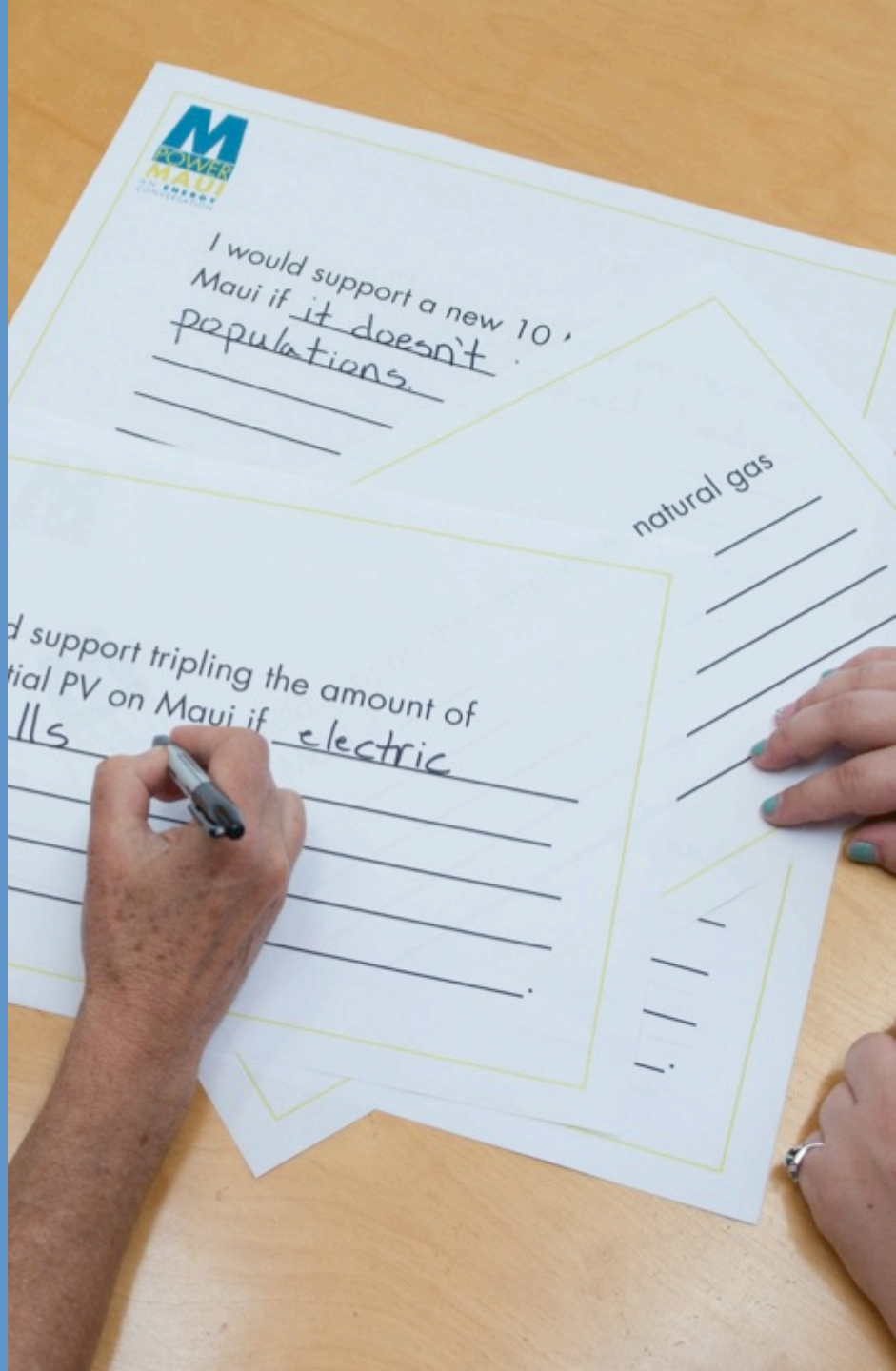
- Five incomplete sentences on large sheets at tables: *"I would support "x" on Maui if ……"*
- 5 "topics": wind farm; amount of residential PV; natural gas; reduction of dependence on imported fuel
- 1 "sentence:" *It is important to maintain safe, reliable supply of energy, but also important to ……*
- Work in groups of 2-3 people (depending on total numbers)
- Teams share/discuss responses; sheets collected

4. Tradeoff Results (a)

"I would support a new 10MW wind farm on Maui if...."

- … Enough storage in place (prior to support); *top response*
- … I had more information that could be trusted
- … it didn't impact cultural sites; environmental concerns addressed; cost assessment; power stays on Maui

Overall, positive… but *"ifs"*



4. Tradeoffs (b)

"I would support tripling residential PV on Maui if…."

