

Wider Communication Strategies

Customer Engagement

During 2010, to help define our Customer Service Strategy and Operating Plan for 2010/11, we implemented 'Voice of the Customer' research to allow us to understand how our customers and key stakeholders feel about the service we deliver and how they would like us to engage with them going forward.

We conducted a series of face-to-face focus groups, telephone surveys and structured, in-depth interviews. We focused on customers who had been through our complaints process, customers who had experienced a planned or unplanned outage, as well as customers who had made a general enquiry or a connections enquiry.

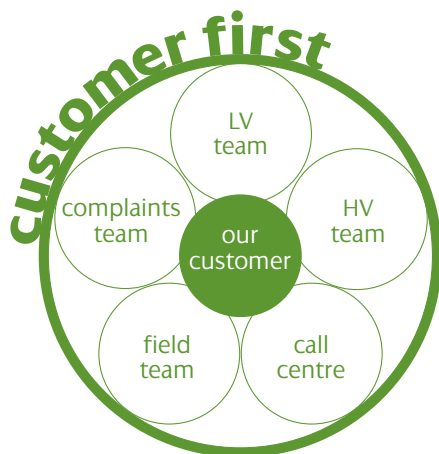
What our customers told us

Our customers are not always aware of SP Energy Networks. They struggle to understand the difference between a Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and a Supplier and, because of this, don't always know how or when to contact us.

Our customers are however, aware of our complaints process and how to raise a complaint. Overall, customers viewed our call taking agents and field staff as being very helpful and polite.

Our customers want:

- a quick resolution to their problem
- an accurate restoration time
- to talk to someone who cares
- to be kept up to date when supplies are interrupted
- recorded messages when supplies are interrupted
- text messages following restoration
- us to recognise and help them if they have a vulnerability
- New Connections quotations to be clear and easily understandable
- a quick turnaround for quotations for New Connections work



What we have done

We have listened to our customers and highlighted areas to improve our performance, processes, communication and engagement. The actions we have taken as a result of this research are:

Introduction of Customer First model

We want to make sure everyone in our organisation works together to get the best resolution for the customer.

We implemented **Customer First** in February 2011.

This is a model where:

- we have blended our workforce, bringing key experts into our call centre, to ensure we have all skills on hand to assist the call taking agent on the first call.
- we have floor walkers in our call centre, listening in to calls in real time, ensuring we are directing the right support to the agent at the right time.
- our complaints agents are an integral part of the team, ensuring that where a customer has a complaint this is resolved as quickly as possible and that lessons are recorded.
- we hold regular "live learning sessions" where our employees get together to review a customer's experience and the part they played. The customer's journey is discussed in a positive environment to learn lessons and share experiences. Learning outcomes are subsequently built into coaching plans.
- We have a System integration project, delivering in March 2012 (Real Time Systems), which will allow all of our staff to operate from one system from Control Rooms through to Call Centre. This will allow us to update messages for our customer as soon as a network alarm is received.
- Following customers telling us that they did not want us to write explaining why a supply interruption happened, we have stopped this process, but we continue to text customers following restoration, as customers told us they welcomed this service.
- We continuously train employees to recognize vulnerable customers when they call, ensuring we cater for their needs during the supply interruption.
- We have improved our processes, as part of Customer First, to ensure where customers have more than one supply interruption our teams are mobilised from the initial call to resolve this quickly and permanently for the customer.
- We are currently reviewing our New Connection Quotations, to understand how we can make this easily understood and clear for the customer.
- We are reviewing the quotations process to ensure we have a quicker turnaround for customers and will be implementing an online quotation tool during 2011.

We have seen improvement in:

- our complaint turnaround times
- our response time to faults
- the flow of information back to our customers

Engagement with Councils – and our vulnerable Customers

We are working closely with local councils to ensure we provide the best possible service to our most vulnerable customers. Where we are likely to have customers off supply for 6 hours or more we inform the Council's Emergency Planning Officers who in turn share information with us on vulnerable customers in the impacted areas. With this partnership approach we are better placed to get support to customers (such as hot meals) in a time of supply interruption.

We are also able to update our records to ensure we have the relevant information on our database.

Enhanced approach to stakeholder engagement

As mentioned before, we consulted with a number of customer groups to understand how our customers feel about our service and to find out what our customers want from us.

In 2011 we are continuing this research with a survey, currently underway, that will engage with the following stakeholder groups:- Local Councils; Parish Councils; Environmental Interest Groups; Emergency Services; Large Businesses; Charities representing vulnerable groups; MP's; MSP's and members of the Welsh Assembly.

Making it easier to get in touch

As part of our focus groups we asked customers for ideas on how we could make it easier to get in touch with us and they supplied a number of suggestions.

