



Program Strategy Pilot

Induction Cooking Chefluencer
Event Testing

May 2024

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Program Strategy Pilot: Induction Cooking Chefluencer Events in Retail

*CalMTA is a program of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
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1. Program Strategy Pilot Background

With more than a 70% market share, gas ranges are the most prevalent cooking method in California's single- and multi-family homes.¹ Gas ranges have been promoted in California for years, despite their inefficiency and the increased awareness of gas cooking's negative impact on indoor air quality. In the transition to a fully decarbonized California, consumers need affordable and efficient electric options. Induction technology is a growing class of electric cooking products that provides both efficiency and an improved cooking experience. Most manufacturers offer induction models, yet adoption has been slow.

Due to its placement in the kitchen, induction cooking represents a high-profile, end-use in an all-electric home. Overcoming consumers' reluctance to embrace induction is a critical step as California works to decarbonize its housing stock. If we can persuade consumers to overcome their attachment to gas stoves, we can facilitate a faster and easier transition to an all-electric home. This will then help prevent a scenario in which remaining gas infrastructure is utilized for one last appliance. Yet there are significant barriers to the adoption of induction cooking. In addition to higher cost of entry and possible electrical panel challenges, awareness of induction's benefits and cultural attachment to gas cooking are the most significant barriers to consumer adoption.

CalMTA received approval for the advancement of a potential [Market Transformation Initiative \(MTI\)](#) focused on induction cooking in January 2024. As part of the research phase for this MTI, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) also approved a Strategy Pilot targeting the stocking and pricing of induction cooking with major retailers, called the [Geographic Targeting Using ESRPP for Portable/Window Heat Pump and Induction Cooking](#). This pilot launched May 1, 2024, and will provide important sales data, lessons learned on sales and stocking practices, and whether a geographically targeted upstream approach will be effective and viable for induction and portable heat pumps.

The proposed Strategy Pilot described in this document is designed to test an intervention that could be used to change public opinion, build awareness of the benefits of induction cooking, and ultimately grow demand for induction cooktops and ranges. This Strategy Pilot builds upon the work that others have already been doing in California. For example, the Building Decarbonization Coalition (BDC) has been running a successful "Chefluencer" program where local chefs demonstrate induction technology and talk through the benefits of switching to induction cooktops and ranges. Through this proposed pilot, CalMTA plans to test applying the Chefluencer approach and attached messaging in partnership with a subset of retailers already participating in the ESRPP pilot mentioned above.

¹ Highlights for appliances in U.S. homes by state, 2020. Energy Information Agency. Released March 2023. <https://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/data/2020/state/pdf/State%20Appliances.pdf>

2. Program Strategy Pilot Objectives

The Strategy Pilot seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) **Can Chefluencer events change public opinion?** The pilot will host events in two to three stores, and multiple times in each store, over a two-month period. These events will feature an experienced chef who demonstrates the induction technology, discusses its benefits, answers audience questions, and can also involve sales staff, per agreement with the retailers. CalMTA's implementation team will then deploy a survey mechanism to gather participant experiences and gauge their pre- and post-event opinions on induction cooking and their likelihood to purchase an induction appliance in the future.
- 2) **Which messages regarding the benefits of induction cooking resonate the most with retail customers?** Through customer surveys, the pilot will work to confirm the kinds of messaging that most resonate with customers to help build demand for induction cooking.
- 3) **Are participants motivated to purchase induction technology if the event is coupled with a coupon for the purchase of a product?** CalMTA will provide a coupon valued at \$500 to retail customers as part of the completion of the post-event survey. With a coupon, CalMTA will be able to measure how many of the participants were motivated enough to make a purchase at a reduced price with both the experience of the event and the coupon.
- 4) **How does the retailer and their target product manufacturer support and react to these kinds of events?** CalMTA will measure whether participation in these events raises the possibility of a change in retailer stocking practices with their partnering manufacturers. In past MTI programs, special promotions, restocking, and co-marketing from both retailers and manufacturers have been effective strategic interventions with retailers. This pilot will help CalMTA learn about how this might work for induction cooking and understand how these market partners can support changing public opinion and building awareness.
- 5) **Do these events help retail sales associates improve their knowledge about induction for more effective retail sales?** If, through this pilot, CalMTA can work with retail sales associates as part of these events, CalMTA will learn about their messaging and training needs to encourage induction purchases. We will gather this data with a specific sales associate survey.



