



ENTRY FORM

THE AOTEAROA EFFIE AWARDS IN ASSOCIATION WITH TVNZ – ENTRY FORM

ENTRY ID	495-A09
ENTRY TITLE	Same Energy, Probably Cheaper: Brave enough to be Frank about NZ's power.
CLIENT	Frank Energy
PRODUCT	Frank Energy
FIRST MEDIA APPEARANCE DATE	July 2023
CAMPAIGN START DATE	July 2023
CAMPAIGN FINISH DATE	22 June 2024
CATEGORY	A09 – Telcos and Utilities
CATEGORY DESCRIPTION	Telecommunications will be judged alongside Utility providers. Clarity of challenge and category context will be essential to help evaluate your entry.

WORD COUNT: 2500 MAX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY [0%]

Give the judges an understanding of the case they are about to read by providing a brief summary for each of the items below. A one-sentence summary is recommended for each line. (Maximum: 100 words in total – not included in total word count)

The Challenge:	Grow to No.1 in the market – requiring a specific comms strategy rarely seen in the energy category and immensely difficult to deliver.
The Insight:	With a cost of living crisis, financial pressure hits all of NZ – creating a value-seeking segment of 5 million strong - no better time to be a price-fighting brand.
The Strategic Idea/Build:	Let's remind NZ that all power is the same, so why pay more than you need to.
Bringing the Strategy & Idea to Life:	A campaign to highlight that with Frank Energy it's the "Same energy. Probably Cheaper".
The Results:	Frank Energy grew to become NZ's largest Tier 2 energy provider – 8 months ahead of target.
Why is this entry an outstanding example for effective marketing in this Effie entry category? (Maximum 90 words – this is not included in total word count)	
<p>This strategic campaign is the perfect embodiment of Frank Energy's challenger spirit, appetite for risk and what is possible when a brand is prepared to fly in the face of industry convention to take the fight to the competition in pursuit of extraordinary results.</p> <p>Through creativity, strategic execution, and unwavering dedication to the brand's DNA, this campaign overcame industry barriers, dominated the category, smashed ambitious goals and cemented the brand's position as one of NZ's genuine challenger brands.</p> <p>And they didn't even have to give away a TV.</p>	

01.**Challenge, Context & Objectives [20%]**

This section covers your strategic business context for your marketing activity, alongside your key business challenge and objectives.

Please provide the necessary context on your industry category, competitors, and brand so the judges, including those unfamiliar with your brand/category, can evaluate your entry. Outline the degree of ambition represented by your objectives. Including historical data may be useful here to provide judges with a clear picture of the situation the brand or organisation found itself in.

01A

Before your effort began, what was the state of the brand's/organisation's business and the overall category in which it competes? What was the strategic challenge that stemmed from this business situation? Provide context on the degree of difficulty of this challenge.

Mid-size energy retailer Energy Online rebranded itself as Frank Energy in early 2022 – a challenger brand focused on giving Kiwis a straight-up deal on their power. In a category littered (some might say marred) with freebies, sign-up sweeteners, and broadband bundles, Frank decided to swim against the tide and build its brand on little more than the promise of power kept simple, at a great price. No contracts, no free TVs, no extras.

From the outset Frank set itself a hugely ambitious business objective. To become NZ's largest Tier 2 energy brand within 3 years. (Tier 2 = smaller energy retailers such as Powershop, Electric Kiwi, Flick. Tier 1 = Genesis, Mercury etc). Assuming current market leader Powershop maintained flat market share, this would around 20,000 customers

over 3 years. A daunting challenge considering in the prior year, the Energy Online brand had achieved just 3,000 new customers.

While Frank had a successful first year in its new skin, increasing its customer base by just over 5,000, growth was slowing and metrics were flat-lining by early 2023 - the honeymoon appeared over. The goal of becoming No.1 seemed totally out of reach.

