



NJUG CASE STUDY

CASE STUDY 22: Customer Experience in the Community (CEC)

The National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) is the UK industry association representing utilities on street works issues. The 37 companies¹ we represent work to deliver gas, electricity, water and telecommunications to both individual consumers and UK plc.

NJUG members need to continue to drive forward further improvements. We have therefore developed the NJUG Vision for Street Works, which revolves around six main principles:

1. Safety is the number one priority
2. Damage to underground assets is avoided
3. Utilities work together and in partnership with local authorities to minimise disruption
4. Utilities deliver consistent high quality
5. Utilities maximize use of sustainable methods and materials
6. Street works in the UK are regarded as world class

This case study is an example of NJUG delivering on these principles and turning the vision into reality

Overview:

Traditionally, operational activities have focused on success in the product market place by examining the physical aspects of products and services. More recently operational managers have shifted their emphasis to creating added value for their customers. The current trend in operational management is to create positive engaging and lasting experiences for their customers. The competitive battleground of differentiators is also changing. Currently it is customers' emotional attachment with the brand, the brand community and the brand company via customer experience that is gaining importance and is imperative for the delivery of a quality interaction.

Delivering customer experience in the community (CEC) goes beyond mere customer satisfaction and it is a relatively new concept recently introduced into Three Valleys Water (TVW), working collaboratively with Stanmore Quality Surfacing (SQS) to deliver zero complaints and exemplary quality in the reinstatement process, an area which required significant improvement. To compete successfully in this customer experience territory TVW and SQS are systematically applying the principles and tools of CEC to generate, strengthen and sustain enduring customer loyalty.

Case Study

Analysing total customer experience in the community:

TVW and SQS have identified several common features from literature and case studies to develop their own definition of CEC. The research came from the following companies: Disney World, The American Girl Place, Avis Car Rental, Apple and Blyth Industries. The features are:

- Anticipating and fulfilling customer needs and wants better than competitors

¹ NJUG's current members are Energy Networks Association (representing electricity and gas), Water UK (representing all water and wastewater companies), National Grid, Openreach, and Virgin Media. Our associate members are Clancy Docwra, Skanska McNicholas, Balfour Beatty, Morrison Utility Services, Morgan Est, NACAP, PJ Keary, First Intervention, Carillion, Enterprise, Laing O'Rourke and AMEC. Including members through trade associations, NJUG represents thirty-seven utility companies.

- Providing real customer experiences
- Experiences as distinct operational offerings
- Experiences as interactions
- Experiences as emerging memories
- Providing real emotional experiences

All of these qualities generated customer experiences that were beyond physical attributes such as quality, quantity and safety. They also triggered an experience of meaning, value, a friendly caring service, belongingness and brand community.

Understanding emotive versus tactile performance:

For the customer and CEC, reinstatement is one of the most important aspects of the job and it's imperative they get it right first time. The key here is the balance of tactile performance and the physical quantities of the interaction, such as consistency, availability or convenience. These are represented and measured by metrics such as response times. Also gaining prominence are emotive performances describing the intangible subjective ways in which customers are treated, such as being seen as genuine or empathetic. These attributes present the greatest opportunity for differentiation largely due to lack of operational attention given to them and TVW are learning to treat emotional experiences as a distinct positive offering through CEC.

Creating customer experience in the community:

In order to create and deliver the step changes, a new system and process was introduced by SQS to part of the TVW area of supply on a repair and maintenance contract called **“On Track”**. This tracks every task that has excavation carried out on it from when the dig and fix teams arrive and complete their site set-up to when the site is cleared and the job closed. Generally five images per task are taken by the teams on site via a camera phone and the image is posted onto a web based site within five seconds. Every community within TVW and SQS has access so each job is tracked at every stage in real time. Current volumes of tasks average out at 1200 jobs per month.

The success of their strategy is conveyed by the fact that TVW now only receive approximately five complaints a month on average. Also 100% of tasks requiring same day backfill to meet the customer experience has been achieved, generally 20 tasks per day, while 95% of tasks are reinstated and site cleared on day two. Less than 1 per cent of defects have been received and less than 1 per cent Section 74 overstay charges have been incurred.

The images below show two extracts from “On Track” from a burst in Hampstead



THREE VALLEYS WATER