

Session 4:
Introduction – EURELECTRIC Awards – Johannes Teysen
Tuesday, 3 June 2014

Ladies and gentlemen,

Post lunch speeches are always a challenge so may I ask you to do one of the following:

- push the “attention reset” button of the devices you were given as you walked in
- or, swap seats with the person next to you so you can look at me from a different angle! ☺

Ladies and gentlemen, on a slightly more serious note, the EURELECTRIC Industry Award was inaugurated at the EURELECTRIC Convention in Barcelona in 2008 to recognise companies or persons that have made a pioneering contribution to the development of the European electricity industry. This can be in any field that is linked to or impacts on the electricity industry, and in any stage of the business process – generation, transmission, distribution, retail and supply. It can also be an outstanding personality or indeed a specific technology, research or innovative activity.

In my role as President of EURELECTRIC, I am honoured to present the 2014 EURELECTRIC award today to a company that has taken the buzz words “empowering customers” to the next level, working with us – the utility industry – to make sure we can deliver energy efficiency using market-based, innovation-friendly means.

Founded not so long ago – in 2007 - the company partnered with utilities (including my own) to send homeowners reports overviews comparing the energy patterns of their homes with those of their neighbours. If your house was the biggest energy user on the street, you would soon find out and get tips on how to start trimming your consumption to lower your bills. As Mr Laskey – President and Founder of the company Opower - winner of the 2014 EURELECTRIC award, put it:

“Social pressure, that’s powerful stuff! And harnessed correctly, it can be a powerful force for good.” This peer pressure is applied here in the UK too and appears to have had measurable effects.

Opower’s business model centres around a simple question:
How can utility companies become trusted partners and incentivise customers to lower energy use?

And their concept of dialoguing with customers and “empowering” them to play an active role on the demand side blends perfectly with the theme of the EURELECTRIC conference, “Building trust in the new energy world”. It also brilliantly supports our message that policies centred on regulation (the stick) – savings obligations and the like – are less effective than those spurred by innovation and market competition (the carrot).

Opower's success has unleashed a wave of innovation and several companies are now following in their footsteps. As we know the most powerful ingredient to support innovation is heightened competition and Opower has no doubt helped in spurring that!

So ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the independent jury of senior industry executives that selected Opower as the winner of the 2014 EURELECTRIC Industry Award, it is a great pleasure and honour for me to call on stage Alex Laskey himself to receive the prestigious EURELECTRIC Industry Award.

May I ask you to join me in a round of applause for Opower and the steps it has taken to ensure that utility companies firmly position themselves at the centre of the emerging smart energy world by providing a new customer experience leveraging on new technology, better interactions between providers and consumers and market rules conducive to business innovation and consumer protection.

Congratulations Mr Laskey!