# Easton Utilities



**Municipal Utility Company in Easton, Maryland**

➢ Electric generation and distribution

➢ Natural gas

➢ Water and wastewater

➢ Cable television, internet and VoIP phone service

➢ IT Professional Services



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# Easton, Maryland

- ➢ Located in Talbot County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland

- ➢ Federal government retirement community

- ➢ Gateway to the beaches

# Easton Utilities IT

- ➢ A Unique Perspective: Utility IT and also Consultant
- ➢ IT Professional Services
    - ➢ 50+ National Clients
- ➢ Support Other 6 Core Businesses
- ➢ Nestled between IOUs, Coop and Large Telecoms
    - ➢ BGE
    - ➢ Delmarva Power
    - ➢ Choptank Electric
    - ➢ Atlantic BB
    - ➢ Comcast

# What Business Are We Really In?

➢ Electricity is a Commodity!

➢ Our Customers want SERVICE!

➢ If we don't give our customers what they want... someone else WILL!

➢ Let's THRILL our Customers!

# Agenda

- ➢ Let's Take Inventory…
  - ➢ What do our customers want?
  - ➢ What delivery mechanisms do we have?
  - ➢ What data do we actually have?
- ➢ Opportunities to Thrill
  - ➢ The Human Touch
  - ➢ Self-Service: Customer Portal / Native Apps
  - ➢ Stay Connected: Notification Engine
  - ➢ Bill Template
  - ➢ Targeted Communications
  - ➢ Cybersecurity
- ➢ Takeaways – Public Power has much to offer!

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# What Do Our Customers Want?

➢ Reliability

➢ Information / Transparency

➢ Control

➢ Communication

➢ Low Prices

➢ Answers & Solutions NOW

➢ To Be Green

➢ The Human Touch

➢ Data Security

➢ Accuracy

➢ Convenience

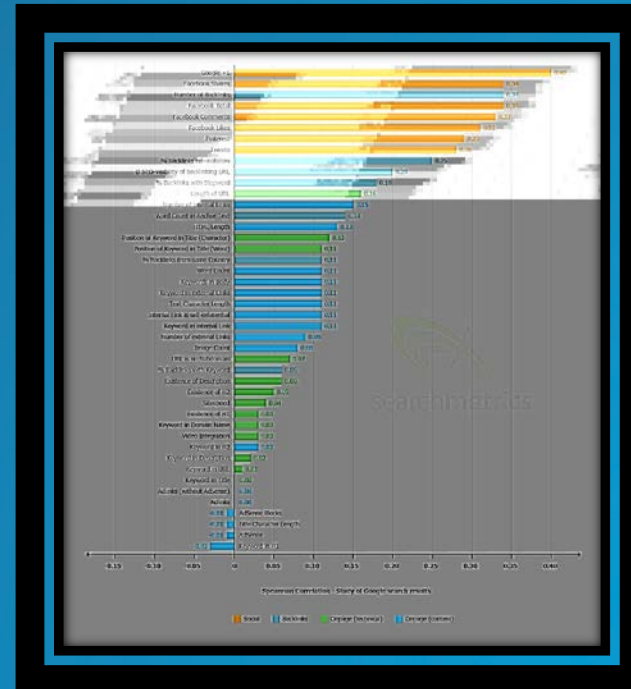Life. Made better.™

# What Delivery Mechanisms are Available to Us?

➢ Social Media

➢ Customer Portal / Native Apps

➢ Text Messaging

➢ Email

➢ Phone

➢ Robo Calls

➢ Paper Bill Presentation / Collection Notices

➢ Mailings

➢ Face-to-face

  ➢ In the field

  ➢ In the office

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# What Data Do We Actually Have?

- ➢ Consumption Data / Usage Patterns

- ➢ Payment History

- ➢ Conversation History / Number of Calls

- ➢ Collection Letters

- ➢ Service Order Requests

- ➢ Customer Portal Usage

- ➢ Outage Statistics

- ➢ Behavioral Patterns
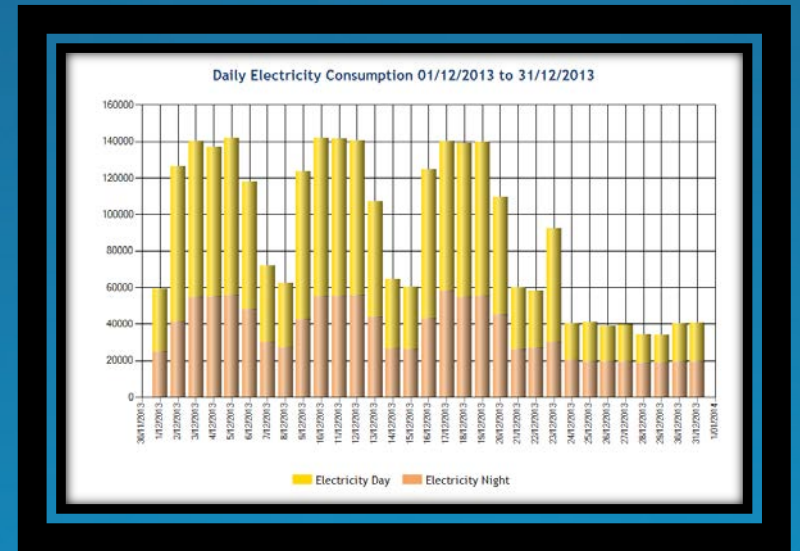




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# The Human Touch: Aim to Thrill

➢ Our Service Providers Want to Thrill!

