

Northwest ENERGY STAR® Homes  
EPA Partner Meeting | Baltimore, MD  
Presented by: Anne Brink, NEEA

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version 3  
**messaging**  
& consumer engagement



# PAST CREATIVE + MESSAGING

## BETTER

Focus on features + benefits.

### MESSAGING:

- Position ENERGY STAR homes as: Better built, more comfortable homes
- 2008 NEEA focus group concluded that consumers respond to comfort and savings



**Better built, more comfortable homes.**



ENERGY STAR® homes are at least 15% more energy efficient than homes built to today's building codes. From energy efficient windows to advanced heating and cooling systems, ENERGY STAR homes guarantee greater savings, comfort and peace-of-mind. That means you'll save energy and money year round. That's good for the environment and your pocketbook.

For more information, or to find a local ENERGY STAR builder, visit [northwestENERGYSTAR.com](http://northwestENERGYSTAR.com)



[www.northwestENERGYSTAR.com](http://www.northwestENERGYSTAR.com)

## NEED FOR CHANGE

- 1) We want to communicate the increased value of the new specifications.
- 2) We also wanted to create impactful messaging and creative to **BREAK THROUGH THE EXISTING MASS OF ADVERTISING CLUTTER.**

# FOCUS GROUP STUDIES

## OVERVIEW

**3 Markets:** Seattle, WA • Spokane, WA • Boise, ID

**3 Concepts Tested**

**41 Homebuyers Participated:** Purchased or plan to purchase in next 6 mo.

### WE WANTED TO LEARN:

- Does the creative and messaging get your attention?
- Does it generate interest?
- What is the main message that is coming across to you?
- Does it resonate with you?
- Is the message believable?
- Does this message help you to better understand ENERGY STAR Homes?

# FEATURES FOCUSED

## BETTER-ER-ER HOMES

The first set of creative was also the safest. Previous messaging in the Northwest frequently used the term “better” to compare ENERGY STAR homes to code-built homes or the existing home market, i.e. Better for your pocketbook, Better heating and cooling.

**This new direction focused on upscale, close-up images that conveyed ENERGY STAR as a cut above the rest and engineered for high performance.**

## CONCEPT ONE

### **BETTER IS BETTER.**

Why would you put an ounce of time, money, or energy into things you can't even see?

Because they're better.

Our idea of the perfect home is changing.

And bigger isn't better. Better is better.

Better built, better performing - a better investment.

Better built for the next generation.

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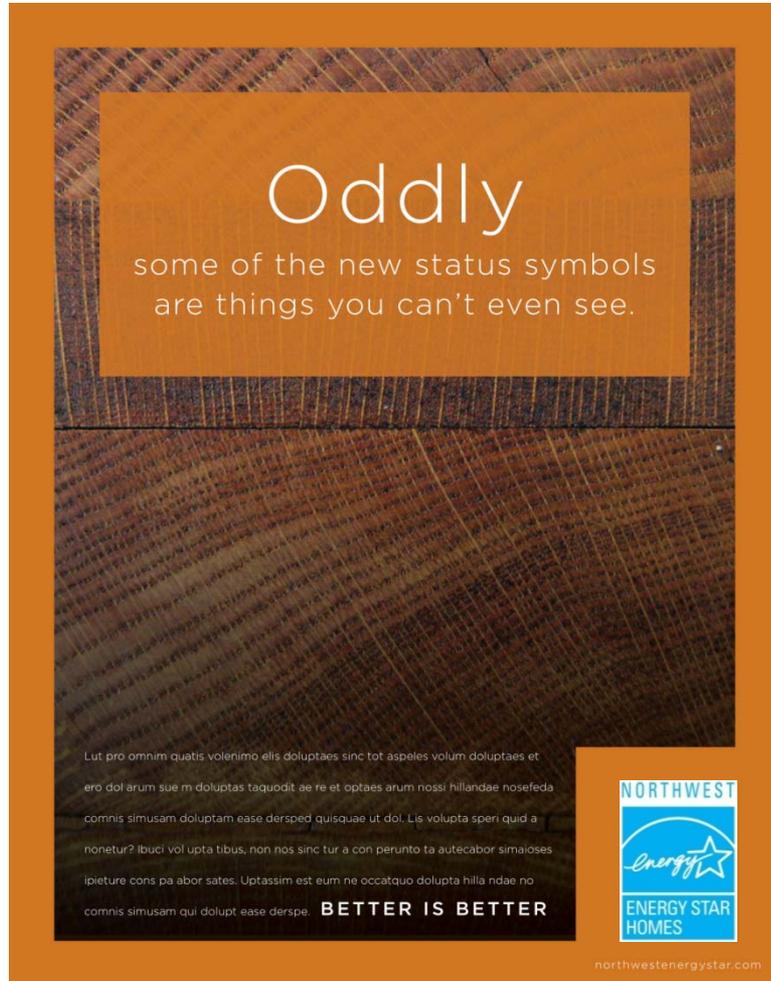
**Better built, better performing - a better investment.**

