
ISGF White Paper

LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA BY ELECTRIC UTILITIES FOR EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to highlight the advantages social media can provide for electric utilities for better communication with their customers. About 500 million people in India are expected to get connected to the internet by 2018 and majority of them will use social media which can be leveraged by utilities for directly reaching out to provide outage information, updates on service restoration, new tariff plans, billing and collection alerts, receiving feedback and several other useful tips and updates. Social media is a fast-growing interaction channel between the customer and the industry. Electric Utilities being an integral part of daily life, it is imperative for them to have a strong presence in social media.

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About India Smart Grid Forum

India Smart Grid Forum (ISGF) is a public private initiative of the Ministry of Power (MoP), Government of India for accelerated development of smart grid technologies in the Indian power sector. ISGF was set up in 2010 to provide a mechanism through which academia, industry; utilities and other stakeholders could participate in the development of Indian smart grid systems and provide relevant inputs to the government's decision making.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
1. Customer Education.....	5
1.1 Demand Response	5
1.2 Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)	6
1.3 Renewable Energy Promotion	6
1.4 Electric Vehicles (EV).....	7
1.5 Energy Saving & Energy Efficiency	7
2. Outage Management System	7
2.1 Outage Handling by Utility	8
2.2 Outage Complaints by Consumers.....	8
2.3 Crisis Management	9
3. Increasing Customer Relationship	10
3.1 Customer Issues	10
3.2 Customer Behaviour/Feedback	11
4. Recruitment/Job Notification	11
5. Branding.....	12
6. Immediate Possibilities for Electric Utilities in India	12
7. Conclusion.....	17



Introduction

Internet has become the gateway to the world. Presently, with 205 million users, India has the third largest number of internet users in the world and by 2018 it is expected to grow to 500 million¹ users. With mobile phones becoming a must-have accessory (India has 930 million cell phone users), internet at the touch of a button is very much a reality. One can buy and sell just about anything on the internet - be it socks, marriage certificates, high definition TVs, guns or cornflakes. One can even meet their future spouses, crowd fund their education, find a long lost relative, learn to play an instrument, chat with the grandkids, plan a vacation, live stream a wedding to loved ones abroad, report an event, research for a PhD, seek medical advice, order food, give free advice or start a revolution, the possibilities are endless! Young India is very technology savvy, while the rest is fast discovering the power of the internet.

The Government of India is pursuing an ambitious program to build a broadband highway connecting 250,000 villages across the country in the next three years. With that rural India is also going to witness a large part of its population actively use social media platforms.

For a power utility, a call center has traditionally been the single touch-point to its customers. For utilities to be able to cope with the changing times and start excelling in their energy delivery, the customer service models are undergoing a paradigm shift. A large number of electric utilities in the US are already using social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter etc., to connect with their customers, issue outbound communications, track customer complaints and queries etc. They are also being used as effective mediums for promoting energy efficiency measures, imparting safety tips and proper usage of domestic appliances, influencing consumer behaviour and forging positive consumer relationships particularly during power outages and storm recovery efforts. However reports indicate that 48 percent² of U.S. customers believe companies need to do a better job of integrating their online and offline experiences, and over 50 percent of people surveyed in 2014 believed that local utilities should harness the real-time communications of various social media channels to share information. As of now, however, less than one percent of customers currently follow their local utilities on Twitter, but the numbers are fast increasing.

This presents a gap between current and potential capability. The entire spectrum of social media platforms available across the globe can be seen in the picture below. This is a massive amount of data that can be very effectively used by utilities to better understand their customers, their consumption patterns, aspirations and pain points.