Simultaneously, NZ's "Cost of Living Crisis" reached fever-pitch proportions. And while good value was inferred in Frank's no-frills vibe, the brand had initially launched with a campaign about keeping power simple and straight-up. It now seemed like a no-brainer to aggressively double-down on the Frank value proposition, promoting competitive prices (but not the cheapest) to an audience desperate for an extra buck or two each month.

Easier said than done.

NZ energy pricing is ridiculously complicated. With 27 independent lines companies, and a myriad of other uncontrollable external costs from third parties added to power bills, pricing is a minefield. In simple terms, a national pricing strategy can see retailers cheap in one town, but expensive in the next.

Energy retailers therefore struggle to make any kind of definitive claims around the strength of their pricing, erring on the side of caution with beige retail tropes – great deals, hot prices, winter savings.

Hardly a compelling, differentiated, or motivating foundation for a campaign to dramatically accelerate Frank's growth trajectory.

So in the face of a perfect-storm, and a once-in-a-decade opportunity to capitalise on this uniquely price-sensitive market, the question was simple. Could Frank find the strategic and creative pathway to fully leverage its competitive price position, fly in the face of industry barriers and convention, and give itself a fighting chance of big time success?

You bet.

01B

What were the objectives you set to address your challenge? For each objective, include: KPI, benchmarks, previous outcomes and the rationale for why it was selected.

Please outline one business/organisational objective and a maximum of 3 marketing and 3 advertising/comms objectives.

Business Objective

- 1) Become NZ's largest Tier 2 Energy Brand by February 2025 (3 years from launch Feb 2022)

Owning the largest share of the tier 2 market is an indication of total brand excellence – including brand strategy, product and pricing strategy, comms, customer care and brand experience. This would require maintaining net growth of around 7000 connections per year across 3 years. From February's brand launch to May 2023, prior to this new campaign, net growth of just 5000 connections had been achieved.

Marketing Objectives

- 1) **Net Connection Growth**

Achieve net connection growth of at least 10,000 ICPs (ICP = customer connections) between July 2023 - June 2024. This would be the 12mth stretch growth required to put us within reach of becoming NZ's largest retailer by Feb 2025.

2) Market Share Growth

Achieve Tier 2 Market Share of 18% by end June 2024, 19% by Feb 2025.

Prior to the commencement of the revised strategy and new campaign, market share sat at a distant 16.25% in early 2023.

Advertising/Comms Objectives

- 1) For brand growth, **prompted brand awareness** and **consideration** are critical. As a new brand coming off a zero base, we achieved good growth in these metrics in our first year but could we push further with a refreshed strategy, albeit reduced media weights?

With these metrics generally slow to move, we set stretch goals to improve both by +5% pts by June 2024.

- 2) **Win an Axis award for creative excellence.**

In recognising the magnitude of the challenge, stand-out creative would be required. No previous Energy Online or Frank Energy work had ever won an Axis Award. This needed to be the year.

02.

Insights & Strategy [25%]

This section covers the key building blocks of your strategy. Explain to the judges how you arrived at your strategy and clearly articulate that strategy. Focus on the thinking or insight(s) that unlocked your solution and tied it to successfully addressing your objectives.

02A.

Explain the thinking that led you to your strategy. Explain how any insights discovered were directly tied to your brand, your audiences behaviours and attitudes, your research and/or business situation.

The new Frank Energy brand had a solid first year off the back of its strongly differentiated proposition and cut-through launch creative. But with heavy launch media investment coming to an end and competitors stepping up, growth had slowed significantly, and the ambitious goals were looking increasingly unlikely.

We began with customer research to understand the drivers for choosing Frank. This revealed that while our ‘straight-up, no BS’ proposition was resonating strongly with consumers, competitive pricing was the primary factor influencing path to purchase. Unsurprising, given Aotearoa was in the middle of a ‘Cost of Living Crisis’.

But a more interesting insight emerged. While value-conscious consumers always make up a decent chunk of any retail market, this environment was different. Financial pressure had spread to all levels of society and suddenly people on executive salaries with baches at Pauanui felt the pinch, watching their costs like never before. In effect the value-seeker market had ‘super-sized’ itself – the whole of NZ was now desperate to save a buck, and potentially hanging out for an energy company offer just like Frank’s.