**Better built for the next generation.**

# CONCEPT: BETTER IS BETTER

## IMAGERY

Warmer colors



Oddly  
some of the new status symbols  
are things you can't even see.

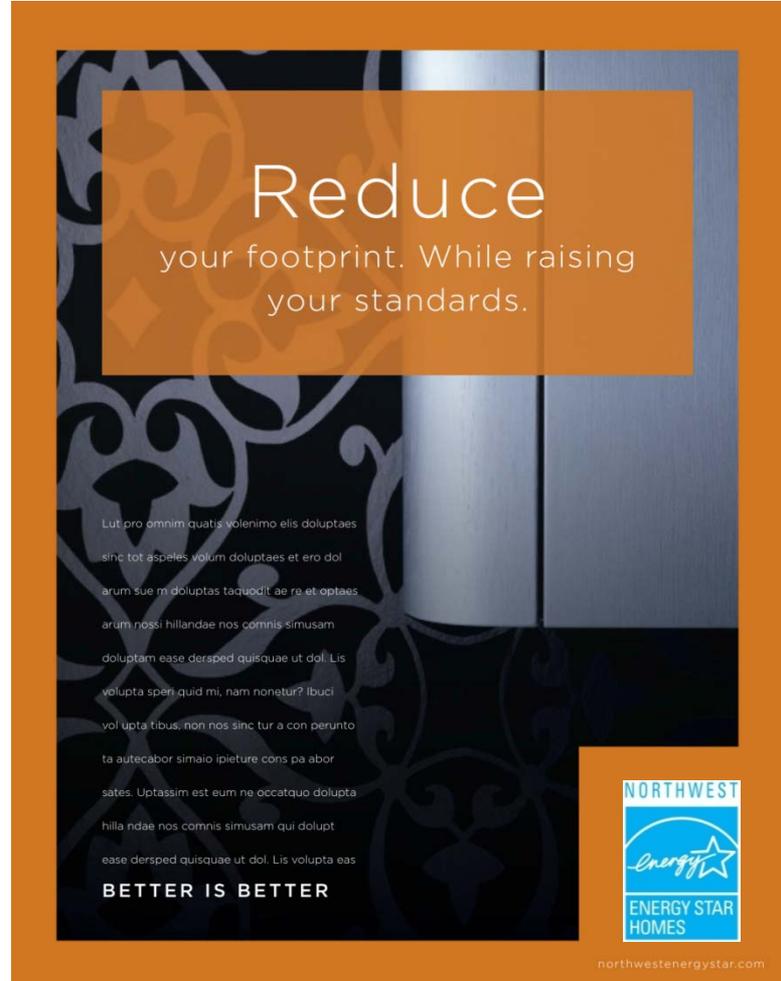
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northwestenergystar.com

## DETAIL

Micro surface images that speak to stories beneath the surface.



Reduce  
your footprint. While raising  
your standards.

