

the expertise of local service personnel. The HPWH has never had a dedicated distribution channel with the technical expertise to support efficient installation and maintenance. EUS and other manufacturers are now supporting specialized dealers who install and service their HPWHs (Ivey and Smith, 1988); this should reduce the problem of untrained installers.

5.2.6 Facilitating Factors

The most receptive regions for HPWH marketing have been the service areas of utilities and public programs that offer either rebates or low-interest loans for HPWH purchases. Mandating energy efficient water heating would also generate considerable demand, and there is some preliminary evidence that the California building code (which does give credit to heat pump water heaters) has indeed stimulated the market.

5.2.7 Future Technology Transfer

Research on shopping behavior and innovation diffusion suggests that there should be a certain group of consumers who would enjoy examining heat pump water heaters, and who might serve as a source of information for friends, neighbors, and acquaintances at those critical times when replacement water heaters are purchased. A diffusion strategy that targets these "innovators" and "opinion leaders" might be especially effective. Previous research suggests that articles in popular magazines would be one way of stimulating awareness on the part of these consumers. Unfortunately, this tactic has not proven effective to date.

One attractive but largely unpenetrated market for HPWHs is the major real estate developer. Developers of subdivisions could install units in large lots. After installation, having a cluster of HPWHs would allow the development of local expertise in maintenance and replacement.