We hadn’t specifically talked about price yet - but with competitive rates a key pillar of the brand, and the need to accelerate growth, it was clearly time to shift our strategic focus towards our value proposition - leaving consumers in no doubt that Frank Energy was sharp on price.

02B.	What was the Core Idea or strategic build that enabled you to reach your solution? (Be succinct. A maximum of 50 words.)
Kiwis are innocent victims in a national scandal. Despite the homogeneous nature of the power, some are needlessly paying more than others. How could we remind people that all power makes your lights glow the same way, so why pay more? Choose Frank and pay less.	

03.	Bringing the Strategy & Idea to Life [20%]
03A.	Describe the creative solution and how it helped the idea break out of the category and resulted in unexpected solutions.
<p>Bound by our brand promise to debunk industry conventions, and a brief to convince NZ they might be paying more than they need to for power if they're not with Frank, we got thinking.</p> <p>Knowing we were pretty competitive on price [REDACTED] we wanted to make the strongest possible claim – while staying truthful, straight-up, a little bit tongue in cheek per our brand, and importantly for the execs - away from the Commerce Commission spotlight.</p> <p>But just how strong could our pricing message be? Could we make a comparative claim? The marketing dept of 2 spent weeks working with legal and pricing teams to assess our price position across NZ and determine how far we could push claims. Analysis of thousands of competitor price plans nationwide revealed that joining Frank could save the vast majority of Kiwis money on their monthly power bill.</p> <p>So we couldn't say 'we're the cheapest,' but we weren't far off. The 'Same Energy, Probably Cheaper' campaign was born.</p> <p>Making any price claim in the energy sector is a rare, bold move, fraught with legal danger. It requires considered nuance of message - a feat the campaign pulls off with the kind of understated quirky honesty the brand has been built on. It conveys the tongue-in-cheek possibility of a better deal, sowing a seed of doubt in consumers' minds... 'Frank Energy may or may not give me a better price, but I should at least check them out.'</p> <p>To demonstrate that all energy is in fact the same, we sent our mascot into the test lab in a series of TV spots that highlight the startling results when expensive power goes head to head against Frank Energy. In a dramatic plot twist we find that all energy is in fact exactly the same, delivering identical results across all of our test scenarios. We sign off with the provocative campaign line – 'Same energy, probably cheaper'.</p> <p>We expected an onslaught of competitor complaints. However from their viewpoint, the campaign claim has been frustratingly difficult to challenge or disprove, given the wonderful vagueness of the word "probably" and the promise therein. While we expected tears and legal-based complaints from competitors, the campaign remains unchallenged.</p> <p>Completing the loop, those that ventured from campaign assets onto our website were given the opportunity to plug their current bill into our bill-comparison calculator, to see for themselves whether Frank was in fact probably cheaper.</p>	
03B.	WHAT WAS THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY?

This section relates to the media and communications thinking and strategy that brought the creative solution to life in the most powerful and relevant way for the target audience. Include all significant touchpoints and channels in this section.

Outline the rationale behind your communications strategy. Explain how the key elements worked together to drive results:

In support of our 'grow at pace' objective, media had the role of cementing Frank Energy as the low-cost energy retailer of choice in consumers' minds.

The resulting tactical media mix was thereby focused on two simple imperatives.

1. Build basic brand awareness.
2. Present the brand directly to those in the market for cheap power.

With overall budgets significantly lower than larger competitors in particular, we had to be strategic in fighting for share of voice, interrogating every channel, finding ways to maximise the value of each dollar spent.

We may be small, but we were able to punch above our weight by focusing on the right levers, shifting budget towards brand building channels, while focusing performance efforts on solidifying our low-cost brand position where it mattered most - when potential customers were 'in market' researching.

We started with our strongest asset, our new video creative. Our AV strategy was planned to ensure wherever people were watching video, we were there. Our presence spanned across Linear TV, Online Video and Social Channels including Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, utilising multiple formats and durations to get the best out of each platform.