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**BETTER IS BETTER**



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# CONCEPT: BETTER IS BETTER

## FEEDBACK

### HEADLINE

“Uninspiring”

“Too vague to entice you to read more.”

### MESSAGING

People liked that it **conveyed specifically what an ENERGY STAR home was and substantiated those claims** from the extended accompanying messaging:

- Better built, better insulated, better equipped, better comfort, better climate, better at saving energy, better investment.

### TAKE AWAY

“It’s a message of quality construction & attention to details.”

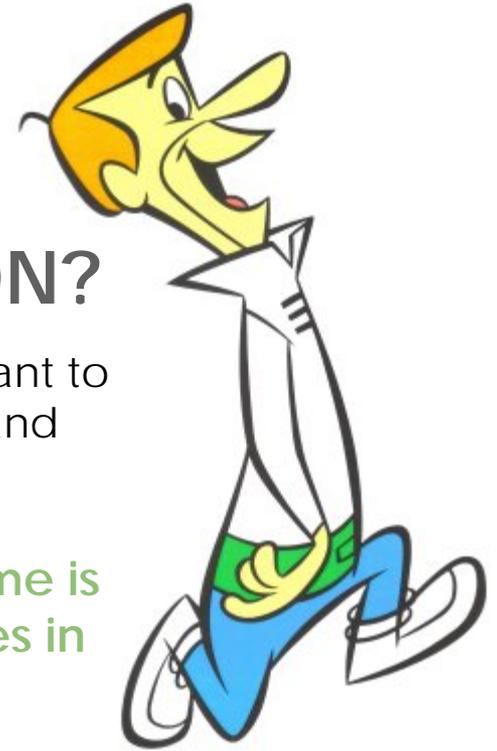
*- Focus Group Participant*

# FUTURE FOCUSED

## WHAT DO GEORGE JETSON + ENERGY STAR HAVE IN COMMON?

ENERGY STAR Homes have changed, but more important to note is that they'll continue to change to stay above and influence building codes.

**In essence, someone buying an ENERGY STAR home is actually purchasing the next generation of homes in their market.**



## CONCEPT TWO

### THE (new) HOME OF THE FUTURE

Remember the home of the future?

The new home of the future isn't what you ever imagined.  
It's a whole lot better.

It's about solid construction, enduring materials. Corners aren't cut, they're lavished with care. It's all about the details – the ones you see, and especially the ones you don't, deep within the veins and bones and lungs of the house.

The new home of the future is the best investment for your own future.

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# CONCEPT: THE (NEW) HOME OF THE FUTURE

## IMAGERY

Modern colors; bold



# CONCEPT: THE (NEW) HOME OF THE FUTURE

## FEEDBACK

### HEADLINE

The Home of the Future tagline was well-received. It immediately **generated interest** because of the promise of something **new** and the intriguing allure of a **futuristic** home.

### MESSAGING

Many felt **misled** to believe an ENERGY STAR Home was going to include automation, wind turbines, and pack their kids' lunches. Some liked the images showing the details of a home, such as mastic-sealed ducts.

### TAKE AWAY

Intriguing tagline, but the messaging risked overpromising and left too many unanswered questions.

“For me [it] says this house is going to be the best house you’ve ever seen in your whole life.”

- Focus Group Participant

# FEELINGS FOCUSED

## HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS?

People love their ENERGY STAR homes once they've moved in. But can ENERGY STAR love be translated to potential buyers who haven't yet experienced this comfort?

**The final set of creative played on the emotional side of buying a home – starting a family, creating a warm and safe environment.**

## CONCEPT THREE

### **MAKING HOMES HOMIER**

ENERGY STAR homes come in all shapes and sizes, but what sets them apart is not how they look, but how they feel to live in.

While this feeling isn't strictly about the physical properties of a house, the way a house is built - the design, the craftsmanship, the care - make room for it.

ENERGY STAR homes, making homes homier.

