Large Public Power Council Members -- Electric Ratepayer Engagement

1. Please identify how many customers you serve with electric power:

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 150,000	**45.5%**	**5**
150,000 – 250,000	9.1%	1
250,001 – 350,000	9.1%	1
350,001 – 450,000	0.0%	0
450,001 – 550,000	9.1%	1
550,001 – 650,000	0.0%	0
More than 650,001	27.3%	3
	answered question	**11**
	skipped question	**0**

2. How often do you do propose a change in rates?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Annually	36.4%	4
Biennially	9.1%	1
Every three years	0.0%	0
Every four years	0.0%	0
Five or more years	9.1%	1
As needed	**45.5%**	**5**
	Other (please specify)	2
	answered question	**11**
	skipped question	**0**

3. How soon do you begin the process of changing rates?

	Response Percent	Response Count
A year before rate needs to be adopted	9.1%	1
More than a year before rates need to be adopted	**45.5%**	**5**
Six months before rate needs to be adopted	36.4%	4
Three months before rate needs to be adopted	9.1%	1
Less than three months before rate needs to be adopted	0.0%	0
	Other (please specify)	1
	answered question	**11**
	skipped question	**0**

4. What are the first steps you consider in beginning the ratepayer outreach process? (Select all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Poll or survey to determine how approachable the community is	10.0%	1
Focus groups to refine the message and words to frame the discussion	10.0%	1
Stakeholder discussions/briefings	**60.0%**	**6**
An education campaign about why discussions are important	30.0%	3
Key customer survey about rate process	10.0%	1
Community influencer survey about rate process	0.0%	0
Targeted education campaign with specific customer groups	50.0%	5
Other (please specify)		2
answered question		**10**
skipped question		**1**

5. Who do you engage when you are planning a rate change? (Select all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
A specially designated advisory board/committee	18.2%	2
An existing advisory board	36.4%	4
Residential customers generally	36.4%	4
Top 100 customers	36.4%	4
Commercial and Industrial customers	**54.5%**	**6**
Small business customers	18.2%	2
Customers who work from home	0.0%	0
Community/Civic influencers	**54.5%**	**6**
Customers who are involved in special programs (low-income, energy efficiency, payment plans)	27.3%	3
Employees	45.5%	5
Non-English speaking customers	9.1%	1
	Other (please specify)	3
	answered question	**11**
	skipped question	**0**

6. How do you contact your ratepayers/target audiences when inviting them to engage in a rates discussion? (Select all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Blanket direct mail to all customers	20.0%	2
In the customer bill	50.0%	5
E-mails	20.0%	2
E-mail surveys	0.0%	0
Telephone call	0.0%	0
Telephone polls	10.0%	1
Newsletter	30.0%	3
Newsletter links to website for info or response	20.0%	2
Print advertising	**70.0%**	**7**
Radio advertising	20.0%	2
Television advertising	10.0%	1
Public television call-in	0.0%	0
Cable advertising	10.0%	1
Online advertising	20.0%	2
Online discussion	10.0%	1
Social media (blog, Tweet, Facebook, etc.)	60.0%	6
Presentations to civic/business/stakeholder groups	40.0%	4
Community engagement round tables	40.0%	4
Door-to-door interviews	0.0%	0
Intercept interviews at malls, grocery stores, etc.	0.0%	0

Focus groups		10.0%	1
		Other (please specify)	4
		answered question	**10**
		skipped question	**1**

7. Do you offer any incentives to gain greater engagement and participation in your process?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		11.1%	1
No		**88.9%**	**8**
		Other (please specify)	2
		answered question	**9**
		skipped question	**2**

8. Tell us what you find is the most effective way to inform/educate your customers about rates? (Please be specific)

	Response Count
	11
answered question	**11**
skipped question	**0**

9. Thinking back to the last time you engaged in rates change, what did not work as well as you planned? (Select all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Not enough people were involved to satisfy the decision-makers	0.0%	0
Public was not informed enough to make meaningful decisions/give advice	28.6%	2
Engagement was dominated by a small number of stakeholders	**71.4%**	**5**
The process involved complicated information that people don't generally flock to hear or want to learn	57.1%	4
The press riled-up the public/stakeholders so that objective conversation never happened	28.6%	2
The process was long and action delayed so public interest waned	0.0%	0
The level of negative response was greater than anticipated	0.0%	0
Other agency news dominated the discussion/process so confidence in the rate design process was compromised	14.3%	1
Internal communication was weak; where employees might have been helpful, they were not	14.3%	1
We did too much to engage customers; wasn't worth what we got	0.0%	0
We did too little to engage customers; we need to do more and different engagement	14.3%	1

Other (please specify)	4

answered question	**7**
skipped question	**4**

10. What changed or didn't change because of your outreach efforts? Did anything surprise you? (Please be specific)

	Response Count
	7

answered question	**7**
skipped question	**4**

11. Do you have any additional advice/best practices for us to consider in reaching out to our customers on rates? And/or what's the most creative approach you have ever heard about in engaging the public in rate design?

