Moving moderates on climate change: A deep look at the data

12.9.21
What we want you to know

1. Why suburban women are key to progress
2. The challenge with conventional messaging
3. What works and what doesn’t
But first, an introduction
How do we get people to care about climate change?
Our Goals

( ) Change the story, permanently

( ) Radically grow the size of the market
A large and growing database of evidence

- 1 billion ads served and measured
- >100,000 in-field surveys
- 10 million citizens in digital lab
- 200 ads and messages tested in RCTs
Our goal is persuasion
Outcome: Moving the needle on citizen support

“Strong support for immediate government action”
What works for engagement is not what works for persuasion

Digital Engagement vs. Persuasion Lift

There is no correlation between common digital signals and persuasion lift.

Results of Potential Energy study testing > 100 audience x message combinations

Source: Potential Energy Digital Lab testing, 2020
Measuring persuasion treatment effects requires a much more in-depth, rigorous approach

Potential Energy deploys a **randomized control methodology** to detect climate persuasion effects in research and in-market settings. We deploy these tests with both a digital panel and across an audience of greater than 5 million people, on an ongoing basis.

**How does a randomized control trial work?**

1. Audiences are randomly assigned to either a “control” or “treatment” cell
2. The treatment cell(s) are served content; the control cell is not served media
3. All “cells” are surveyed and statistically analyzed after the treatment. The “persuasion lift” is the difference between the control and treatment responses.

**Potential Energy’s in-field RCT approach**

1. We cut audiences from the voter file and randomly assign them to a treatment cell
2. We have **four treatment cells and one control cell** live at any given point
3. We match voter file data to media platforms to target the various audiences
4. Every four weeks we run a survey of ~10,000 responses to read out on key treatment effects
Section 1

Suburban women are the key
Moderate, suburban women are the most persuadable audience

Top Decile of Most Persuadable Citizens

- Average age 51
- 92% women
- 41% more likely to be a parent
- Twice as likely to be Hispanic
- Average income < $100k
- Mix of high school and college
- Equal parts Republican and Democrat
- Highly concerned about pollution
- Low engagement on climate change

Climate Change Support Persuasion Scores for Every Citizen
38% strong support for immediate government action
How do we connect with Jill and Robin?

Jill from Wisconsin
A moderate who voted Obama – Trump – Biden

What issues are top of mind for her? The economy and our relations with foreign countries.
What makes her happy? “Well, of course my family. I have three children and I’m also currently pregnant. And I’ve also got dogs, chickens, and cows that bring me a lot of joy.”
Does she care about climate change? “Oh gosh, yes. I’d like to make sure that we are maintaining a world that’s suitable for our children and their children and so on. I’d like to know the science behind it versus the media frenzy and all the scare tactics that it tends to become. I’d love to have an informative discussion about climate change to see what I can do to make an impact in my own community.”

Robin from Arizona
A moderate who voted Romney – Trump – Biden

What issues are top of mind for her? The economy and how our government does at keeping us safe
What makes her happy? “Drinking a cup of coffee with my family close by. Or the days when I can get all my kids to go to church with me.”
Does she care about climate change? “Well for me, it’s kind of like a safety thing. We don’t think of it like the police kind of safety, but when you listen to people, it is something that could affect our lives, and definitely our kids’ lives. I’m not a super green-y type, but I want to leave a better world for my kids.”
Messaging can significantly raise support for action on climate with these highly valuable voters.
There’s just one problem...
Section 2

Conventional messages & messengers aren’t persuasive
There’s a big gap between intention and interpretation

**What politicians say:**

- “Taking action on climate change will create thousands of good-paying jobs”
- “Climate action will spur innovation and make our lives better”
- “We have to act now to stay under 1.5 degrees!”

**What moderates think:**

- “Not jobs that are for me.”
- “I like my house, car, etc. I don’t want to change how I live.”
- “Why is everyone freaking out over a couple of degrees?”
We need a different approach

- Trusted messengers
  Suburban moms trust experts, but they also want to relate to the messenger. Putting people like them in communications goes a long way.

- Nonpartisan messages
  These women don’t consider themselves political people. If the message smells like politics, they immediately turn off.

- Content that meets people where they are
  A lot of moms don’t feel knowledgeable enough to engage in climate action, and are intimidated by “environmentalists.” We have to make them feel welcome.
Our major effort to move suburban women is **Science Moms**
This campaign has focused on turning 5 mm+ moderate women in key suburban clusters into strong climate supporters

Goal: over 10% increase in strong support in 10 major suburbs

Goals:
- Get to a **majority** of strong support
- Influence the positions of elected officials

Target:
- Moderate moms in ten suburban clusters
- 14% of total electorate in these states

Focus Markets:
1. Phoenix
2. Tucson
3. Atlanta
4. Charlotte
5. Pittsburgh
6. Harrisburg
7. Philadelphia
8. Madison
9. Milwaukee
10. Orange County and Central Valley, CA
A comprehensive persuasion campaign across channels

We're a nonpartisan group of climate scientists, who are also mothers, working to demystify climate change, talk honestly about its effects on our families, and give moms the info they need to help preserve their kids.

Paid:
- 714mm paid impressions in digital, tv in target geographies
- 503mm video views of content

In-kind:
- 40mm free tv cable impressions from national cable provider
- Underway: 1.6 billion free impressions from Ad Council partners and media brands
A group of nonpartisan moms and climate scientists with significant reach

3,300+ media hits with an approximate reach of 266 million (potential reach of 1.7 billion)

Featured in

395+ broadcast TV and
730 radio interviews from NBC Nightly News to GMA to CNN to NPR’s On Point.

1,910 top-tier print/digital articles from the LA Times to The Washington Post. Being In People Magazine and The New Yorker in the same week shows.
We built an extreme weather-triggered media capability to buy media at times of extreme heat, drought, other weather events.

