



Case Study

Engaging Customers With Data Driven, Personalized Design And Targeted Messaging

As a utility, you recognize the importance of taking every opportunity to connect meaningfully with your customers and make a positive brand impression. But, despite recognizing the importance of CX, many utilities haven't yet considered how their bill design and billing process contributes to a great customer experience - or leaves customers feeling misunderstood.

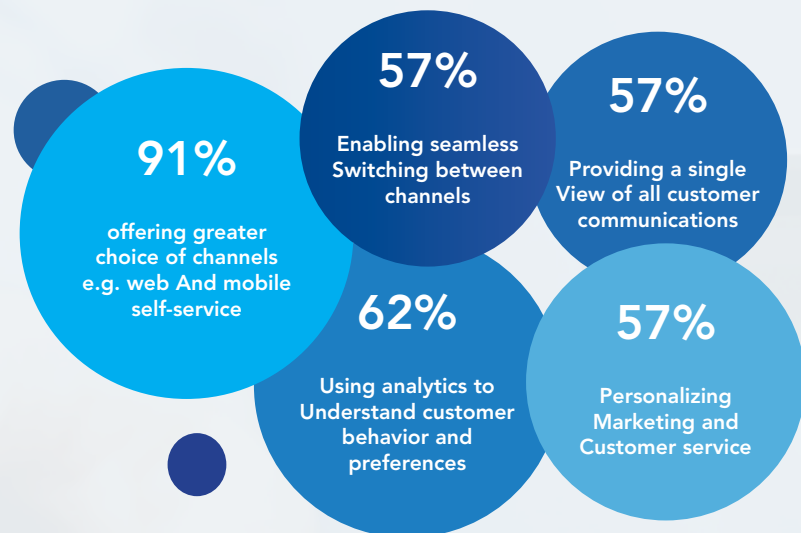
Utilitec is here to help! Read on to learn how your routine communications can contribute meaningfully to your business-critical customer engagement strategy. Then, discover how the Fayetteville Public Works Commission team leveraged a bill redesign project that allowed them to create better customer connections through 135,000 monthly bills and notices.

ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

When surveyed, utility leaders identify a number of initiatives that are critical for improving customer engagement. A modern billing solution meets the increased expectations of today's utility customers by addressing their needs for highly personal and relevant communications, delivered reliably through customer-preferred channels.

Which initiatives are most important for improving customer engagement?

ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES



Citation - SoftLanding CX Survey, 2017

To figure out whether your current bills are meeting these needs, ask yourself some simple questions to put yourself in a customer-first mindset:

- What do you know about your customers? Age, demographics, preferred channels? And is this knowledge reflected in their bills, so each bill feels like a 1:1 communication?
- What's important to each individual customer? Budget billing customers have different needs and priorities from other residential customers - it shows you care if you communicate differently with each group.

By taking the time to put yourself in the customer's shoes, you can easily appreciate whether your current bill really meets their needs, or whether a redesign project and some updated technology would help you make more meaningful, data-driven customer connections.



The Challenge

One utility which has recently benefited from new billing technology and design is The Fayetteville Public Works Commission (PWC). PWC provides service to the sixth-largest city in North Carolina, including electricity, water, and sewer, and generates an average of 135,000 bills a month.

In 2018, PWC recognized that it was time for a fresh new bill design, as it had been 15+ years since the last redesign. The implementation of time-of-use rates also meant that the utility needed space on the bill for easy to understand time-of-use information.

Understanding the importance of bill redesign, the utility formed a cross-functional team including representatives from customer service, communications, marketing, IS, procurement, and customer billing. Following a comprehensive RFP process, the utility selected Utilitec as a partner for next-level billing, and took three key steps to success:

1. PWC established focus groups and solicited feedback on billing needs from everyone from employees to CSRs to key account representatives and its community advisory group.
2. The utility shared a comprehensive list of all billing scenarios with Utilitec, to make sure every possibility was covered.
3. Bill design received a legal review to ensure that everything was in order.

The Results

PWC immediately saw results from the bill redesign project. The old bill was two-color and had limitations on "real estate" for marketing and personalization. The new bill, in comparison, is much easier to understand, and offers more targeted messaging and better graphic design.

The utility took advantage of color coding for each service type (electric, water, and sewer charges) to make it easier for customers to understand their charges. Customers often perceived PWC bills as more expensive than other utilities, so the visual reminder that three services were included in the total cost increased customer satisfaction.

Clever use of graphs provides enhanced information at a glance, like usage history. Usage snapshots placed on the front of the bill help customers to understand how their costs change over time, reducing calls to the call center. A new customer portal and a new IVR complemented the bill redesign, and together these initiatives reduced call center contacts by 15%.

Simple icons on the back of the bill provide concise information on ways to pay, and refer the customers to the website for further information, freeing up more space for account-driven messaging.



Segmented Marketing and Messaging

With Utilitec's help, PWC created 30 unique messages, from marketing programs to past-due reminders to rate information. The utility can segment the user base by service-specific information as well as residential vs. budget vs. commercial. Messages are then assigned to customers based on urgency and segment. Now bill-based messaging is more relevant and personal, and customers are better informed.

The communications department also makes use of a "Did You Know?" section to share promotions, conservation tips, account manager information and time-of-use reminders.

A monthly newsletter is included as an inline insert both in print and in PDF, so customers are more likely to review it. PWC also updated its eBill to include more relevant information (like amount due) making it more actionable and user-friendly. The utility will use tracking to review how the eBills are being used, including their open and click-through rates.

The PWC team also uses Utilitec's tracking tools to check the status of a billing cycle, capture billing exceptions for review, and handle returned mail effectively, saving time and money.



"I love how my bill looks, but I still don't like paying it!"

The PWC team has been delighted with the positive feedback it has received on its bill redesign project, even if customers still aren't excited to submit their payments. Some of the tangible benefits the utility reports are:

- Easy statement access for CSRs, so they can resolve customer concerns quickly
- A reduction in customer contacts, because the bills are now easier to understand
- Information better aligned with what matters to each individual customer or account

Is your utility next in line for a better-looking bill? Book a demo of Utilitec's industry-specific solutions today, and we'll show you what your routine communications can achieve for you!



SEE THE UTILITEC DIFFERENCE



Utilitec is a utility-centric customer communications management company that helps utilities leverage their data to improve service, increase collections and engage their customers. Headquartered in Troy, MI, Utilitec has been serving utilities since 2001. In 2019, Utilitec was acquired by Doxim and expanded its reach and facility footprint across North America.

Doxim is the customer communications and engagement technology leader serving financial and regulated markets, providing omnichannel document solutions and transforming experiences to strengthen engagement throughout the entire lifecycle.

Learn more at www.doxim.com.