This was supported by a digital-led performance layer designed to maximise our presence to those looking for value. To successfully execute this the following changes were made:

Revamping Frank's paid search strategy by pivoting keyword priority to 'value' keywords (searches for affordable energy), which suited Frank's 'value' proposition. We also turned off brand search campaigns due to a lack of advertisers bidding on brand terms. This allowed us to redirect budget to more competitive 'affordable' keywords

Maximised performance results through AI – specifically using Performance Max. We built the campaign using rich first-party data and online sign ups, signaling to AI the profile of a likely customer to find these users across Google's entire advertising network.

With this simple combination of mass market brand building and timely, targeted acquisition, we ensured that not only a good number of Kiwis knew about Frank Energy, but those keen to save a buck on power were presented with the brand as an option when they went looking. The results speak for themselves.

List all supplementary communications touch points used in this campaign (the touchpoints that were not central to the campaign).

- Customer eDMs
- Website
- Sponsorships – NZ Warriors / 7 Days TV Programme

<p>What was the \$ Spend? Outline the media and production spend on the campaign within the campaign period. Use actual spend rather than ratecard. In the case of donated media please list the rate card value separately from the paid media spend.</p>	
Media Spend	July 2023 – June 2024 [REDACTED]
Outline the media spend in relation to competition and versus last year	<p>Frank Energy actual spend vs last year</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Ratecard Spend Vs Competition (July '23 – June '24)</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
Creative Production Spend	[REDACTED]

<p>04.</p>	<p>WHAT WERE THE RESULTS? [20% for 4A and 15% for 4B]. Outline the results achieved by the campaign against the short and long-term objectives set, provide conclusive proof that it was the campaign that drove the results. In this section, the judges will be looking to see a clear cause and effect between the communication activity and business performance over time. Show the compelling evidence that will convince even the most cynical finance director. Please Note: All results must be sourced to be judged; any unsourced results will not considered by judges.</p>
<p>04A</p>	<p>Overall achievement against objectives [20%]. Clear proof that the objectives established in section one have been achieved. Judges will be seeking quantified results. Successful entries ensure that results can easily be aligned against objectives established in section one. Note: Please ensure all data is sourced, and is specific to the results period outlined in the Call for Entry, and geographically isolated to Aotearoa.</p>
<p>Objective: Become NZ's largest Tier 2 Energy Brand by February 2025 (3 years from launch Feb 2022)</p>	

Result:

The new strategic direction and campaign met the mood of the nation, delivering spectacular growth beyond all expectation. Competitors were left in our wake and we did indeed officially become NZ's largest Tier 2 Energy Retailer at the end of June 2024 as highlighted in the market share data in Chart 3.