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3. Program Strategy Pilot Plan

Task 1. Scope Agreement, Project Kickoff, Program Management

Description:

CalMTA will engage and contract with the strategy test implementer. Once under contract, the implementer will hold a kickoff meeting with the full CalMTA team and designated retailer representatives, and then hold regular weekly meetings with CalMTA and with internal teams. The implementation contractor will manage the scope, schedule, and budget for the project with oversight from the CalMTA team.

Key Activities:

- Host project kickoff meeting, which includes circulating a kickoff meeting agenda and notes
- Lead weekly meetings with the CalMTA team
- Track the budget and schedule
- Submit monthly invoices and summaries of the work that was completed

Key Deliverables:

- Kickoff Meeting Agenda and Notes
- Monthly Invoices and Progress Reports

Task 2. Retailer & Induction Manufacturer Engagement

Description:

CalMTA team will leverage an existing relationship with a retailer who is participating in the ESRPP pilot. CalMTA will work with the retailer to identify locations for events and with an induction supplier to support events with co-marketing materials. Once locations are determined, when possible, CalMTA will coordinate with local programs that offer induction loaner and incentives on induction products.

Key Activities:

- In partnership with program implementer, engage retailer partner on events and identify participating locations
- Coordinate events with local programs that may be geographically in or near to store locations
- Secure induction equipment to use at each event
- Determine with retailer if events can also work with store's retail appliance sales teams



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- Determine with retailer and manufacturer partners if they can support events with any marketing materials
- Engage with retailers on logistics for events and supporting implementation contractor during events
- Work with retailer and induction supplier to identify models associated with customer coupons
- Launch process for coupon redemption and associated data tracking

Key Deliverables:

- List of participating store locations and dates of events
- Documentation on induction equipment to be used at events
- Schedule for events
- Key retailer personnel contact at each store for implementer
- Documented and approved incentive redemption process
- Data from sales on redeemed products
- Sales associate participation in pilot evaluation interviews when possible
- Copies of any supporting marketing materials supplied by retailer and/or manufacturer

Task 3. Planning & Design of Chefluencer Events

Description:

The Strategy Pilot implementer will work with CalMTA, manufacturers, retailer contacts at designated locations, and chefs to plan the in-store experience and develop the pilot implementation plan.

Key Activities:

- Work with retail locations to plan the in-store experience
- Schedule chefs for the demonstrations
- Develop materials for sales associate training
- Develop, produce, and/or procure marketing assets in partnership with CalMTA marketing team
- Develop an in-store experience and pilot memo for each store that details the plan, roles, timing, and goals for the pilot
- Ensure in-store experience and pilot memo includes evaluation steps regarding survey and distribution of coupons
- Secure sign-off from all impacted parties, including retailer, CalMTA, manufacturer, and chefs
- Manage the installation of the induction equipment at the participating stores
- Develop local media plan to generate traffic to stores



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Key Deliverables:

- Overall schedule of all events and logistics
- In-store run of show summaries
- Marketing plan for events
- PDF samples of all sales associates and consumer materials created for the events

Task 4. Implementation of Chefluencer Events

Description:

Chosen implementer will hold Chefluencer events as articulated in the in-store experience and pilot memos.

Key Activities

- Conduct sales training the morning of event days for customer demonstrations.
- Coordinate with store staff on placing promotional material in strategic areas to increase interest and educate customers about induction. If retailers agree, set up displays that can be in store on days leading up to and after a Chefluencer demo.
- Implement cooking demonstration for customers. Details to be determined, but events will include at least four 20-minute demos across a 2-hour timeframe. Schedule to be determined with retailers. This activity will include one chef conducting the demonstration and support staff to supply participants with marketing materials and access to the survey.
- After the events, customers will be provided with a handout that includes instructions for accessing a short online store survey (to be completed on mobile devices or with a BDC staff person) and instructions for redeeming a coupon that can be used in-store or at another retailer location participating in demonstration events.

Key Deliverables:

- Documentation of events including photos, video clips, and list of participants + their surveys.
- Completed lessons learned memos per event to help complete the evaluation.

Task 5. Program Strategy Pilot Assessment

CalMTA will evaluate outcomes of the Strategy Pilot against stated objectives, and share information and lessons learned with key stakeholders.

Task 5 Activities

- Assess whether the Strategy Pilot was deployed successfully and in alignment with its intended design for maximum learnings. Metrics will be finalized prior to the start of implementation. Table 1 identifies preliminary performance metrics identified by CalMTA.



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- Assess whether the objectives of the Strategy Pilot were successfully met, as documented in Table 2.

