New Braunfels Utilities Reduces Incoming Call Volume 55%
Detected Water Leaks And Power Outage Notifications Sent Using TextPower's SmartAlerts

Business Situation
New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) owns approximately 878 miles of electric distribution lines and provides almost 4 billion gallons of water per year for nearly 30,000 customers. In the business of power and water distribution, outages and service issues are inevitable. NBU focuses heavily on keeping their customers “dynamically connected” and initially was seeking a way to proactively inform customers about power outages. They turned to TextPower to implement an integrated, automated service that would help them provide information to customers in a form that they are accustomed to using: text messaging. Recognizing TextPower’s market-leading experience with dozens of utilities nationwide, NBU was confident that it could address their needs.

Solution
TextPower was granted access to NBU’s CIS database and checked each phone number to determine whether it was a landline or cell phone. All cell phones numbers were then imported into the TextPower system and customers were sent a “welcome” text with information describing how to report outages through text message. Following the bulk opt-in, customers were immediately able to report and receive updates about power outages. The outage reports received are fed directly to the OMS via integration with TextPower. As a result, NBU now has a fully automated outage reporting system.

While the system had been initially installed to handle power outages, NBU realized the effectiveness of text communication and decided to utilize it in other creative ways such as customer-side leak alerts. NBU leverages AMI water meter read data to identify customers with continuous consumption – which can be indicative of a customer-side leak. Customers with a 24-hour consumption report are sent a friendly text message to raise their awareness of a possible leak. TextPower’s system allows NBU to embed a link in the text message that sends customers to web pages with far more information about leak detection in the home or business than they would accept in a text or phone call. All of this is done through TextPower’s web-based application, AlertManager, which is able to send mass alerts at speeds of up to 300 messages per second.

Customers have responded with “extremely positive” feedback about both these uses and incoming call volume has been reduced by 55%. Following the initial “welcome” text message there has been a 97% acceptance rate (<3% opted out of future messages).

“We’ve gotten extremely positive feedback from our customers. This has been excellent for us.”
~ Ryan Kelso
System Control Supervisor
New Braunfels Utilities
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TextPower Inc.

TextPower provides text messaging (SMS) solutions for mission-critical applications ranging from immediate communications with customers/staff to high security authentication of users. Our SmartAlerts™ platform provides utilities with tools that allow them to:

✓ 2-way text notifications of outages from/to consumers
✓ Notify consumers to curtail load in real-time with “Beat The Peak” alerts
✓ Simplify crew call-outs with text so they get the message when they cannot answer a phone
✓ Reduce costs and burden on call center or IVR when major outages occur
✓ Improve collections with real-time disconnect notices via text
✓ Integrate OMS and other systems with our MultiSpeak™ interface
✓ Easily integrate text opt-in processes with your website using TextPower widgets

New Braunfels Utilities

NBU is a municipally-owned utility that employs approximately 250 people in three lines of business: Electric, Water and Wastewater. The electric side consists of 878 miles of overhead and underground distribution lines with over 36,000 electric customers on the system. NBU operates 12 groundwater wells as well as an 8 million gallon per day surface water treatment plant with nearly 30,000 customers. The NBU Wastewater System contains approximately 375 miles of sewer mains and presently serves over 25,000 customers. The three wastewater treatment plants have a total capacity of 8.4 million gallons per day.

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