¹ <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/internet/indian-internet-users-to-surpass-us-in-2014/article6308559.ece>

² http://www.intelligentutility.com/article/14/12/social-media-use-and-storm-response-there-value?utm_source=2014_12_05&utm_medium=eNL&utm_campaign=IU_DAILY&utm_content=133291

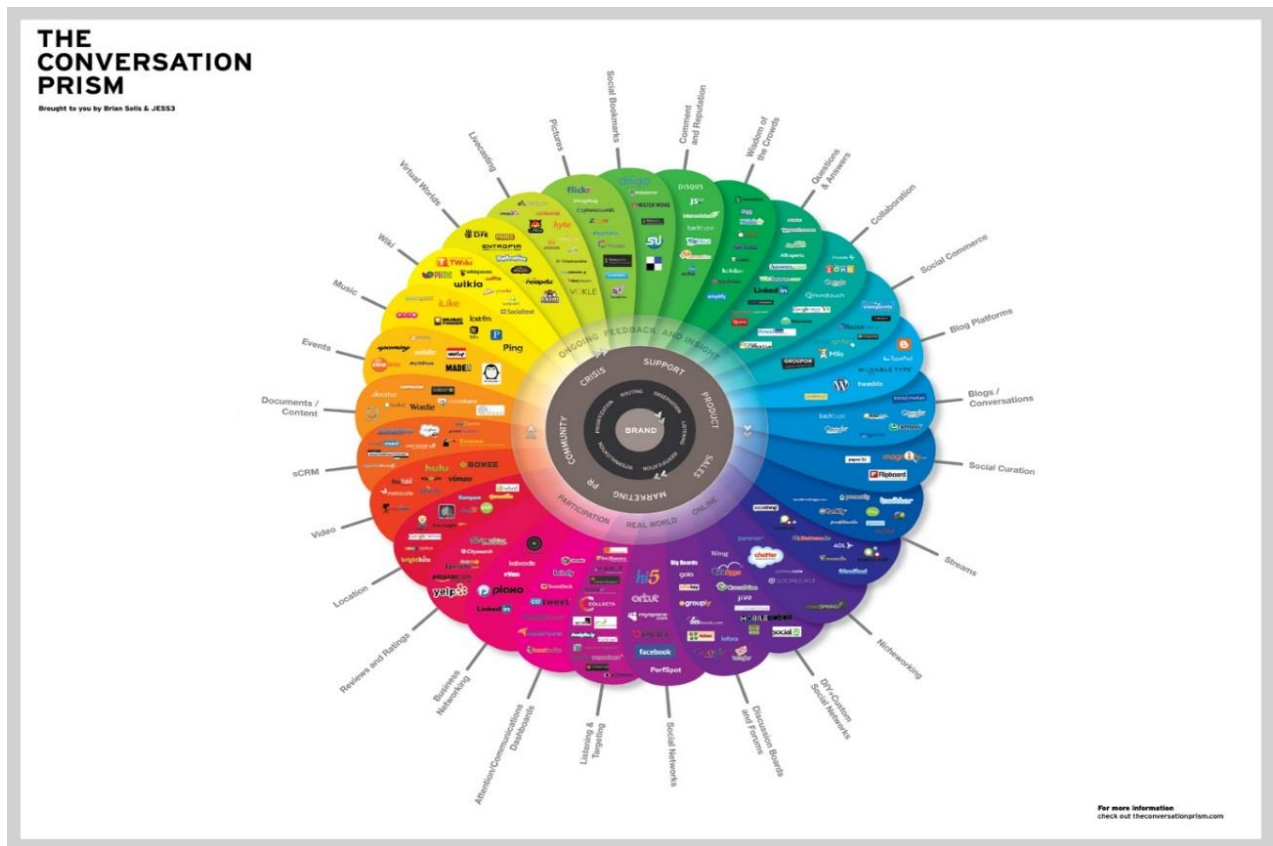


Figure 1: The conversation prism

Utilities can provide much better services by integrating social media in their outage management, crisis/disaster handling, billing and collection and other customer related issues. In addition social media can be a platform for promotion of clean energy, DSM/DR activities, tariff plans, electric vehicle usage etc. It can also prove as an effective tool for branding and promotion of good will. Some of the utilities around the world effectively using social media platforms to connect with their consumers are:

- Duke Energy, USA
- Xcel Energy, USA
- Southern California Edison, USA
- Florida Power & Light, USA
- Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E), USA
- B.C Hydro, Canada
- Ontario Energy, Canada
- Scottish and Southern energy, UK
- Npower, UK
- Good Energy, UK

Some utilities in India already have presence in social media.

