



# marketing mix

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## Expanded messaging

### REFOCUS YOUR BUSINESS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOUR PROPANE CUSTOMERS

For the last two years or more, the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) has been ramping up its environmental messaging to “fit in” with all the other green energy conversation.

Some would say that this narrow approach gained little traction with environmentalists and left consumers in propane country confused about the true value of propane compared to other energy sources available to them.

While many propane marketers initially supported the development of environmental messaging, it often falls to the bottom of the list of reasons why a consumer may be interested in propane as an energy source for their homes or businesses. Features such as reliability and affordability seem to be more important to the average energy consumer.

Let's look at PERC's expanded messaging approach and how your propane business can regain focus on what really matters to current and prospective customers.

#### ► PROPANE IS SAFE

Your customers and prospects should expect that propane is a safe energy source to use in their homes or businesses, and that you and your employees are operating with a focus on safety in all aspects of the business. Meeting those safety expectations means that you need to totally embrace PERC's new Every Day Safe program to further

strengthen the safety culture at your company.

#### ► PROPANE IS RELIABLE

Just one winter storm earlier this year put over 800,000 people out of power in 40 states. The electric grid is becoming increasingly unreliable as dependable base power generation is giving way to wimpy solar and wind farms in many states. Propane customers on your automatic delivery service should never run out of propane due to improper routing and scheduling of deliveries. If you have a problem in this area, it is time to review how you schedule refills, so that your customers have a continuous fuel supply. Perhaps you should consider a stronger reliance on remote tank monitoring to supplement less dependable scheduling methods. Keep close track of your reliability factor and be prepared to brag about it to your customers, and especially to prospects in your marketing area. Your electric utility competitor probably isn't doing much bragging about its service reliability.

#### ► PROPANE IS AFFORDABLE

The “free” electricity from renewable sources turns into the most expensive electricity source by the time it reaches your customer's electric bill. It is important that you find various ways of reminding your customers and prospects that propane is an affordable energy choice, especially compared to electricity. Some state associations are now using a per-therm price comparison to compare the cost of electricity to propane. Compare the per-therm cost of electricity in your marketing area with the per-therm cost of your propane

price. It should validate that propane is an affordable energy choice.

#### ► PROPANE IS ABUNDANT

Nationwide propane supplies are at a historic high point, with about three times as much propane being exported compared to what is being used in this country. None of that matters if you don't secure your propane needs on a continuous basis. Work on perfecting your supply plan, letting your customers know they can depend on you to provide them continuous energy service no matter how often their electricity service may fail them. Propane appliances, coupled with a propane standby generator, become the best energy insurance policy your customers can have.

#### ► AND YES, PROPANE IS ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

It is no longer the lead, but clean propane can still be an important attribute, especially when you compete in the autogas market. Talking with select prospects about the environmental friendliness of propane can become a complement to the more important attributes that PERC has added to their arsenal, rather than the only attribute to be considered.

PERC has expanded its focus, and you should consider doing the same. The future of the propane industry and your business may very well depend on it. **LPG**

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