Objective:**Net connection growth**

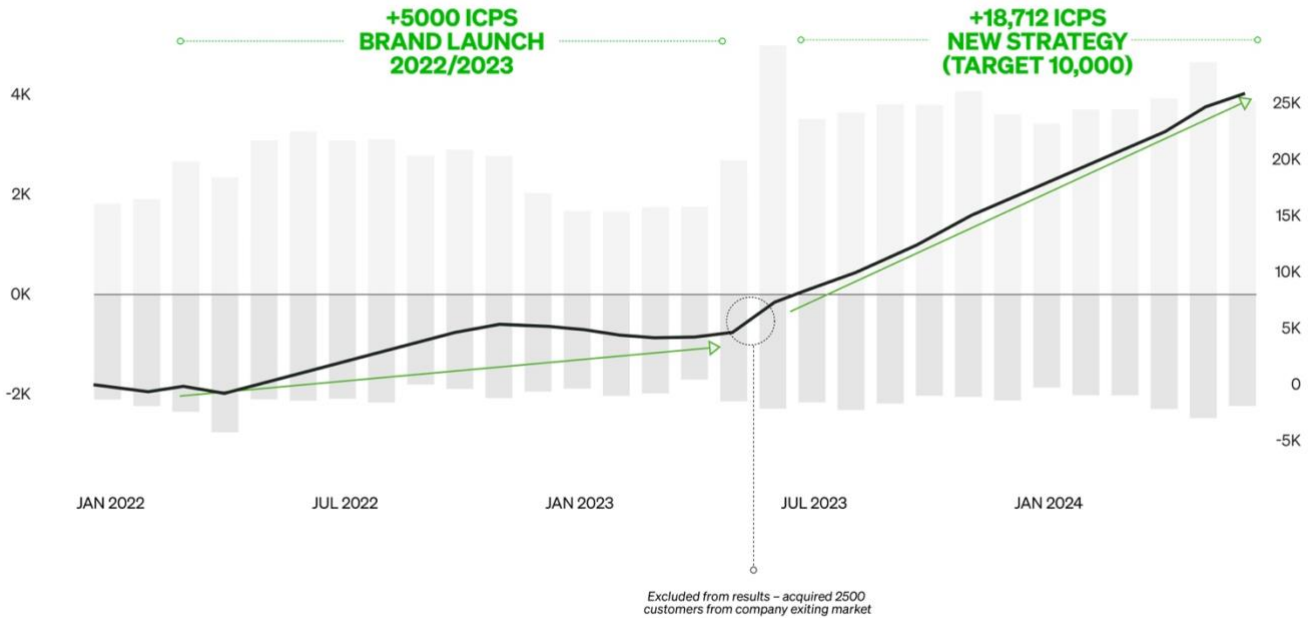
Achieve Electricity net connection growth of at least **10,000 ICPs** (ICP = customer connections) between July 2023 - June 2024.

Result:

Electricity Net connection growth in the period was a staggering **18,712 ICPs**, almost double the target and more than **3.5x** the growth seen in the 15mths post launch, with just 50% of the media investment.

Source: NZ Electricity Authority Data July 2024

CHART 1. NET TOTAL CONNECTION GROWTH



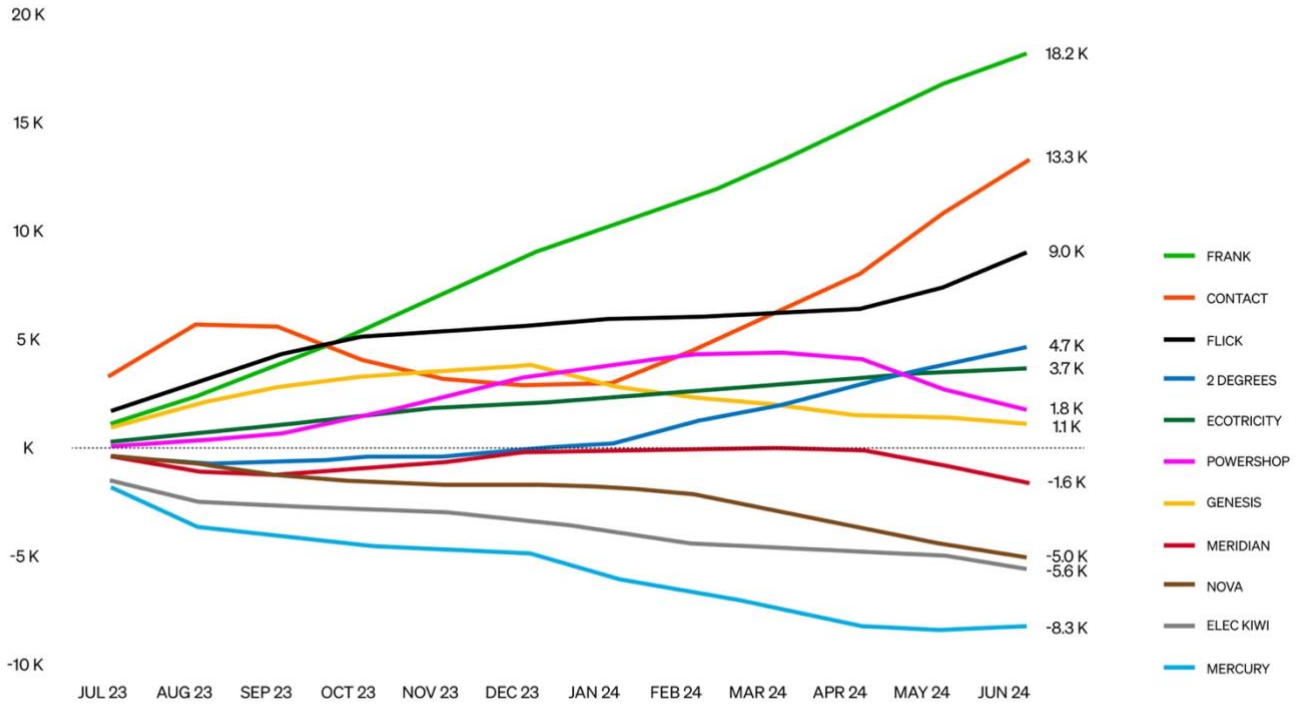
Source: NZ Electricity Authority Data July 2024