Social media provides a promising platform to engage with the customer in a number of different ways – the scope of which has been explored below:

1. Customer Education

Technological revolutions are constantly transforming the industry and modernizing the present electric grid. With these new and ever changing technologies, products and services, there is a need for regular communication between utilities and customers to make them more responsive and efficient in their energy usage. Social media can be a very effective tool for this. Utilities can make customers aware of the benefits of smart meters, time of use tariff plans, renewable energy promotion programs, demand response program etc. By educating customers, utilities can ensure better acceptance, appreciation and implementation of smart technologies.



Figure 2: Tweet by Duke Energy, USA

1.1 Demand Response

45% of India's electricity consumption is by the industrial sector followed by 30% in residential and commercial sectors. This means there are lots of opportunities for reducing peak load through demand response programs.

In India, customer acceptance of dynamic pricing and other changes associated with demand response is a barrier to widespread adoption of demand response programs. The solution is effective customer education. Simple messages using social media platforms to provide meaningful insights into why the program is beneficial to customers and why it is required for reliable operation of the grid can contribute to successful implementation.

Several utilities in the US such as Pacific Gas & Electric, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Baltimore Gas and Electric etc have met with great success in using sms, emails, facebook and twitter to help consumers understand in near real time their energy use and the cost of behavioural choices they make.



Figure 3: Tweet by PG&E, USA

1.2 Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

With every new technology, there is a certain apprehension as to its benefits and drawbacks. It is the responsibility of the utility to educate the customers about them. The monitoring and control features of AMI facilitates flexibility of load to both the customer and the utility. However, concerns ranging from over radiation from the meters to rise in energy bills have had customers up in protest in several places. Utilities in the west have been forced to have an opt-out program for smart meters to handle this development. Keeping the consumer well-informed from start to finish of AMI deployments can help mitigate this. Social media platforms can be utilised for reaching out and engaging with the customer.

1.3 Renewable Energy Promotion

Social media is a promising platform for promotion of green energy. Utilities can inform customers through micro blogging sites about tax exemptions and incentives provided by the government for promotion of renewable energy. It can be used to reach people for promoting new government policies relating to net metering and feed-in tariff. In a way, social media can be very effective in turning a consumer into a “prosumer”.

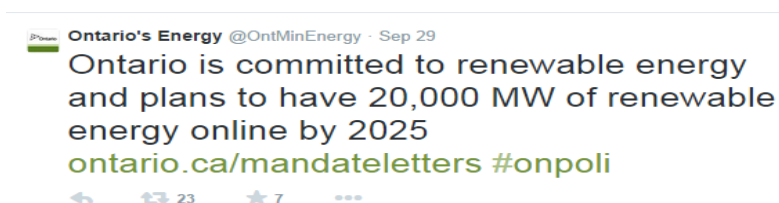


Figure 4: Tweet by Ontario Energy, Canada

1.4 Electric Vehicles (EV)

Social media can encourage customers to buy EVs by communicating the merits, charging points, tariff plans and other advantages of EV's. Promotion of EV's as virtual power plants helps in peak shaving as well as economic savings for customers. With the help of social media, a utility can also inform the customers about the location of EV charging stations available near their locality or current location.



Figure 5: Tweet by SCE, USA on EV

1.5 Energy Saving & Energy Efficiency

Utilities can encourage customers to buy energy efficient appliances through various social media platforms. Promotion of such appliances which are efficient and consume less power, reduce the consumers energy bill and also the utilities demand.

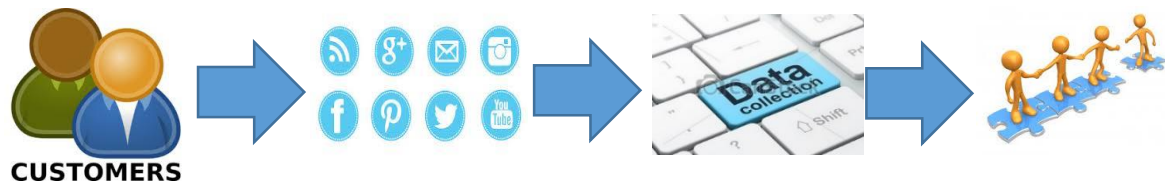


Figure 6: Facebook post by BC Hydro, Canada on Energy Saving

2. Outage Management System

By definition, outage management system refers to computer systems used by operators of electric distribution systems to assist in attending to faults and restoring power. However, utilities still struggle with performing quicker and more effective damage assessment and obtain real-time, local information about hazards such as road blockages,

lightning strikes, and broken wires as well as damage to their own equipment. Social media can play a significant role during these times.