- a 'glow in the dark' sticker making our contact number visible in the dark. These have been produced and are being distributed.
- a postcard showing our phone number and answering the key questions customers want to ask us during a supply interruption. These will be distributed across our areas over the coming months.
- Some of the local councils have agreed to incorporate our contact details and advice on what to do in a power cut into their magazines, during 2011.

Language line

In 2011 we introduced a Language Line for customers whose first language is not English. This allows a live 3 way conference call between the customer, our employee and a professional interpreter, providing the customer with a much better level of service.

Employee engagement

We recognise that every employee needs to be engaged and motivated if we are to deliver excellent service to our customers.

We have introduced six Big Goals, two of which are "Engaged Motivated People" and "Complete Customer Satisfaction".



Our aim is to ensure that every employee knows where they fit into the organisation and what they need to do on a daily basis to deliver for our customers. We conduct regular employee surveys to ensure we understand how our employees are feeling and to gather feedback on what improvement initiatives employees feel could be introduced.

We have also introduced Customer Champions in every department across our business to actively seek examples of good and bad customer service to ensure these are talked about, communicated and lessons learned.

Internet

We are currently developing our website to allow customers to gain updates online, we will also be introducing an iPhone/Smart Phone App. At present customers can phone our call centre and obtain an update via our messaging platform, however, we want our customers to be kept informed via a number of channels.

When these enhancements are delivered later this year customers will be able to obtain updates on any fault in their area and the expected restoration time.

Online community

We are currently developing an Online Community which will be launched during May 2011. This will allow us to communicate with our customers in new and innovative ways. It is our intention to recruit customers into our community allowing us to gain real time feedback on the service we provide. We will pose questions and polls to find out what our customers think and they will be able to "chat" and give us feedback on areas of our service.

The community site will also be used to keep customers informed about our investment programmes and work planned in their areas.



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Evidence

Engagement with Councils – and our vulnerable Customers

Hogmanay distress

On New Year's Eve we received details of a fault impacting on 8 customers. Recognising that no one wants to be without power, particularly at that time of year, we immediately contacted customers involved by phone and also arranged for an onsite assessment.

During our calls, we were able to establish that one customer in particular had very severe medical conditions and that additional support was urgently required. We contacted the local council who arranged short-term care and additional assistance for this high priority case.

As some of the customer's electrical equipment was damaged by the fault, we also provided replacements for some of the damaged electrical equipment that day.

Follow up visits by field engineers over the next few days ensured customers experienced no further problems.

Engaged Motivated People

Two SPEN employees came up with the idea of developing the SP Energy Networks' website to educate customers and contractors on safe digging practices. They developed the idea themselves and drove this through from concept to delivery. Having decided how the site should look and developing all of the training material themselves, they now want to add videos to the site to make the information easy to understand and more engaging.

Our contractors tell us that the materials are so good that they are now using these materials to train their staff. The result of this is that we continue to reduce Third Party Damage to our network, therefore reducing interruptions to customers' supplies.



<http://www.spenergynetworks.com/safety/saferexcavations/>

Customer First

Working with our community in Torphichen

In January, 42 customers in Torphichen were affected by an ongoing fault. Our Customer Liaison Officer went onsite to speak to all customers. Once there we were able to give an update on how the repair process was progressing and what work was required, for safety reasons, prior to reconnecting supplies.

Following discussion with our Field Engineers it was soon apparent that the repair would run later than expected. Recognising it was almost time for dinner and that customers would be distressed with further disruption and without cooking facilities, we contacted a local hotel to provide a 2 course evening meal. We also provided transport to the hotel, where required.

Working with our community in Kippford, Dumfriesshire

The residents of Kippford, Dumfriesshire experienced short interruptions to their supplies last year. We recognised this was inconvenient and frustrating for customers in the area and arranged to meet with residents at a community meeting to explain what had happened and why. Around 35 residents attended the meeting and the Zone Manager for Dumfries gave a presentation showing how the network for the area is fed and why the interruptions occurred.

Mary Hesketh, the Chair of the Community Council, said "the information provided was very well explained and easy to understand, the SP Energy Networks staff were very positive and willing to listen to the points the residents had to make and all questions not answered on the night were taken away and residents received individual responses. The residents felt the meeting went well and were pleased to talk to someone face-to-face".

The problems in Kippford have now been resolved to the residents satisfaction.

Metric	Trend	09/10	10/11
Customer Satisfaction SPD	↑	11th	4th
Customer Satisfaction SPM	↑	10th	3rd
Complaints < 1 day	↑		35%
Complaints > 31 days	↑		12%
Re-opened Complaints	↑		3%