



MOVING WATER FORWARD

Customer Service

The top priority of our members is making every drop—and every customer—count.

In what seems like the blink of an eye and a few turns of a wrist, clean and safe water is there; ready to be used for your morning shower or late night cup of tea, not to mention the fire hydrant on the street. The 73 million Americans served by our members rely on private water companies to take care of essential water infrastructure, protect the environment and provide 24-hour service to help ensure a reliable supply of quality water and efficient disposal of wastewater.

If there is a main break in the middle of the night, our members are often the first on the scene and prepared to resolve the issue. And if a customer calls with a question or concern about the quality of their water, we listen to get all the facts so we can handle it fast, but more importantly, handle it right. Because even though most businesses provide some type of value to their customers, no other utility service is as vital to daily life and community well-being as reliable water service.

Benchmarking Satisfaction

Aqua America • Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

Is it possible to significantly improve customer satisfaction while also reducing operating costs? In 2009, Aqua America proved that it is.

With an average of 1.4 million customer phone calls coming into three call centers, they examined the usefulness of their Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, the technological call-handling agent that routes calls including emergencies to the appropriate service departments.

The company formed an IVR development team consisting of call center employees and quality assurance and technology consultants. Using customer feedback and utility best practices, the team developed a benchmark of the old system, and after a series of timed A/B tests (essentially allowing half of the in-bound calls to hear the old version, and the other half to experience the revised version) they had the empirical comparison data they needed to make the assumed remedies final.

After they completed the rebuild of their call center IVR, Aqua America noted an increased use of the new customer self-service option, a change in customer satisfaction levels from 49 percent to 75 percent, and reduced operating and maintenance costs totaling a combined savings of \$136,000 per year. Customers got the answers they needed when they needed them; in fact, customers spent 21 percent less time in the call system before making their selections and getting to a friendly service representative.



SCOPE:

The Interactive Voice Response system results in higher customer satisfaction and savings

SUCCESS:

Customer satisfaction levels increased from 49 percent to 75 percent

DETAILS:

www.aquaamerica.com

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Satisfaction Success Story

Connecticut Water • Clinton, Connecticut

Private water companies, like many other types of businesses, are also in the customer service business. Critical to providing high-quality service is honest feedback from those they serve.

Connecticut Water, headquartered in Clinton, CT, has spent more than 20 years using an independent research firm to gauge customer satisfaction with the company and its call center operations and field services, as well as to solicit feedback on new initiatives. Throughout the year, 1,200 randomly selected customers are asked 37 core questions. The answers are used to calculate what is called a Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI).

Connecticut Water's CSI is a critical measure that impacts business operations and employee performance. As Connecticut Water CEO Eric Thornburg sees it, customer satisfaction is everyone's responsibility. He rewards employees if they achieve a CSI greater than 85 percent and uses it as a metric to determine job performance. As proof of the influence of customer feedback, the first CSI rating was in the mid-60s and today typically measures at an outstanding 90 percent.



OVERVIEW: Client satisfaction surveys are key to company and employee success

RESULTS: CSI rating measures at an outstanding 90 percent

DETAILS: www.ctwater.com

Old-Fashioned Values, Progressive Ideas

York Water Company • York, Pennsylvania

As one of America's oldest private water companies still thriving today, the York Water Company has been providing value through customer service for nearly 200 years. Although it's our oldest company member, the company continues to evolve through technological advances such as a new electronic billing system. Of course, they still provide the same personal touch that customers have come to expect.

Compared to all other Pennsylvania water utilities, York Water Company scores a below average customer complaint rate. The company attributes this exceptional rating to the fact that customers can speak to friendly customer service representatives and/or walk into the company's historic downtown office for one-on-one support. And for every customer who likes old-fashioned, face-to-face interaction with their water utility, there's another who prefers to pay their water bills online. For that reason, York Water Company launched its 'green' electronic billing initiative in 2010.

York Water Company President and CEO Jeff Hines says the company will continue to anticipate community growth and customer needs so that wherever and whenever "that good York water" is needed, it will be available in plentiful supply.



OVERVIEW: Friendly, one-on-one service still thriving at York Water Company

SUCCESS: Innovation makes this 200-year-old company an even greater asset to customers




DETAILS: www.yorkwater.com

About the NAWC: The NAWC is the voice of the private water industry and the only organization that represents this group of quality water service providers, innovation drivers and responsible partners. In conjunction with our members, we engage with others looking for fresh and powerful solutions to water-related challenges.

We invite you to contact us to learn more about the private water industry and the solutions our members are creating. Together, we're moving water forward.

CALL: 202.833.8383 to speak about a wide range of water issues

VISIT: www.nawc.org for access to additional resources

JOIN:    for the very latest information