- … No "if," just do it!
- … there is an equitable way to spread cost reduction and access
- … everyone pays a fair share of true cost of electricity

Extremely supportive (32 unconditional yeses); concerns about affordability, equity, capacity, grid connectivity

Desire for "whole community" to be able to benefit cost-wise

4. Tradeoffs (c)

"I would support the transition to natural gas on Maui if…."

- … it's a secondary form of energy on hours when renewables are inaccessible
- … as transition to actual clean energy, doesn't cost more, is environmentally-friendly sourced

Most negative responses: 20% absolute No; concerns: reliance on outside source, environmental impacts, band-aid solution, safety; many misunderstandings

4. Tradeoffs (d)

"It's important for Maui to reduce its dependence on imported fuel, but that should not come at the cost of…."

- … people's livelihoods
- … higher bills
- … becoming dependent

50% of comments referred to cost to consumer; second most common concern involved environmental impacts (in Maui and beyond)

4. Tradeoffs (e)

"It's important that the electric company produce and maintain a safe and reliable supply of energy, but it's also important that the company …"

- … provide choices for customers
- … be a cultural steward
- … not leverage its monopoly in ways that cause hardship for consumers; not make too much profit

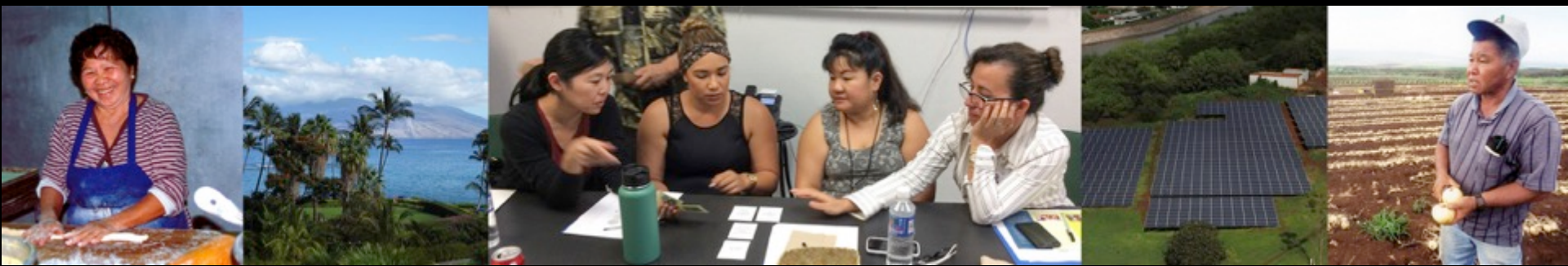
5. Messages (8 minutes)

- An opportunity to advise decision-makers
- Draft messages to Maui, electric company, government (350)
- To Maui: prideful, recognition of community responsibility, need to stay informed, participate, conserve (very little negativity)
- To Government: lack of transparency, short-sightedness, relationship with utilities, greater regulation needed, encourage competition, create nonprofit energy company
- To Utility: keep profits in proportion, support renewables, affordability, think innovatively, lack of trust/transparency

Messages to Maui…..

"Get involved. Use your voice to engage and participate in the issues that are important for you and future generations."

"Take interest and be aware of what would affect our lives and the lives of future generations… Malama the Aina.. If not for ourselves, then for future Keiki."



Messages to Government …..

"Regulate the electric company more."

"Focus on sincere collaboration (government and utility)."

"Be more productive in resolving energy issues; don't defer to more 'studies.'"

Messages to the Electric Company…..

“Please remember we are a small island community. Please keep your profits in proportion.”

“How committed are you to changing your business model to support renewables?”

“Lead, follow, or get out of the way!”

“Don’t let us down. Be trendsetters. Set the template.”

Participant Evaluation

"Mahalo.. I learned how little I know. You piqued my interest. I hope that government and the electric company listen to what we said."

- 98 % were "actively engaged"
- 97% "felt heard"
- 90% "felt they learned something"
- 95% trusted the presenter and felt the session was objective

What We Learned …

- Cost is the biggest factor, but environment and equity are also important considerations
- There is a definite preference for PV and wind is generally accepted but definitely a second choice
- Participants are very wary of LNG
- Lack of knowledge is a big issue (and information coming from "trusted" sources)
- Choice is important
- Recognition that these are big issues and they require collaboration

"Maui… you are full of conscientious people that care about our planet. We have the opportunity to show the rest of the world how much energy can be generated by renewable sources and prove how possible it is… Embrace and represent this well."