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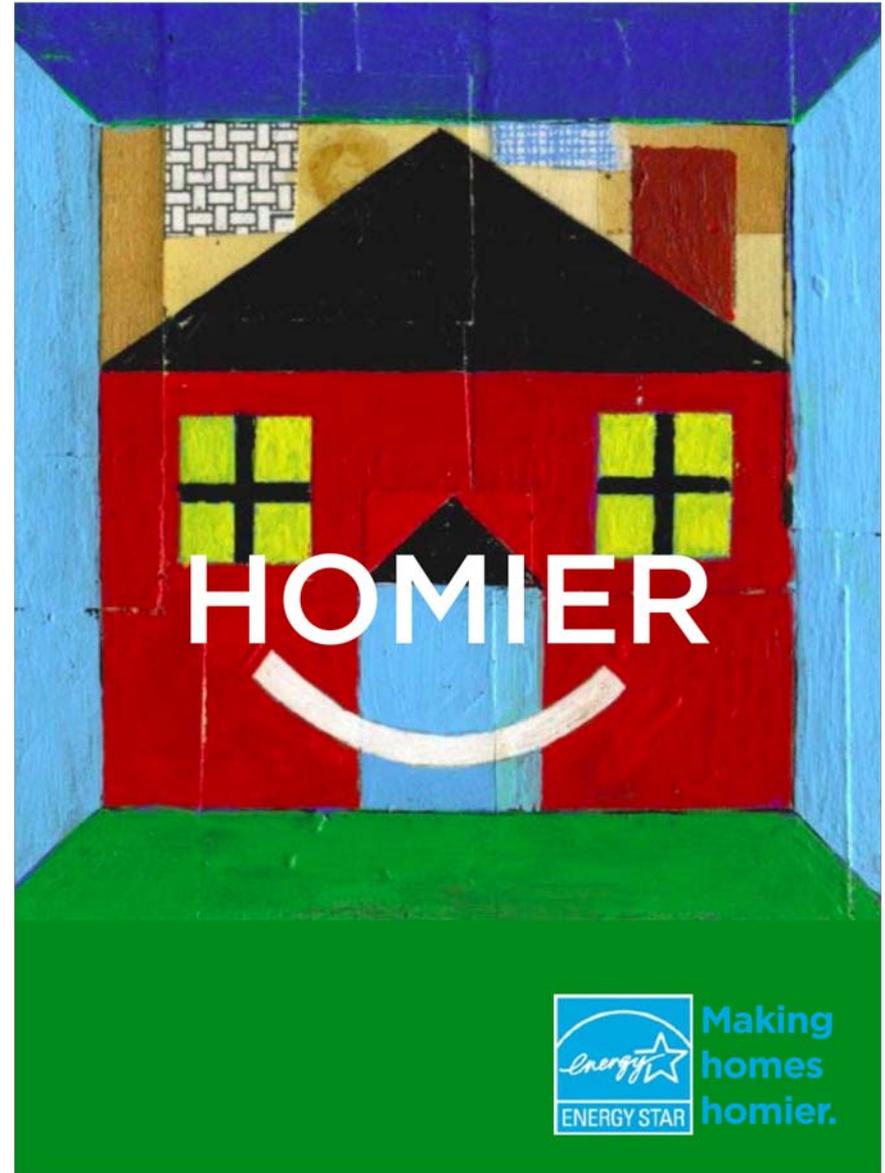
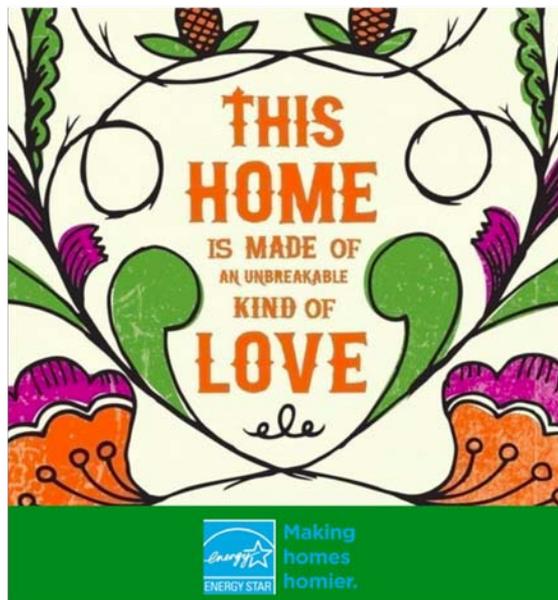
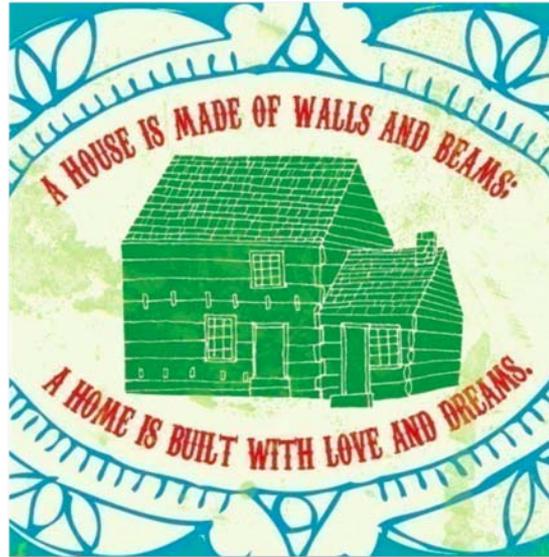
While this feeling isn't strictly about the physical properties of a house, **the way a house is built - the design, the craftsmanship, the care - make room for it.**

