



RIVERSTAR

CONSUMERS ENERGY CASE STUDY

RiverStar Enhances Text and Email Communication Between Utility and Customers, Increasing Overall Customer Experience by 6% Percent



CHALLENGE

Consumers Energy, a natural gas and electricity public utility for Michigan, provides support for its nearly seven million customers through its customer operations department. This team, made up of four central groups, employs nearly 400 customer service representatives (CSRs). Leadership was looking for a way to reduce the number of duplicative calls and enhance the overall customer experience. They needed a solution that could accumulate the information customers most wanted to know into a knowledge database and communicate that information through new channels, most specifically, text and email.

Leveraging internal data and analytics, leadership determined that a growing number of inbound calls involved payment status — particularly a late payment with an accompanying shut-off notice, or a request for a payment extension. The challenge was to find a cost-effective solution that could be piloted, easy to implement and flexible. RiverStar had worked with many of the agency partners of Consumers Energy, and the success of these relationships led to the initial contact to create a solution.

RIVERSTAR SOLUTION

RiverStar created a 90-day pilot program made up of two teams of 16 CSRs that equipped them to send a text or email confirmation messages to customers who had been either granted an extension or been enrolled in a payment plan. Consumers Energy provided customer data they were looking to capture, and RiverStar rapidly created a functional application that required very little internal integration efforts from the Consumers Energy team. The training required was also minimal and intuitive. When a customer



ABOUT CONSUMERS ENERGY

Consumers Energy is a public utility that provides electricity and natural gas to customers in all of 69 counties of Michigan's lower peninsula. In addition to traditional electric generation and natural gas service, Consumers Energy is a leader in developing renewable energy throughout Michigan. The Customer Operations division of Consumers Energy provides support for its nearly seven million customers through a variety of channels.

calls in, the CSR simply signs into the application and enters all information relevant to the request (amount and due date of payment, etc.). They then select the customer's preference for a follow-up message (text or email) and click "submit." The information is immediately sent to the customer and then archived for future reference or re-submission.

Consumers Energy was an active participant throughout the entire implementation process, working with the RiverStar team to make adjustments during the pilot testing phase. The application was ultimately rolled out from the pilot group to the full team of CSRs in an effortless manner.

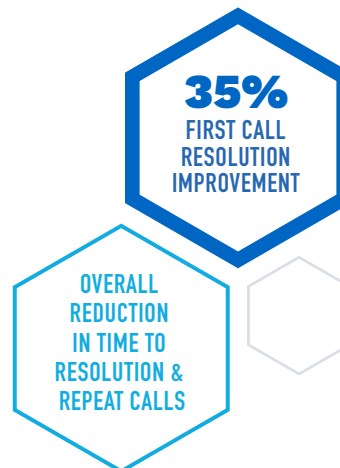
RESULTS

Feedback from those on the front lines has been very positive. "Overall, this application is very easy to use," says Pritchard, "and allows CSRs to do something they've wanted to do for a long time."

More importantly, customers love the added functionality and improved communication. Consumers Energy utilizes a metric called Customer Experience Index (CXI) to gauge customer satisfaction.

"Before this pilot, the Consumer Operations department consistently scored an 86 (out of a possible 100). Within six months of full implementation, we saw an increase in our Customer Experience Index by 6%."

Ultimately, clients have more immediate visibility into payment status, peace of mind that a payment has been received, and three important metrics have all dropped significantly: call time, time to resolution and repeat calls.



"The process of working with RiverStar was very easy," says Customer Operations Manager Stefanie Pritchard, especially considering resource restraints that had prevented larger solutions in the past. "We let RiverStar know what was possible for us," says Pritchard, "and they came back with a potential solution." Moving forward, the team is creating a list of additional ways the application can be integrated and expanded to other departments to help assist customers.

STEFANIE PRITCHARD

Customer Operations Manager
Consumers Energy

ABOUT RIVERSTAR

RiverStar delivers software and consulting services for companies with inbound or outbound contact centers. Our consultants are experts in extending the value of existing systems and creating custom desktop workflows to streamline complex customer-facing processes. RiverStar achieves tangible results, significantly increasing agent productivity, conversion rates, first call resolution rates, and reducing call handling time and training time. Some of the world's largest organizations across multiple industries have entrusted RiverStar with their complex customer-facing processes.

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