



KANSAS CITY POWER & LIGHT

KCP&L uses email to communicate with customers in a cost-effective manner, and increase enrollment in energy efficiency programs

The Company

Kansas City Power & Light (KCP&L), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Great Plains Energy Inc., is a leading regulated provider of energy-related products and services for homes, businesses, industries and municipalities in the Kansas City metropolitan area and surrounding region.

The Challenge

In recent years, energy providers have begun looking for new ways to communicate with customers as they introduce programs to help manage costs and use energy more efficiently. KCP&L is committed to helping its customers through initiatives designed to supply its community with clean, reliable and affordable energy now and for generations to come.

KCP&L considered email as a major channel for communicating with customers about energy efficiency programs as well as making its business more effective in terms of implementing paperless billing and transactional emails. Unfortunately, KCP&L lacked sophisticated email capabilities. List accuracy was also an important issue for KCP&L as it grew its list to more than 215,000 customer email addresses. "We needed to be sure we had a clean list so we could be assured that we were reaching our customer base," said Amy Van Hall, e-service specialist, KCP&L.

The Solution

With a new focus on email as the channel to deliver communications and better engage its customer base, KCP&L began its search for an email service provider that could best fit its business requirements. After a competitive selection process, KCP&L chose Silverpop Engage. "We selected Engage for a variety of reasons, including recommendations from other utilities, its usability and breadth of reporting capabilities, and the reputation of both its customer service organization and deliverability team," Van Hall said.

To better engage its customers, KCP&L launched a preference center where customers can opt in to any of the following emails:

- Energy Solutions for tips on using energy more efficiently
- KCP&L newsletter and information for details about the company and its customer programs
- Provide Feedback for opportunities to voice opinions about how KCP&L is doing

Once customers sign into their account, they can also use the preference center to register for Paperless Billing, which allows them to receive bills via email.

Business challenges

- Desire to launch email program to promote products and services
- Email was restricted to text only
- Need to reduce costs through the promotion of paperless billing

Benefits

- KCP&L is communicating with more than a quarter of its customer base via email
- 3X increase in the number of customers enrolling in paperless billing, without paying any incentive
- Ability to exceed program goals for its energy-efficient programs

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Amy Van Hall
E-service specialist
KCP&L

In addition, when KCP&L started using Engage it immediately addressed the list accuracy issue, initially sending out an email to subscribers as a baseline for scrubbing its list and fixing deliverability issues. Today, KCP&L continues this best practices approach to list maintenance. For example, if a bill sent via email to a paperless customer bounces, a postcard is sent through regular mail directing that person to log back on to update the email address. These customers cannot access their account without updating their email first.

The Results

Today, KCP&L communicates with more than 25% of its customer base through email, engaging its community to help promote its programs and services. For example, email has helped KCP&L correspond with customers regarding its Energy Optimizer service, in which programmable thermostats are installed in small businesses and residential homes. KCP&L remotely cycles air conditioners off and on for brief intervals on hot days when energy consumption peaks. KCP&L is using Silverpop Engage's segmentation capabilities for geo-targeting the offer for this service.

"Email is helping us exceed our goals for the Energy Optimizer program," Van Hall said. "Through email we can easily reach our target audience, which has resulted in a backlog of appointments for this program for the next four months."

Email has also helped KCP&L become much more efficient with signing customers up for Paperless Billing. "We're providing a convenience to our customers while creating a cost savings for the company," Van Hall said. "We've calculated the cost to KCP&L for every person who chooses to receive bills through the postal service. Communicating to customers through Silverpop Engage allowed us to sign up more customers for paperless billing in one month than we have in any other month in the program's six-year history, representing a significant cost savings for KCP&L."

To find out more about Silverpop's Engage solution and how it can benefit your company, please contact us toll-free at 1-866-745-8767

Visit us at www.silverpop.com