**Extreme Weather Content**

**Triggered Buying**

**Results/Learnings**

We have seen a **48% decrease in CPA** and **97% increase in C2C rate** for heat ads on days with excessive mean temperatures (Arizona).
... and fueled it with multiple extreme weather creative concepts.
Strong support for immediate government action among moderate suburban women is up significantly since March

496,000+
incremental strong climate supporters created in:
- Arizona
- Georgia
- Colorado
- North Carolina
- Pennsylvania
- Wisconsin

...since the launch of Science Moms

Q. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “I support immediate action by the government to address global warming.”

Sources: Potential Energy & Echelon, 2021
Support is on the rise across ideology...

Q. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “I support immediate action by the government to address global warming” [% Strongly Support; Overall]

Sources: Potential Energy & Echelon, 2021
... and across states

Q. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “I support immediate action by the government to address global warming” [% Strongly Support; Overall]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Center Right</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Center Center</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Center Center</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>49%</td>
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<td>Wisconsin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Center Left</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>+5%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Sources: Potential Energy & Echelon, 2021
The content works across political affiliations ...

"By The Time"

Source: Potential Energy - Dynata Study (September 2021)
... with the greatest lift per dollar coming from ideologically moderate moms

**Political Ideology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Ideology</th>
<th>High Lift</th>
<th>Low Lift</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Conservative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Most Progressive</td>
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**Child in Household**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child in Household</th>
<th>High Lift</th>
<th>Low Lift</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Children in HH</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in HH</td>
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</table>

**Party Affiliation**

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<th>Low Lift</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
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**Race**

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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Sources: Potential Energy, 2021
Section 3

What works and what doesn’t
A strong pattern is beginning to emerge

Best messages for Independents to drive support

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Top Box Support Lift</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generational</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Localized Risk</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most effective approaches to persuade Independents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Top Box Support Lift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worry</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokespeople</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alarm</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We will continue to iterate and test content against all these areas in the search for the highest performance

Sources: Potential Energy Digital Lab, 2021
Three things that have not worked well for moderates
Messages that haven’t worked well with moderate moms

1. Alarm: The crisis is here!
   Moderates are not living in the climate bubble and they don’t filter the news the same way.

2. Fighting climate is an economic boom
   It may feel like it works to politicians, but people don’t really believe the jobs promises.

3. Pretty much all of the “climate-y” language & frames
   From net zero to 1.5 degrees to decarbonization, none of it is clear or effective.
+ 7.5% liberals

+ 1.8% moderates

−4.3% conservatives
Mom-to-mom outperformed “emergency”

Dr Burt’s Extreme Weather Explainer

12.0% lift in strong support for immediate climate action

One Emergency

3.4% lift in strong support for immediate climate action

Sources: Potential Energy - Dynata Study, 2021
Personal mom stories significantly outperform extreme weather imagery

Sources: Potential Energy - Dynata Study, 2021
Same message, very different outcome

Pollution imagery

90% of Americans agree it’s the right thing to do.

5.3% lift in strong support for immediate climate action

Catastrophe imagery

90% of Americans agree it’s the right thing to do.

0.2% lift in strong support for immediate climate action

Sources: Potential Energy Study, 2021
Simple moral frames beat complicated, political arguments

Fairness

It’s time we hold polluters accountable.

8.5%
lift in strong support for immediate climate action for women

Deception

Big oil spends millions polluting our world with LIES

-1.5%
lift in strong support for immediate climate action for women

Sources: Potential Energy Study, 2021
It’s hard to persuade people to become climate supporters with big picture jobs and growth arguments

Ad about moms thinking about their kids’ future

Ad about the prosperity from solving climate change

9.5% lift in strong support for immediate climate action

1.5% lift in strong support for immediate climate action

Sources: Potential Energy study, 2021
Most communications use policy language that doesn’t connect
to the actual cost to enroll a citizen to demand a plan for climate action.

Cost to enroll a citizen to demand a plan for climate action:
- Get to zero emissions by 2050: 15
- Cut emissions in half by 2050: 10
- Tax polluters: 5
- Stop coastal development: 3
- Save Florida: 2

Just say no to:
- Decarbonization
- Net-zero
- Anthropogenic
- GHG
- Methane

Policy ≠ Marketing

Source: Potential Energy Digital Lab testing, 2020
Simple, vivid language is essential.

Warming \rightarrow Overheating

Emissions \rightarrow Pollution

Changing climate \rightarrow Extreme weather
Three messages that work with moderates
What works well

1. Your kids’ future
   The number one reason moderate moms care about climate change is for their kids. When we spell out why action now will protect their children, support skyrockets.

2. Climate foundations
   Less than 25% of Americans believe there is complete scientific consensus about human-made climate change. Hearing there is 99% scientific consensus raises support for government action significantly.

3. Pollution
   Simply explaining that climate change is caused by heat-trapping air pollution helps people understand the problem and feel like the solutions are within reach.
These assets create significant persuasion lift with moderate moms

For Our Daughters
- 9.5% lift in strong support for immediate climate action for women

Experts
- 8.0% lift in strong support for immediate climate action for women

Letter to My Kids
- 7.6% lift in strong support for immediate climate action for women

Sources: Potential Energy Digital Lab, 2021
Bonus:
Media spend and mix that works
There is a significant correlation between media spend per person and persuasion lift

Sources: Potential Energy Campaign Analysis, 2020-2021
Reaching threshold media has a significant impact on persuasion economics

Finding the right spend sweet spot requires investing enough per citizen to “break through”

It is 2x more cost effective to serve 7 impressions vs. 1 impressions/week

Sources: Potential Energy Campaign Meta Analysis
jm@potentialenergycoalition.org

LINK
Thank you!