ENERGY STAR homes, making homes homier.

# CONCEPT: MAKING HOMES HOMIER

## IMAGERY

Colors + images that evoke emotion and warmth.



# CONCEPT: MAKING HOMES HOMIER

## FEEDBACK

### HEADLINE

The headline was mostly effective at drawing the attention of the female demographic. Some thought “homier” was a silly criterion for a home and associated it with old and cluttered.

### MESSAGING

“This played too much on my emotions.”

“ENERGY STAR doesn’t make my home homey, I do.”

### TAKE AWAY

People liked the idea that the way a home is built can provide comfort, coziness, and even safety. And some people just wanted to see more mastic-sealed ductwork.

“The main message I got was a warm, safe, healthy environment for your family.”

*- Focus Group Participant*

# KEY LEARNINGS

## ALL THREE WORKED (...and didn't work)

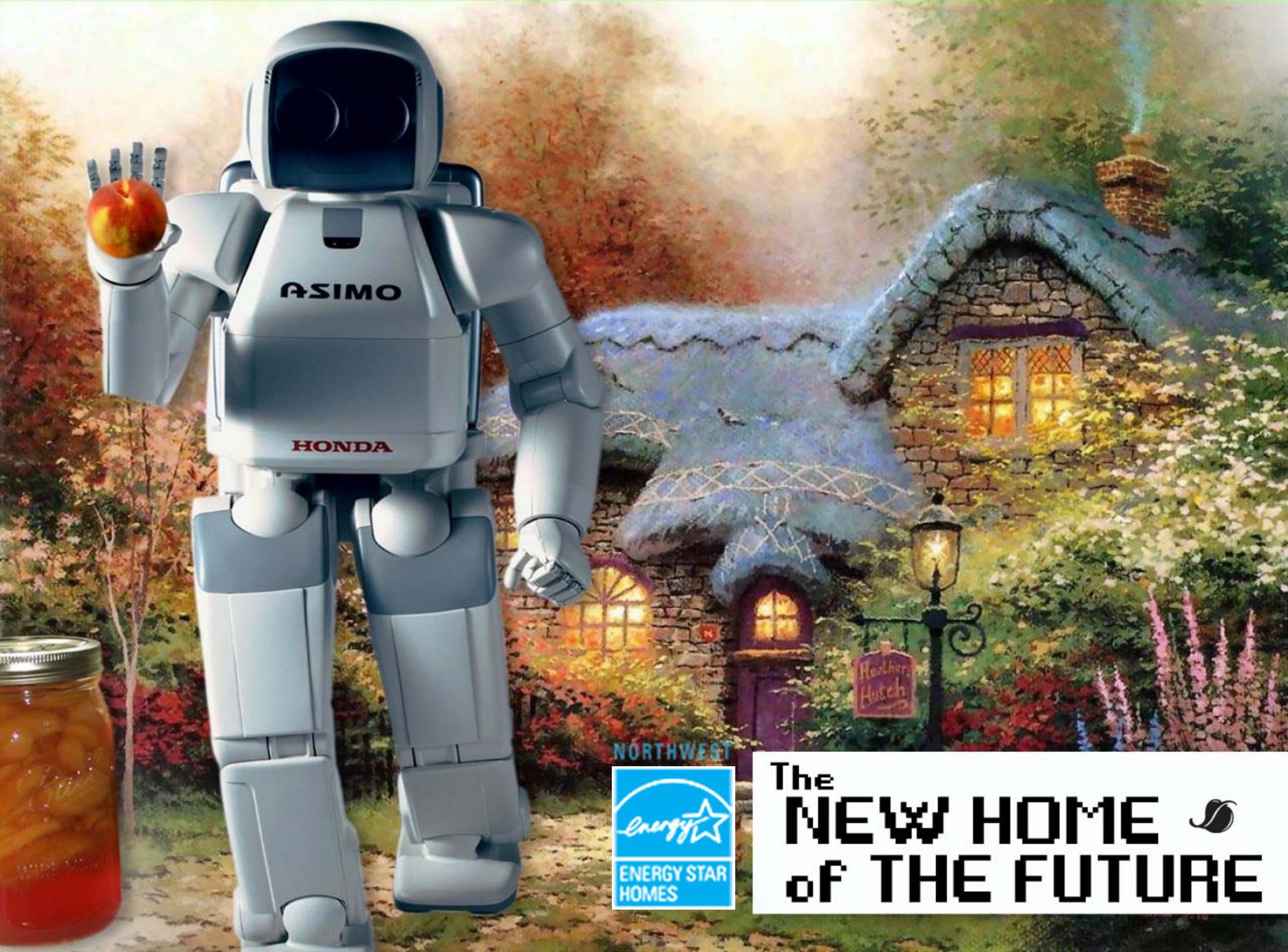
Consistent and collective feedback included the following:

### WARMTH • PEACE OF MIND • SECURITY

- People, especially women, respond to the idea of coziness and warmth;
- Peace of mind/security also resonated with many in a big way;
- Many responded to “They come in all shapes and sizes.” An initial take on ENERGY STAR Homes was that they might be too expensive;
- There is a line, that’s not always clear, between too much fluff and overpromising, and just enough of an emotional connection;
- Tell me what an ENERGY STAR Home is and make your claims credible.

## KEY LEARNINGS

So if we incorporate **cozy hearts** onto **futuristic robot** houses and call them **better** while focusing on some **high-tech details**, we should reach everyone?



