

Fast Facts: Americans Willing to Embrace New Energy Behaviors to Affect Change



GE Energy Services commissioned a survey in June of 2010 in the United States (U.S.) to better understand the general public's perceptions of solutions for overcoming energy challenges. What did we learn?

Most Americans (79 percent) are willing to do their part to help the country overcome its energy challenges in the future, even if it entails difficult decisions about consumption habits and behaviors in the short-term.

What's more, **88 percent are willing to use a smart device such as a meter, thermostat, appliance, etc. if it would help to better manage their energy usage.**

Americans Understand Energy Challenges Exist

Consumers know a fundamental change to how we produce and use energy is needed:

- **Nearly three-quarters (72 percent)** think how we generate and use energy today could harm the economic growth of the country:
 - Interestingly, **women are significantly more likely than men to agree that how we generate and use energy today could harm the economic growth of this country** (75 percent vs. 68 percent men).
- Most (**88 percent**) recognize that investing in energy infrastructure improvements is essential.
- **Fifty-six percent strongly agree** that money spent on making capital improvements to today's energy infrastructure is necessary.
- **Eighty-five percent believe that America would have a competitive advantage** over other countries if we updated our electrical grid to be more efficient, cleaner and "smarter."

Americans are Willing to do their Part to Affect Change

Most consumers are willing to change their energy consumption habits, in order to affect change:

- Eighty-eight percent are willing to use smart devices, **most (82 percent) believe smart meters and smart appliances are the future.**
 - Adults age 18-34 are more likely to be willing to use a smart device if it would help them better manage their energy usage
- Most are motivated to use smart appliances by a desire to **save money (95 percent); gain control over their energy bills (90 percent); and make a positive difference for their children or grandchildren (88 percent).**
- **Seventy percent** of consumers would actually prefer their power company to spend money improving the aging electric infrastructure with solutions such as a smarter grid, rather than building new power plants.

There is More Education to be Done

Many Americans remain unsure of their role & are wary of drastic changes:

Despite significant consumer endorsement of the development and deployment of a smart grid, and the end benefits that it will deliver, there are some still hesitant to accept smart grid as the way forward:

- Ten percent of consumers are not yet willing to use smart devices primarily because of concerns about a rise in costs (62 percent) and potential privacy and security risks (61 percent). All of which are often fueled by misperceptions that can be addressed by consumer education.
- Nearly half (46%) of consumers believe that *beyond controlling my own energy (i.e. turning off lights, keeping the A/C temperature at 78, etc.), I don't think there is much more I can do to support "green"/sustainable energy platforms*. This belief is especially strong among non-parents and consumers 65 and older:
 - 51 percent of Non-parents Agree vs. 38 percent of Parents Agree
 - 65 percent of consumers age 65 and older agree compared to 36 percent age 18-34, 37 percent age 35-44, 46 percent age 45-54, 54 percent age 55-64