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Scale, Speed, and Persistence in an Analytics Age of Efficiency: How Deep Data Meets Big Savings to Deliver Comprehensive Efficiency☆

By deploying advanced analytics, leading utilities are transforming their demand-side efficiency programs to target customers across portfolios, identify efficiency opportunities, engage customers continuously, implement measures, and monitor savings and ensure persistency.

Dian Grueneich and David Jacot

I. Introduction: The New 'Analytics Age of Efficiency'

The era of advanced analytics has arrived in many key segments of the economy. Analytics have quickly transformed how internal corporate functions operate and even how entire industries identify and capture value. In the retail industry, for example, companies now leverage vast amounts of transaction data to inform strategic decisions regarding product development and supply chain management, pricing, customer segmentation, global go-to-market strategies, and micro-targeted advertising, to name a few. Similar applications can be found in financial services, consumer packaged goods,

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telecommunications, and electioneering.¹

This article describes how data analytics are on the cusp of transforming how we save energy – ushering in what we refer to as "The Analytics Age of Efficiency." Advanced analytics are now fairly commonplace between generation sources and the meter (sometimes referred to as "supply side analytics") to help utilities, for example, better manage grid operations.² Until recently, however, analytics have been far less utilized between the meter and the end user, or "behind the meter."

oday, three fundamental forces are helping to create a paradigm shift in "demand-side" efficiency and are paving the way for analytics to play an increasingly strategic and essential role. First, significant investments in smart grid/ advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) across North America and the broader globe have exponentially increased the availability of high-frequency consumption data coming from residential, commercial, and industrial meters.³ In the past, meters were read on a monthly basis and thus efficiency experts attempting to conduct historical energy consumption analysis only had a very limited 12 data points per year of consumption to analyze. With smart grid/AMI deployment, it is now possible to have 35,040 consumption data points per year (from interval meters that record consumption

every 15 min) to analyze – representing a rich trove of information that experts can mine to understand how, where, and why energy is being wasted.

Second, utilities are more motivated than ever to find new and better ways to achieve compliance with state policies requiring aggressive end-use energy savings goals and some utilities (e.g., Los Angeles

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Department of Water & Power) are actively incorporating energy efficiency in their long-term power procurement planning (as discussed elsewhere in this issue of The Electricity Journal). Cost-effective efficiency procurement laws, loading orders that prioritize efficiency before generation, and energy efficiency resources standards (EERS) all place year-over-year savings requirements on utilities and pressure to find new sources of efficiency savings.⁴ In addition, EERS are often accompanied by revenue decoupling and performance incentives, which ensure

utilities are neutral to sales volume and are financially motivated to help their consumers save energy.

Third, private-sector companies, recognizing the proliferation of data and a market need, have developed innovative efficiency analytics solutions using high-frequency consumption data to derive deep insight into how buildings waste energy. Importantly, these advances fill a gap between (1) insufficiently accurate and more generic "yardstickmeasurement" approaches such as energy use intensity, likebuilding comparisons, and even traditional energy simulation modeling and (2) time-intensive, costly approaches based on site visits and device installations.

T he market transformation beginning to take place in efficiency programs through the use of analytics is tremendous – providing step-change improvements for utilities, customers, the environment, and the broader economy. More specifically, this Analytics Age of Efficiency is helping utilities and other program administrators overcome long-standing barriers to energy efficiency by providing the following benefits:

• Increased scale: Reaching a much larger proportion of the buildings in a utility's service territory and identifying deeper retrofit and operational savings in that larger population of buildings.

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