

ELECTRIC VEHICLE ADOPTION:  
How utilities can charge up EV adoption in the US with marketing efforts

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ABSTRACT

Power utilities are hoping to capture additional electricity sales from electric vehicle (EV) charging. While EVs have been on the mainstream car market for about a decade, adoption of these vehicles has been slow. While EV adoption research has taken place, it had yet to focus on the role of the electric power utility (EPU) in helping customers understand and adopt electric vehicles. Using semi-structured interviews with EV marketing and program managers and the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, this study examines the marketing activities, messages, and segmentation efforts EPUs have taken to encourage the adoption of EVs by their customers. The study found several potential opportunities and issues with current EPU EV marketing. First, EPUs should highlight positive market conditions including the increase of EV car types, higher gas prices, and increased environmental concerns. Also, there is still a need to help potential EV drivers understand EV charging, vehicle range, and overall costs, and the messaging should be focused on mid-funnel marketing. Lastly, EV stereotypes and errors in audience segmentation and adoption rates need to be overcome to ensure more effective marketing performance.