➢ Put Information at your employees fingertips!

➢ Call Center Screen Pops

➢ Computer Telephony Interface

➢ Customer Service Toolbelt

➢ Management Toolbelt

➢ Data Integrity and Error Detection

➢ Alerts / Notifications / Monitoring
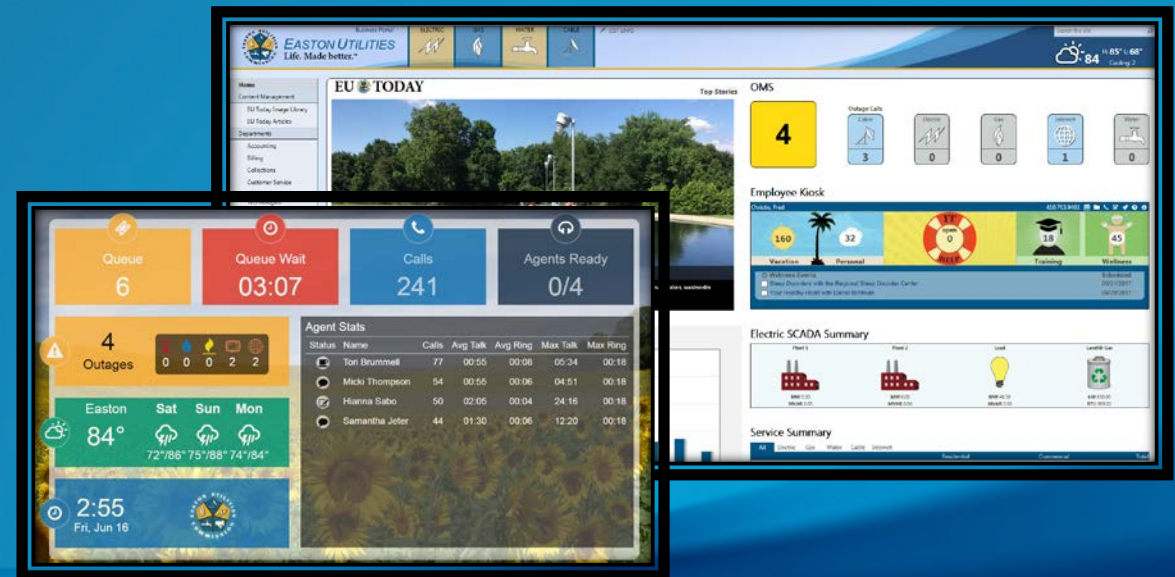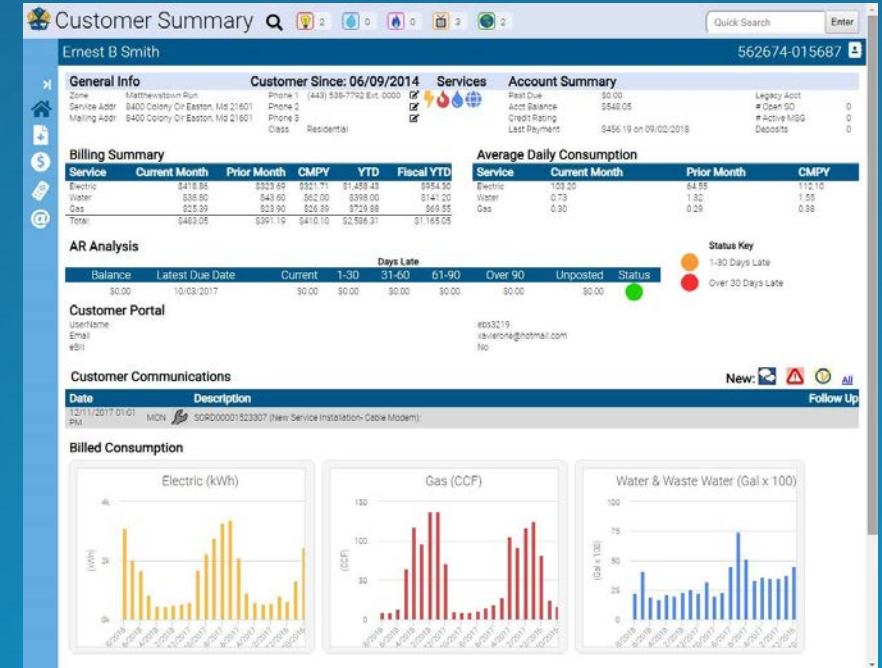
# The Ultimate Control Panel: Customer Portal

➢ **Customers Take Control**

  ➢ Make Payments on Their Terms

    ➢ CC, eChecks, PayPal, etc.

