



Top Ways to Reach and Retain Homebuilders Fact Sheet

Your organization needs to develop and cultivate relationships with builders to ensure success with ENERGY STAR. This will entail continued outreach to new builders, providing support to the builders you recruit, and coordinating with other local stakeholders.



Before you get started, it's important to understand the local residential new construction market and its key players. Then, incorporate outreach and support to builders as part of your business and marketing plans. Associating your organization with ENERGY STAR by using the [ENERGY STAR logo](#) in your advertising, on your web site, and on promotional materials, can help builders recognize your participation in the program.

Outreach to Builders

Deliver ENERGY STAR Presentations. EPA has developed an effective presentation for recruiting builder partners. You can start with [EPA's presentation template](#), and customize it for your organization. You can offer to present this to Homebuilder Associations (HBAs) or directly to a builder's management team.

Host ENERGY STAR Events. Hold a builder seminar or a brown bag lunch. Provide an incentive to attract builders (e.g. free lunch, a coupon for one free rating). Introduce ENERGY STAR for Homes and provide both technical and marketing overviews.

Link with Existing Events. Research local events in your area that builders often attend or participate, such as Parade of Homes, events sponsored by your local real estate organization, or HBA. Consider sponsoring an event, having a booth, or simply attending the event to network.

Find Your Ally Within the Builder's Company. If you can connect with one key player who sees the value of ENERGY STAR, their enthusiasm will spread. Adapt your message to your audience – your messaging to the marketing manager should be different than the purchasing manager or the warranty manager. Refer to *“Working with Production Builders,”* a part of this Handbook, for more information..

Build Rapport with Decision Makers. Face-to-face interaction with the decision makers can enable you to build a sustained relationship within a builder's organization. Trust is a valuable asset. Upper management often has one common goal of maximizing profits. Therefore, your story must explain how they can financially benefit from ENERGY STAR and sell their homes at a competitive price in a timely manner.

Leverage the Marketing Toolkit. Use the ENERGY STAR [Marketing Toolkit](#) to create materials that show builders and their homebuyers how they can benefit from ENERGY STAR. When you are meeting with builders for the first time, customize a few flyers to highlight the services you offer them.

Support Builder Partners

Offer Marketing Support. Offer to train the builder's sales and marketing staff how to effectively sell the value of ENERGY STAR. Provide builders a choice of marketing materials they can use, including a "menu" of options and show them examples of other builders who have successfully leveraged ENERGY STAR. Also be sure that the [ENERGY STAR logo](#) is being utilized in all of the builder's advertisements, on signage, on their web site, and on other promotional materials.

Utilize the Marketing Toolkit. The ENERGY STAR [Marketing Toolkit](#) enables partners to create customized promotional materials, such as flyers, web graphics, and model-home display cards, to showcase their ENERGY STAR qualified homes. Use the Toolkit to offer design services to your key builders. With their logo and web site, you can produce high-quality marketing materials for them. Consider offering to train their staff on how to use the Toolkit.

Help Committed Builders. Go an extra step and provide ongoing sales training to the sales force of committed builders. Ensure they are comfortable with the technical components of ENERGY STAR. Make routine site visits to restock inventory of ENERGY STAR [brochures](#). You can also meet with management about any concerns they may have and how you can support them.

Design a Checklist. To increase trust and simplify the process of qualifying a home, builders will appreciate a checklist of how you are going to support their ENERGY STAR activities and help them succeed with the program.

Communicate Regularly. Communicate with builders on a regular basis to ensure that all parties are satisfied. One way to communicate is through the use of a newsletter (or e-newsletter), which can celebrate good news and provide updates.

Provide Technical Training. Use building science experts, manufacturers, and suppliers to assist your team in answering technical questions or concerns. Consider offering new builders training for their subcontractors.

Sponsor Realtor and Consumer Events. Offer to sponsor an "ENERGY STAR day" or "muddy boots tour" to real estate agents and prospects for your top builders.

Foster Public Relations. Help to showcase stories about champion builders and/or early adopters in the local media. For example, invite media to tour your builder's first ENERGY STAR qualified home.

Invite Top Builders to Events. If you are attending a local event to talk about ENERGY STAR, invite your top builders to join you. They can give the builder perspective on the benefits of partnering with ENERGY STAR.

Recognize Builders' Efforts. Work with local, state, or utility sponsors to hold an annual awards ceremony to highlight promotional efforts, accomplishments, and milestones. Also, encourage the builders who best promote ENERGY STAR to apply for EPA's Excellence in ENERGY STAR Promotion award.

Coordinate with Local Stakeholders

Network with Allies. Develop rapport by teaming up with key players in your market involved in residential construction, energy efficiency, and green building. These may include the state energy office, local HBA, architects, Chamber of Commerce, Realtor[®] association, Home Energy Raters, utility companies, real estate agents, suppliers, and manufacturers, as well as ENERGY STAR builder partners. Meet on a regular basis to share ideas, collaborate, and coordinate education.

Coordinate Cooperative Advertising. Work together to increase consumer awareness through cooperative advertising. Cooperative advertising allows you to reduce advertising costs by pooling funds together. If you have at least two ENERGY STAR builders participating, apply for funding through EPA's Annual Outreach Partnership.

Facilitate a State-wide Home Energy Rater Association. The existence of a local Home Energy Rater association can bring more credibility to the industry, improve communication among raters, and enable funds to be pulled together for marketing.

Develop Relationships with Subcontractors. It may be helpful to familiarize yourself with the major subcontractors in the area and develop a positive rapport. Subcontractors often work for many builders at a time and may refer you to another builder.