	Response Count
	8

answered question	**8**
skipped question	**3**

12. What is your job title?

	Response Count
	11

answered question	**11**
skipped question	**0**

13. If you would be willing to have someone from City Light follow up with you, please give us your name and contact information.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Name:	**100.0%**	**10**
Company:	**100.0%**	**10**
Address:	80.0%	8
Address 2:	0.0%	0
City/Town:	80.0%	8
State:	90.0%	9
ZIP:	70.0%	7
Country:	30.0%	3
Email Address:	**100.0%**	**10**
Phone Number:	80.0%	8
	answered question	**10**
	skipped question	**1**

Q2. How often do you do propose a change in rates?		
1	We will be doing a Cost of Service Study every 5 years, but that will not necessarily culminate in a change of rates.	Apr 11, 2013 2:07 PM
2	Gerenally annually -- longer if a change isn't needed and twice a year on occasion if needed.	Apr 10, 2013 3:09 PM

Q3. How soon do you begin the process of changing rates?		
1	It completely varies depending on what is driving the rate change. In general, about six months before.	Apr 10, 2013 3:09 PM

Q4. What are the first steps you consider in beginning the ratepayer outreach process? (Select all that apply)		
1	Our first priority is to educate our board regarding the necessity for the increase. We invite interested stakeholders to those meetings. They hear in real time how the discussion unfolds.	Apr 11, 2013 10:20 AM
2	We may do all of these things (and more) and we may do none of them. Again, it depends on the amount and reason for the rate increase. There are many variables.	Apr 10, 2013 3:09 PM

Q5. Who do you engage when you are planning a rate change? (Select all that apply)		
1	Board of Trustees	Apr 12, 2013 7:35 PM
2	Board of Directors	Apr 11, 2013 7:53 AM
3	Generally, we try and let all of our customers know ahead of time to avoid surprises.	Apr 10, 2013 3:09 PM

Q6. How do you contact your ratepayers/target audiences when inviting them to engage in a rates discussion? (Select all that apply)		
1	We contract with a private consultant that surveys City residents for the customer's input on not just rates but also on how we do our job.	Apr 17, 2013 7:32 AM
2	Our by-laws require open hearings allowing all stakeholders that opportunity to provide comments	Apr 11, 2013 6:25 AM
3	News releases, visits to other medicos where we serve.	Apr 10, 2013 5:16 PM
4	If the Board calls a special meeting we advertise it.	Apr 10, 2013 3:09 PM

Q7. Do you offer any incentives to gain greater engagement and participation in your process?		
1	We had food at our Public Involvement Committee meetings.	Apr 11, 2013 2:07 PM
2	If we were to invite customers in for a focus group or some kind of panel, we would offer an incentive.	Apr 10, 2013 3:09 PM

Q8. Tell us what you find is the most effective way to inform/educate your customers about rates? (Please be specific)		
1	Customer bills and inserts. We also openly dicuss during budget time and hae sections in our budget that provide details.	Apr 19, 2013 6:10 AM
2	Group meetings within a rate class, other times with account reps.	Apr 17, 2013 7:32 AM
3	Annual customer meetings, which always include a 10-year financial forecast.	Apr 15, 2013 7:00 AM
4	no magic bullet. a thousand different things and hundreds/thousands of face-to-face conversations.	Apr 12, 2013 7:35 PM
5	Stakeholder engagement	Apr 11, 2013 2:07 PM
6	We have found that direct contact with interested customer groups is the best form of outreach. We meet regularly with our industrial and irrigation customers in small group sessions. We also attend civic group meetings to communicate with a more diverse group of customers.	Apr 11, 2013 10:20 AM
7	It varies by customer class. We find that for our Industrial customer focus group meetings are very beneficial to them as well as educational for us. Posting information via our website is beneficial to residential and commercial customers.	Apr 11, 2013 9:59 AM
8	Paid and non paid media, bill inserts	Apr 11, 2013 7:53 AM
9	Education as to why the increase is needed. Key is to also communicate at least 2 to 3 months in advance that it is coming - which sometimes we are not able to do. Greatest issue here is alignment with the local newspaper	Apr 11, 2013 6:25 AM
10	Newsletter, visits to community groups, discussions with key customers, discussions with City Council	Apr 10, 2013 5:16 PM
11	We use our bill stuffer for rate updates. Generally, we don't talk much on rates. There is also information of course, on our web site.	Apr 10, 2013 3:09 PM