Our stellar growth is best put into perspective when compared to our competitor set across the same period – see graph below. Almost 5000 net ICP growth more than the next best in Contact, despite them spending almost 3.5x more on media (see media investment section).

Note we weren't the cheapest in market at this time, didn't adjust our prices at any stage, and our "Same Energy Probably Cheaper" campaign was the only messaging utilised.

Source: NZ Electricity Authority Data July 2024

CHART 2. NET ICP CHANGE FY24 (JUL-23 TO JUN-24) RESI ELEC ICPS



Source: NZ Electricity Authority Data July 2024

Objective:

Market Share Growth

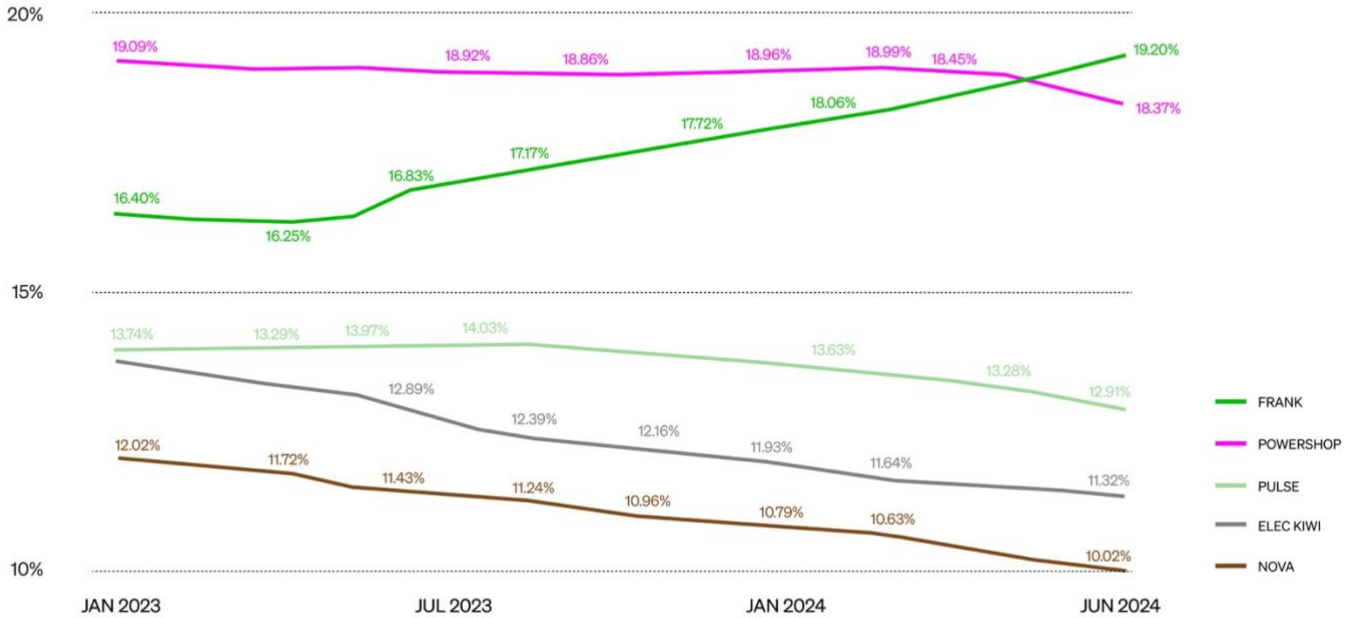
Achieve Tier 2 Market Share of 19% by Feb 2025, 18% by end June 2024.

