



"It's a No-Brainer!" Part 1 of 3. By Jason Jepsen, CEM

Solar has always been an ethos for me - a primary perspective stemming from cross-wired DNA dropped into today, a past time. For many of us, Solar is our essence, aspiration and spirituality. As Children of the Sun, all aberrant and slightly twitchy, we attempt to accelerate the inevitable; we dwell in a different dimension, our mind-eyes piercing the very laws of physics revealing a new present laced with latent promise – that copper-colored mountain where infinite light-fuel drips through boundary-less space to potent fields, which fluently transmute solar energy into inconceivable benefit.

Yeah, that's my tribe - singed solar wrenches from dusty, dead-end roads, persistent and pestilent pioneers who refused to yield to common convention and current capabilities (and the occasional inspector). This was and is Solar Skunk Works, where shit falls off the map landing exponentially in a sudden new reality. Children of the Sun know a brighter way – the Tao of Solar. For us, the value in solar is innate. For us, it's a "no-brainer".

Now, if I had a nickel for every time I heard an energy salesperson say, "it's a no brainer", I'd be retired. This is basically an affront to a potential meal ticket. If it were a 'no-brainer', we would all be retired! Sure it's a no-brainer to the dirty hippy who figured out to series four used PV's and an electric water heater element to get his solar shower. Sure it's a no-brainer to the greenies and greedies who are shrewd enough to capitalize on policy and spin. And it's a no-brainer to the utilities that see the "light-effectiveness" (you heard it here, first, folks – cost-effectiveness of solar) of massive solar generation.

I suspect, though, that most of these folks are not most of our market. And there is plenty of market! Solar energy will have transformed the energy industries and markets when it is more lucrative to leave carbon in the ground and use abundant and above ground solar energy for our energy needs. This transformation, this revolution, is up to us. And as our industry has come a long, long way, not succumbing to policy defeats, market cycles and opportunistic charlatans, we are now at a crossroads. Prices and thus incentives and credits are all decreasing. Some have already disappeared. Solar is expected to stand on its own.

Knowledge, experience, understanding, technical proficiency, relationships - all awesome, necessary, virtuous skills requiring huge investments of business resources. That's the ticket price for boarding the Solar Coaster. Whether one stays on the ride or jettisons is entirely up to each of us. As established solar professionals, we know the value of solar energy. Our prospects do not always understand this value, or they perceive the price to exceed this value, or maybe they see solar power as a threat to their next deal.

Tell me if you've heard this one before, a recent conversation I had with an efficiency-minded contractor:

Thanks Jason; Tell me if I'm full of it....While I am liking PV more as the cost/benefits improve (actually looking at it for my residence) I still have to state

that it is not generally the low-hanging fruit in most of our industry. And is often a thief of a better environmental solution to carbon reduction. While cost to the owner may be reduced to "0%"; remember that the Environment still Pays the Entire bill. Hence my logic that \$350,000 to produce 100 kw produces less of a carbon reduction than would a typical \$100,000 boiler improvement. And, conservation and efficiency should always be the first choice over generation.

This is a common perception among contractors, architects, engineers, property managers – colleagues that could be our allies and acolytes in nurturing the Tao of Solar. There are infinite possible responses we could approach, each with its own related result. The art is paying attention so we become aware of which responses lead to which results. Then, with this reliable and confirmed information, one simply has to advance or retard their distributor to get the most precise ignition timing, complete combustion and maximum power.

Next month we will explore some activities available to us when working with ‘opposing forces’. These helpful principles are broadly classified as *pacifying, enriching, magnetizing and destroying*. Applying the right activity at the right time, whether to craft a compelling message, generate formal press, or convert a bill into policy, is one of the most potent levers we have in manifesting a Solar Present.

This is about intelligence and precision in our presentations, our selves, and our client correspondence. Like a surgeon, we will need to precisely and definitively slice confusion with compassionate wisdom and communication. As we will see, it can be a more effective and enjoyable exchange!

Jason Jepsen, CEM, is the owner of Commercial Energy Consulting, LLC, a full-service energy management and construction company. Jason installed his first solar system in 1995 in an off-grid Hogan high in the Rockies. He continues to ride the Solar Coaster, enjoying the ever-changing view.