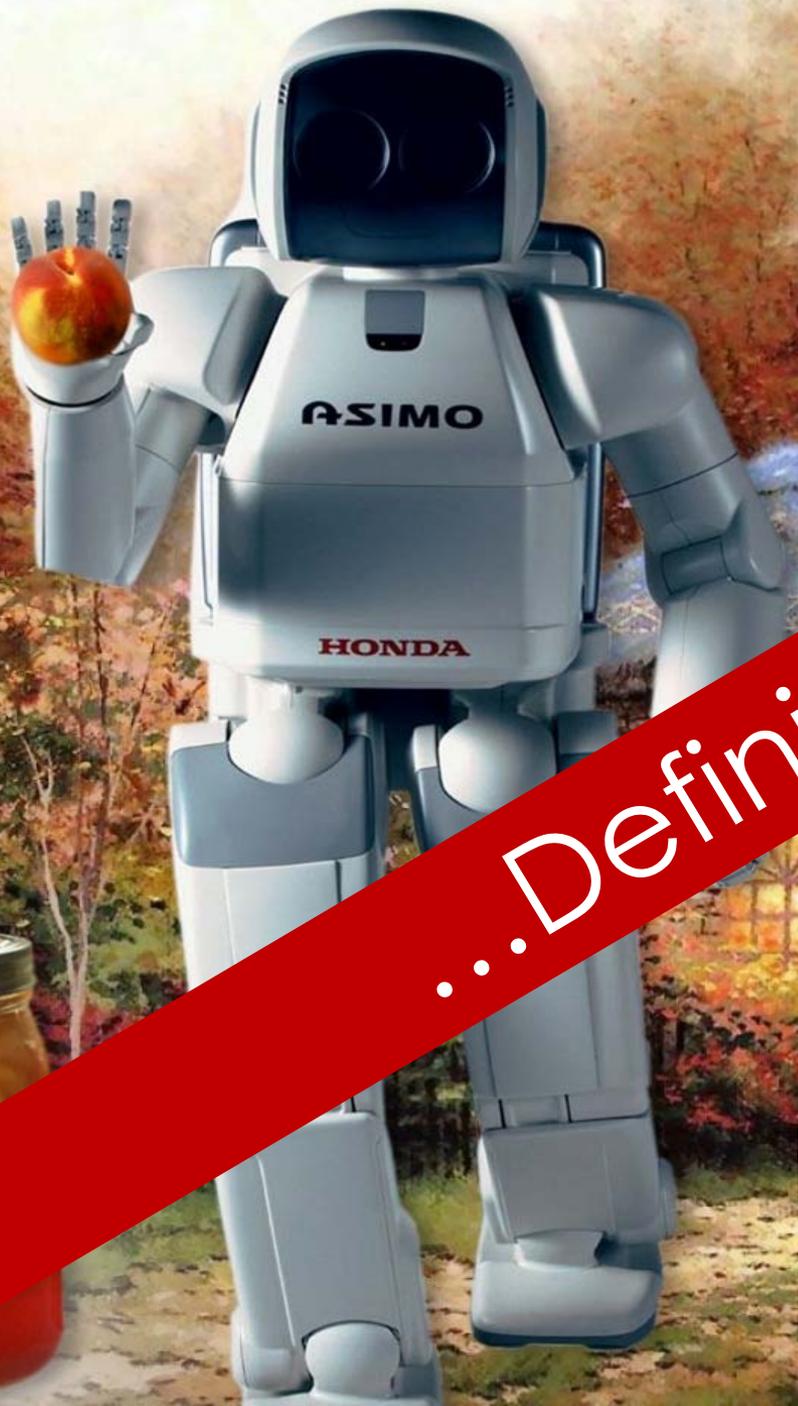
ASIMO

HONDA

NORTHWEST



The  
**NEW HOME**   
of **THE FUTURE**



...Definitely Not.

NORTHWEST



The  
**NEW HOME**   
of **THE FUTURE**

# BUYER SEGMENTATION

TRYING TO APPEAL TO EVERYONE  
...COULD EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE NO ONE.

Who is buying?

## OUR TARGET

- Female
- 25-44
- 2-4 person household
- Some college, college, or graduate school
- \$60,000-\$120,000 income level

## BREAKTHROUGH

// I got that 'homier' meant that I would feel more secure about my investment...They talk about how you feel within the home. **It has a lot to do with your peace of mind about the home.** That's a big thing for me. That's how I feel about my [new] home right now...That's where the homey feel comes from for me... You can relax. You don't have to worry about drafts. You don't have to worry about things falling apart or breaking. Then you feel at home. Home is where you relax. //

- Focus Group Participant

### IN RESPONSE

// *That I could understand as being homier. I would accept that as homier.* //

- (another) Focus Group Participant

// *In the context that [she] explained it, it's perfect!* //

- (another) Focus Group Participant

stay tuned...

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# CONTACT US

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