Q9. Thinking back to the last time you engaged in rates change, what did not work as well as you planned? (Select all that apply)		
1	The information was extremely complex and too time consuming for customers to master and give thoughtful feedback on. Additionally, it is a zero sum game, and most customer classes had adverse interests and couldn't agree on very much. We did a complete cost of service study and changed the cost allocation methodology as well as complete class consolidation and rate design.	Apr 11, 2013 2:07 PM
2	Our 2012 rate study process went extremely well. We utilized our distribution operations folks in the rate design process as well as Corporate Communications group to assist with the public meetings and notices (rather than trying to do it all in the rates group).	Apr 11, 2013 9:59 AM
3	we need to allow more lead time prior to implementing an increase.	Apr 11, 2013 6:25 AM
4	We've had no problems regarding rate communications in recent history (past ten years).	Apr 10, 2013 3:09 PM

Q10. What changed or didn't change because of your outreach efforts? Did anything surprise you? (Please be specific)		
1	NA	Apr 19, 2013 6:10 AM
2	Customer's awareness of where their power came from and cost associated with providing the service. How our cost are different from our competition.	Apr 17, 2013 7:32 AM
3	Initiating the process much sooner.	Apr 12, 2013 7:35 PM
4	It seemed that very little changed due to our extensive outreach efforts. This was probably the biggest surprise we suffered.	Apr 11, 2013 2:07 PM
5	At the end of our rate making process with the board, the size of our rate increase was reduced from 8% to 6%. While this was a directive of the board, it may have been influenced by stakeholder participation.	Apr 11, 2013 10:20 AM
6	Our relationship with the Industrial customers improved in part due to their level of involvement in the rate study process. We had plenty of focus group meeting with them as well as multiple conference calls to provide updated rate design information.	Apr 11, 2013 9:59 AM
7	Very little input fromthe public - topic too complicated. Bottom line was cost driven - since cost was not going up they didn't care.	Apr 11, 2013 7:53 AM

Q11. Do you have any additional advice/best practices for us to consider in reaching out to our customers on rates? And/or what's the most creative approach you have ever heard about in engaging the public in rate design?		
1	NA	Apr 19, 2013 6:10 AM
2	The utility holding meetings that allow two way communications, some one on one, others in groups. Doing this allows us to gain the customer's trust in that the utility understands the force driving their (the customer's) business, as they gain insight into ours (the utility). Also, including upper management in these meetings so that everyone in on the same page.	Apr 17, 2013 7:32 AM
3	We are refining our own efforts for an anticipated increase in late 2013.	Apr 12, 2013 7:35 PM
4	Education is important and stakeholder engagement is absolutely necessary. Hire a residential rate advisor to represent residential customers. The Worship community, along with schools and low income communities require special attention and engagement. Their feedback is extremely important and energy efficiency can serve as assistance to their concerns. Gradual rate adjustment over a period of time is an excellent way to garner acceptance and certainty on increases is important as well.	Apr 11, 2013 2:07 PM
5	Use the talent from staff within internal departments. Communicate, communicate, and communicate (internally and with your Rates consultant).	Apr 11, 2013 9:59 AM
6	Direct public meetings - go to rotary, city council and civic organizations and make brief presentations to community leaders and use them as your cheerleaders.	Apr 11, 2013 7:53 AM
7	LIPA is an awkward situation as a public authority and currently in the news a lot in preparation for a change in service provider. We are not a model given present public issues. However I am available to speak with a rep if desired.	Apr 11, 2013 6:25 AM
8	I think communications around rates need to be gauged around many factors like amount of the increase, time between increases, time till the next one, overall impacts and what's driving it. Depending on that mix, communications may need to highly proactive and inclusive or simple, clean and streamlined.	Apr 10, 2013 3:09 PM