Finding Large Savings for Small Business

DTE Find & Fix Program

Michelle Peters
Associate Program Manager
Energy Sciences

Michigan Energy Efficiency Conference
May 3, 2022
The Find & Fix Gas Program

• Small to medium commercial and light industrial businesses
• Complimentary steam trap survey
• Rebate to cover costs
• Flexibility to complete fixes
• Educational and non-energy savings benefits
The Challenge

Understanding the barriers to participation and how to engage a market segment which rarely participates in energy efficiency programs.
The Customer

• Transactional relationship with DTE
• Energy savings benefits are not tangible
• Operating on thin margins
• No or minimal maintenance budgets
Barriers to Participation

• Unaware of utility programs
• Skeptical of the incentives and benefits
• Upfront cost of steam trap surveys
• Equipment needed is cost prohibitive
Other Factors

- COVID-19 Pandemic
- Reaching the customer
- Supply chain disruptions
- Do no use computers or smartphones
- Applications and paperwork can be confusing
How it Was Solved

Using what we learned from the challenges we faced to build a new program specifically for small to medium businesses that used process steam beginning with dry cleaners and then expanding to other markets.
Build a Program for the Customer

- Appealing offer
- Easy to understand
- One point of contact for the project
- Emphasize non-energy saving benefits
  - Product and service quality
  - Reducing operational expenses
  - Minimized risk of equipment failure and unexpected shutdowns
Minimize Barriers to Participation

- Complimentary Steam Trap Survey ("Find")
- Rebate which covers most upfront costs
- Flexibility to complete "Fixes"
- Assist the customer with application
Adapt to the Conditions

• Strict COVID-19 safety protocol
• Built relationships with suppliers, contractors, and customers
• Outreach strategy change
• Multiple marketing channels and campaigns
Pilot Phase 1
Direct Mail Campaign
Dry Cleaners
Digital Marketing

SEM – Search Engine Marketing

Chamber of Commerce Advertising

LinkedIn
The Outcome

What we learned from implementing both phases of the pilot and becoming a part of the DTE Commercial and Industrial Energy Efficiency Program Portfolio.
What We Learned

• Referrals drove participation within the dry cleaning market
• Additional energy savings opportunities were discovered
• 40% - 60% of the steam traps surveyed had failed
• Customers appreciated the educational message
Dry Cleaner in Highland Park, MI
Small dry cleaning business

• 69% of the steam traps had failed
• 32% natural gas energy savings
• 20% savings in operational costs
• Project cost: $500
• Rebate to customer: $2,750
Brewery in Escanaba, MI
Medium size craft brewery and tap room.

- 33% of the steam traps had failed
- 23% natural gas energy savings
- 22% savings in operational costs
- Project cost: $2,385
- Rebate to customer: $2,034
Light Industrial in Detroit, MI
Medium sized metal finishing facility

- 20% of the steam traps had failed
- 8.5% natural gas energy savings
- 8.5% savings in operational costs
- Project cost: $1,828
- Rebate to customer: $1,828
Responses

- Exceptionally Pleased Customers
- Featured in DTE Publications
- Added to the DTE Commercial & Industrial Portfolio
- High Customer Satisfaction Rating
“This is a great program to help the small business owner. I am going to tell my friends about it.”

- Alex Alexander, Owner
  Alexander’s Cleaners

“Everyone I've talked to has been so kind, courteous and helpful. I can’t express how much this will help me during a difficult period. Thank you so much.”

- Paul Lee, President
  Allen Park Cleaners
Problem-solving project

DTE rolls out Find and Fix gas program to help dry cleaners and other small businesses.

If a light bulb in your bathroom winks out, it might be easy to put off replacing it when there are three or four others that still work. But when a faulty steam trap occurs at the focal point of a steam system, it can be more than just an inconvenience. In addition to being dangerous to health, using more energy, costing the business money, and potentially impacting quality and the business' reputation.

Unlike a light bulb, a faulty steam trap is not immediately apparent, and you might be able to roll that one off without any other issues. If something does work, it might be tempting not to spend money fixing it if it's only one of several traps that are malfunctioning.

That's where the Find and Fix Gas Program kicks in. If you're a business owner in Michigan, you may have heard of a program called the Find and Fix Gas Program. The program offers financial incentives to businesses to help them reduce their energy costs and improve their energy efficiency.

Maintenance mindset

DTE and Energy Smarts shine a light on how businesses can benefit from the Find and Fix Gas Program. One of the key benefits of the program is that it helps businesses save money by identifying and fixing energy inefficiencies in their systems. This can save businesses money on their energy bills and reduce their carbon footprint.

Time and money considerations

The Find and Fix Gas Program exists to save small businesses time and money. Even after the financial incentives are no longer available, businesses can continue to benefit from the program by reducing their energy bills and improving their energy efficiency.
DTE EnergySmarts

Find and Fix Gas Program Feature and Customer Spotlight: Aspen Cleaners – Detroit, MI

Fall 2021
Find and Fix Gas Program Feature and Customer Spotlight: Julia’s Cleaners – Highland Park, MI

Winter 2022
What’s Next

• Continuing to offer complimentary steam trap surveys for all participants
• Building on our success with dry cleaners and small businesses
• Expanding to larger customer markets
• Tailoring the rebates to each of the three markets
Thank you!

ffsteam.dteenergy.com

ffsteam.dteenergy@esciences.us  michelle.peters@esciences.us

248.206.2421  248.206.2416