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Renewables require real marketing and branding – like other sectors

THEnergy and Free Radicals join forces to help accelerate the energy transition

New York (USA), Munich (Germany), October 30, 2019 – Electricity is extremely abstract, which makes it nearly impossible to differentiate at the product marketing level. For the first hundred and fifty years of the category, especially in regulated or nationalized markets, differentiation was not even required. Liberalization and deregulation of the energy markets have produced new and unstable playing fields for energy providers. The pace of accelerating liberalization across global markets has created extraordinary challenges for energy companies as they struggle in their nascent efforts at brand building and product marketing.

For energy companies, differentiation is mainly done based on product-support services and the origin of the electricity. The origin, or source of their power, is one of the most top-of-mind topics in the global consciousness, especially for the millions of young people demonstrating each week in the streets against the ticking clock of climate-death countdown.

The energy industry is acutely aware that electricity and heat generation accounted for more than 40% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve the 1.5-degree objectives from the Paris Agreement, it will be mandatory to decarbonize these two sectors almost fully. Although clean or renewable energy generation costs have come down significantly during the last several years, this trend hardly reaches the end-customers – neither private households nor corporations.

“To some extent, this is due to a lack of marketing and branding”, points out Dr Thomas Hillig, Managing Director of the Germany based energy consultancy THEnergy. And this is why THEnergy and New York based Free Radicals have set up a new partnership. Hillig continues: “We help our client partners to pull the available and appropriate marketing and branding levers. In the end, this will also contribute to accelerate the energy transition.”

Free Radicals and THEnergy combine two approaches that will give customers radical insights – also quantitative. Research is generative, focused on value outcomes for the business. The partnership leverages the complementary tensions between the unique disciplines of the two consultancies.

Both partners highlight the importance of “unMcKinsey-thinking”. “You have to make some trouble to get attention for your brand”, emphasizes Thom Kennon, Managing Director of Free Radicals. “Happy talk about innovation and disruption will not solve the business, brand and marketing problems these energy companies face. In our unorthodox workshops, we develop street-ready strategies that can start paying bottom-line dividends within weeks and months, not quarters or years.”

The brand-building and marketing functions within energy companies do not historically enjoy a central seat at the business planning table. The new approach tackles this problem in two ways. First, Marketing insights around the customer can and should inform all strategic planning. Second,

leveraging the marketing function as the essential connection point with the customer and the market to deploy, test and optimize rapid and cost-effective initiatives for business-building.

”Making some trouble means designing initiatives where the brand shows up in the customers' life with surprising saliency. It’s about a new kind of value marketing, suited to the needs, lives, and consciousnesses of the emerging generation of energy consumers.

The target clients for the new approach include both large utilities who have read the signs of the times and are prepared to join the honest fight for new customers, as well as emerging energy providers who are poised opportunistically to make some trouble for the incumbents – both in B2C and B2B electricity markets. For further information about the cooperation, please also have a look at <https://www.th-energy.net/2019/10/28/renewables-require-real-marketing-and-branding-like-other-sectors/> or <http://www.freeradicals.marketing/2019/10/28/making-strategic-trouble>

About Free Radicals

Free Radicals is a business, brand and marketing strategy consultancy based in New York, with a confederacy of radical strategists in major global capitals. The strategic engagement model is based upon alternative research and insights generation as stimulus to a different kind of workshop fueled value creation.

<http://www.freeradicals.marketing>

About THEnergy

THEnergy is a specialized business consultancy that focuses on innovation in the energy sector, such as microgrids, solar-diesel hybrid, energy storage and hydrogen. THEnergy has developed leading-edge tools to support its clients during product launch and growth. During the last six years, THEnergy has consulted leading multinational utilities, oil and gas companies, and start-ups with market intelligence, due diligence, strategy and also communication.

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