Result :

As one of a small number of retailers that grew market share in the last 12 months, we smashed the target, growing our share by a whopping 2.2% in the period, hitting 19.20% market share by the end of June 2024, 8 months ahead of target.

Source: NZ Electricity Authority Data July 2024

CHART 3. TIER 2 MARKET PERCENTAGE (TOP 5)



Source: NZ Electricity Authority Data July 2024

Objective:

Improve Prompted Brand Awareness and Brand Consideration brand track scores by +5pts by June 2024.

Prior to the campaign Prompted Brand Awareness sat at 41% and Brand Consideration was 18% amongst our core audience AP 35-54.

Result:

Our award-winning creative caught the attention of NZ consumers and we achieved our objectives.

- Prompted Brand Awareness to June 2024 = **+7pts**
- Brand Consideration to June 2024 = **+9pts**

Source: TRA Brand Tracker 2024.

Objective:

Win an Axis award for creative excellence.

Result :

The “Same Energy, Probably Cheaper” campaign received 2 Silver and 2 Bronze medals at the 2024 Axis Awards for creative excellence.

A Silver medal was received in the prestigious ‘TV Campaign’ category - the highest accolade of any NZ brand in this category on the night.

Summary

36% more customer growth than the next best energy retailer in the market, strong lifts in brand metrics, industry awards for creative excellence and phenomenal market share growth making Frank Energy the largest tier 2 retailer in NZ. All off the back of modest media investment and a brilliantly simple mix. And all from a campaign about power, one of the world’s lowest interest categories. Some say we almost made energy sexy....

04B**Convincing proof that the results were a direct result of your campaign [15%].**

Outline other external factors that could account for the results outlined in 04A and provide compelling evidence and rationale for why these did not contribute significantly to those results. There are almost always other factors that could have affected your results, such as product changes, pricing, distribution, stock levels, competitive activity, weather, etc. You need to convince the judges that these factors were not responsible for your results, or estimate their contribution and/or demonstrate how they needed the campaign to amplify their impacts.

With a simple offer, a single minded campaign and no other offers or environmental factors at play during the results period that could have had a material impact, there is a clear and strong relationship between the campaign and the results delivered.

- Frank Energy had no other campaign material or promotional offers in market during the results period.
- At no point in the results period did Frank Energy offer sign-up credits.
- Frank Energy did not adjust its pricing during the campaign/results period.
- Winter is typically a strong growth period for energy retailers with high numbers of customers shifting providers due to unexpectedly high bills. Summer months are typically slow for customer growth. Frank’s steady growth curve was maintained irrespective of season.
- No retailers exited the market during the results period or put a halt on new acquisition – typically driving new customers to well-priced retailers such as Frank as people are forced to migrate.
- Media investment year on year reduced.

	Guidance Notes Please refer to the guidance notes below, to ensure your entry conforms to eligibility criteria.
	<p>Eligibility: Data presented must be isolated to Aotearoa, and work must have run between 1 June 2022 and 30 June 2024. Results may be included up to 23 July 2024. Results data that fails to isolate or identify data specific to the eligibility period and/or Aotearoa New Zealand risks low marks and/or being ineligible.</p> <p>Data Sources: All data referenced in the entry requires sources (recommended as footnotes on the page referenced or at the end of the entry).</p> <p>Charts and Graphs: Entrants are encouraged to display data via charts & graphs within the limits allocated in each question. Sources required for all data including charts and graphs.</p> <p>Agency names: No agencies, of any kind, are to be included in the entry.</p>