    ➢ Select Bill Date

    ➢ Auto Pay

    ➢ Quick Pay

  ➢ Paperless Billing

  ➢ Request Service

  ➢ Report an Outage

  ➢ Reset Cable Modems / Set Top Boxes in home

  ➢ Set Alerts / Notifications

  ➢ Update Billing Address, Email Addresses, Phone Numbers

# The Ultimate Dashboard: Customer Portal

➢ Customers Want Information

  ➢ Account Balance and Payment History

  ➢ Outage Status

  ➢ Consumption / Usage

    ➢ Historical Trends

    ➢ Interval Data

    ➢ Demand Peaks

    ➢ Average Daily Consumption

    ➢ Consumption vs. Degree Days

    ➢ Bill Projections

    ➢ Comparisons to Similar Customers / Neighbors

  ➢ Alerts / Notifications

  ➢ Service Order Scheduling and Status



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# Customer Portal: Web vs. Native Apps

- ➢ Customers Want Mobility and Convenience
- ➢ Native Apps
    - ➢ Effective in Rural Service Territories with Spotty Broadband
    - ➢ More Expensive to Maintain
    - ➢ Greater Control of Mobile Device Feature Set
- ➢ Web Apps
    - ➢ Less Expensive to Maintain
    - ➢ Device Agnostic
    - ➢ Same Interface, All Devices and Computers



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# Keeping in Touch: Notification Engine

- ➢ Automated Queueing System for Customer Communications
  - ➢ Modes of Communication
    - ➢ Email
    - ➢ Text Messaging
    - ➢ Robo Calls
  - ➢ How it Works
    - ➢ Send Command via RESTful Web Service
    - ➢ Command Format: Customer, Message, Mediums
    - ➢ Command is Queued and Processed ASAP
    - ➢ Get the Message Out: Interfaces with Exchange Servers, Text Messaging and Robo Call Services
    - ➢ Conditional Logic for Call Retries
    - ➢ All Actions Logged for Future Reference / Mining / Reporting
  - ➢ Designed for Both Employee and Customer Communication
  - ➢ Demo: Rapid Response

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# Notification Engine - Applications



- Customer Must Opt-In
  - Paperless Billing – Bill is Ready
  - Payment Receipt
  - Outage Response Communication and Restoration
  - Credit Card Expiration Warning
  - Preset Consumption Threshold Alert
  - Service Order Appointment Reminder
  - Service Order Completion Notice
  - Auto-Pay Pre-Draft Warning
  - Collection Notice
  - Peak Demand Days / Load Reduction Incentives
  - Maintenance Alerts

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# The Bill Template: Another Opportunity to Delight

- ➢ Customers Biggest Complaints
  - ➢ Too Complicated
  - ➢ Too Much Information

- ➢ Bound by Regulations
  - ➢ Government Requires Transparency

- ➢ Solution: Bite-Sized Chunks
  - ➢ Front page or First page
    - ➢ High Level Information
    - ➢ Communicate Utility and Community Events
    - ➢ Communicate Training Events
    - ➢ Calming White Space
  - ➢ Second page or back page
    - ➢ Regulatory information
    - ➢ Line Item / Rate Details



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# Use Data to Target Communications

- ➢ Offer Customer Portal Training
  - ➢ non-Portal users
  - ➢ High Maintenance Customers
  - ➢ Foot Traffic Customers
- ➢ AutoPay and Budget Billing to Late Paying Customers
- ➢ eCheck AutoPay to Customers Who Mail in Checks
- ➢ Usage Alerts to Largest Consumers
- ➢ Community Solar to Customers Who Inquired About Green Programs
- ➢ Expose Interval Consumption Data to Commercial Customers
  - ➢ Via Customer Portal
  - ➢ Via Web Service Push/Pull

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# CyberSecurity – Protecting Customer Information

- ➢ As Important as Keeping the Power On

- ➢ PCI (Payment Card Industry) Compliance

- ➢ Customer credit card information should not be stored on-prem

- ➢ All sensitive customer information must be encrypted

- ➢ All customer phone recordings must be encrypted



Protect Critical Customer Data

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# Takeaways – Public Power Has Much to Offer

- ➢ Thrilling Customer Service: Give Them What They Desire!

- ➢ Provide Direct Contact Service Providers World-Class Tools

- ➢ Provide a World-Class Customer Portal

- ➢ Notification Engine: Stay in Touch

- ➢ Data-Driven Targeted Offerings

- ➢ Protect Your Customers' Sensitive Data

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# Questions ??

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