

## TOOL: PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT - MARKETING STRATEGY CHECKLIST

### Abstract

The guideline [Innovative product development](#) and its corresponding checklist tools [Product development – customer checklist](#), [Product development – cooperation checklist](#), [Product development – marketing strategy checklist](#) and [Product development – product checklist](#) support internal processes within utilities when developing well-aligned smart energy product and service innovations. The guideline will focus more on the process and what steps to take, while the information and questions within the checklists will help you to set up a process for information and support gathering within several departments of your utility.

### Target groups:

- Product developers
- Marketing and sales department
- Market research department

### Recommendation for Usage

The marketing strategy checklist is part of the larger guideline on product development. The guideline and its corresponding checklist tools support utilities to facilitate internal processes for developing well aligned smart energy product innovations. The checklists for the topics product, customer, cooperation, and marketing strategy are useful tools for structuring a (series of) workshop(s). Additionally, the checklists can support the work of an individual or a team in a utility in the internal process of developing a new product in dealing with different departments within the company. The checklists contain useful tips on how those different departments can work together and identify topics which so far have not played an important role for product development and product launches.

Have a look at the checklist, decide whether they have to be adapted for your specific purpose and try to fill them together with your colleagues based on the processes delineated in the guideline. The filled out checklists will help you formulate your concrete product or service and to anticipate challenges and chances. You need the answers to “make your case” for the new product and service you would like to offer in front of your CEO etc. and to get to a successful launch of the product. The exact way how to arrive here is up to you.

The marketing strategy for a product depends strongly on the customer segment for which it is developed as well as the product characteristics. The questions listed in the marketing strategy checklist below support decision-making regarding marketing channels and customer contact before actual product communication.

Regarding the marketing strategy for smart energy service products rather than “classic” energy products, the main difference is the amount of potential customers and the consequential niche production. Unlike “classic” energy products, smart energy service products are not mass products with constantly decreasing marginal costs. Instead, sales planning and its realization are critical and have a major impact on the economic efficiency of the product. Additional to the areas of sales and marketing, your company-specific checklist can include questions from the areas of market research/ branding, these can be found in the second part of the checklist.

Area	Question	Yes / No	Affected corporate processes and important contact persons	Tips and practical advice	My remarks
Sales and Marketing	Is the decision-making process of the customer taken into account for the sales and marketing as well as communication strategy?			Usually, the customer will need to be addressed more than two times in order to bring about a decision. Depending on further business processes, an on-site appointment to assess the demand can be reasonable. If the product needs further clarification, suitable communication material and processes must be considered.	
Sales and Marketing	Is the communication channel suited to the product?			A product can be assigned certain attributes (e.g. innovative or easy-to-use). Do these attributes fit with the attributes of the chosen communication channel? (e.g. attributes letter: conservative & formal)	
Sales and Marketing	Do I want to communicate / sell the product via several different channels? (And can I control and manage that?)			Good internal communication/ special hotline / reliable contact persons / second level support  Pitfall: Customer contacting an assumed contact person/ addressor who then knows nothing about the product	

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Market research	What do I know before market roll-out?				
Market research	Did I do pre-testing?				
Market research	Are there any friendly users?				
Market research	Should I initiate specific market research? (e.g. <a href="#">Learning about target groups</a> )				
Brand	Is my brand an advantage?				
Brand	Can other brands be helpful to me, e.g. compensate for deficits?				
Market	Do I know the competitors?				
Marketing	How do I position myself regarding central drivers, e.g. energy autarchy as central message of the product?				
Marketing	Can I take up existing marketing topics to promote the new product?				
Marketing	Has contact quality been taken into account in addressing the customer?				
Sales / Marketing	Does the CRM support contact-tracking?				
Sales / Marketing	Has the knowledge I have about the customer been utilized for the different phases and goals – product development/ sales/ product use				
Sales / Marketing	Are longtime customers being taken into account? Loyalty bonus?				
Sales / Marketing	Do I have an existing relationship to the customer or not? Does this impact communication and marketing strategy?				

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This tool was developed in the S3C project, and is freely available from [www.smartgrid-engagement-toolkit.eu](http://www.smartgrid-engagement-toolkit.eu).

S3C paves the way for successful long-term end user engagement, by acknowledging that the "one" smart consumer does not exist and uniform solutions are not applicable when human nature is involved. Beyond acting as a passive consumer of energy, end users can take on different positions with respective responsibilities and opportunities. In order to promote cooperation between end users and the energy utility of the future, S3C addresses the end user on three roles. The *smart consumer* is mostly interested in lowering his/her energy bill, having stable or predictable energy bills over time and keeping comfort levels of energy services on an equal level. The *smart customer* takes up a more active role in future smart grid functioning, e.g. by becoming a producer of energy or a provider of energy services. The *smart citizen* values the development of smart grids as an opportunity to realise "we-centred" needs or motivations, e.g. affiliation, self-acceptance or community.

S3C (2012-2015) performed an extensive literature review and in-depth case study research on end user engagement in smart grids, resulting in the identification of best practices, success factors and pitfalls. The analysis of collected data and experiences led to the development of a new, optimised set of tools and guidelines to be used for the successful engagement of either Smart Consumers, Smart Customers or Smart Citizens. The S3C guidelines and tools aim to provide support to utilities in the design of an engagement strategy for both household consumers and SMEs. The collection of guidelines and tools describe the various aspects that should be taken into account when engaging with consumers, customers and citizens. More information about S3C, as well as all project deliverables, can be found at [www.s3c-project.eu](http://www.s3c-project.eu).