Table 1. Preliminary Performance Metrics

Strategy Pilot Tasks	Preliminary Performance Metrics
Task 1. Scope Agreement, Project Kickoff, Program Management	N/A
Task 2. Retailer and Induction Manufacturer Engagement	• At least 10 Chefluencer events are hosted with regional diversity • The pilot engages retailers, store sales associates, and manufacturers for smooth and well-attended events • Customer-facing marketing/awareness materials are developed and distributed at each event • At least 150 coupons and surveys are distributed and data on incentive/coupon redemption is tracked
Task 3. Planning and Design of Chefluencer Events	
Task 4. Implementation of Chefluencer Events	

Table 2. Evaluation Research Objectives

Strategy Test Objectives	Evaluation Research Objectives or Metrics
1. Do Chefluencer events change public opinion?	• Percentage change in favorable impression of induction cooking before and after Chefluencer demo (as measured through customer survey)
2. Which messages regarding the benefits of induction cooking resonate the most with retail customers?	• Establish value hierarchy of induction benefits (as measured through customer survey) • Identify top motivation for purchasers (as measured through follow-up purchaser surveys)
3. Are Chefluencer participants motivated to purchase induction technology if the event is coupled with a coupon for the purchase of a product?	• Assess the influence of the coupon on purchases (as measured through follow-up purchaser surveys) • Assess future plans for purchases/replacements as measured through customer surveys
4. Gauge retailer and targeted manufacturers' engagement in Chefluencer events. How does the retailer and their target product manufacturer support and react to these kinds of events?	• Assess experience with Chefluencer events among store managers/associates (as measured through participating retailer/point of contact interviews) • Assess any changes in stocking and promotional practices or future plans for product stocking among participating stores (as measured through retailer staff) • Assess participating manufacturer feedback on pilot and engagement in co-marketing (as measured by materials review and manufacturer interviews)

Strategy Test Objectives	Evaluation Research Objectives or Metrics
5. Gauge perspectives, knowledge and attitudes about induction among retail sales associates. Did Chefluencer events help change opinions, improve knowledge about induction, or hone messaging for more effective sales?	- Assess change in opinion and impressions of induction before/after Chefluencer events (as measured by interviews with participating retail staff) - Assess the most important benefits/messaging from sales associate perspective (as measured by interviews with participating retail staff) - Determine whether more education is needed

- Implement evaluation activities before, during, and after Strategy Pilot to support the evaluation objectives in Table 2 including:
 - Interview Pilot implementation staff and complete materials review
 - Interview with participating retailers (store/branch managers and sales associates) – attempted census
 - Interview with participating manufacturers (attempted census)
 - In collaboration with the implementer of the Strategy Pilot, develop and execute a digital survey customers fill out in store (via QR code scan) to capture contact information and inputs into the evaluation in exchange for coupon redemption. Response rate goal: 50%
- Share findings via a public webinar, inviting key CalMTA stakeholders such as the Market Transformation Advisory Board (MTAB), CPUC, program administrators, community-based organizations, etc.

Task 5 Deliverables:

- Finalized key performance metrics
- Data collection instruments
- Findings in PowerPoint presentation, recorded webinar, and written report

4. Timeline

Activity	Timeline (Months)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Task 1. Scope Agreement, Project Kickoff, Program Management					
Task 2. Retailer and Induction Manufacturer Engagement					
Task 3. Planning and Design of Events					
Task 4. Implementation of Events					
Task 5. Conduct Strategy Pilot Assessment					

5. Program Strategy Test Budget

The table below provides the estimated budget required to complete each task as described and calculates the total cost of each task.

Task	2024 budget	Responsible Party
Task 1. Scope Agreement, Project Kickoff, Program Management	\$75,000	Lead: BDC Support: CalMTA, & Retailer
Task 2: Retailer and Induction Manufacturer Engagement	\$14,000	Lead: CalMTA
Task 3: Planning and Design of Chefluencer Events	\$160,000	Lead: BDC Support: CalMTA & Retailer
Task 4: Implementation of Chefluencer Events	\$380,000	Lead: BDC Support: CalMTA, & Retailer
Task 5: Conduct Strategy Pilot Assessment	\$107,000	Lead: CalMTA Support: BDC, CalMTA, Retailer
Incentives for Induction Coupons	\$130,000	Lead: CalMTA Support: Retailer
Total	\$866,000	

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About CalMTA

CalMTA is a program of the California Public Utilities Commission and is administered by Resource Innovations. We work to deliver cost-effective energy efficiency and decarbonization benefits to Californians through a unique approach called market transformation. Market transformation is the strategic process of intervening in a market to create lasting change by removing market barriers or exploiting opportunities, accelerating the adoption of identified technologies or practices. CalMTA-developed market transformation initiatives also aim to advance state goals on demand flexibility, workforce development and equity. Learn more at www.calmta.org.



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