2.1 Outage Handling by Utility

Social media can make the customer an integral part of the outage management and restoration process. A customer can report an outage on the utility facebook, twitter or other social media forums enabling the utility to take immediate action in locating the fault and restoring power. Information crowd sourced from social media when geo-tagged with customers' smart phones/social media posts, may provide a wealth of additional information to help identify hazards and prioritize activities to help improve the overall restoration and the damage assessment process.

Also, giving out regular updates on the restoration process gives the customers a sense that their problem is being addressed by the utility. Social media is however complementary and not a replacement to the interactive voice response, online complaint portals, customer care centers, e-mails etc.



Figure 7: Tweet by PG&E, USA on restoration

2.2 Outage Complaints by Consumers

Customers prefer the self-service route rather than holding on calls to report outages on a helpline number. Social media platforms can be used by customers to lodge outage complaints. A customer can click a photo of a burnt transformer or broken transmission line and can upload or send it to the utility via social networking platforms where the utility is present. Customers can also repost or share the information given by the utility with neighbours and friends. According to a study conducted by EPRI, mobile utility applications are widely used to report outages. Twitter has proven most popular among customers in lodging outage complaints.

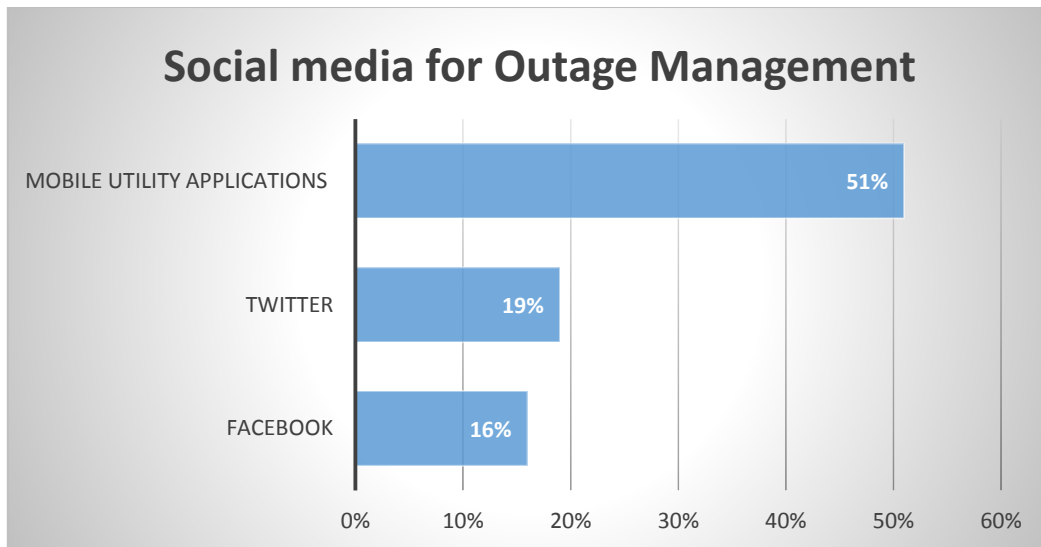


Figure 8: Social Media for Outage Management, EPRI

2.3 Crisis Management

Crisis occurs when majority of consumers are affected by power outage due to some natural calamity or major technical faults. In such situations, utilities have to be proactive in handling the situation and not allow it to become a PR disaster. Regularly sharing information on outage restoration on an as-and-when basis and assuring them that their power would be restored will help reduce some of the chaos and garner good will.

Con Edison, one of the largest power companies serving over 3 million customers in New York used twitter to talk about their restoration progress during hurricane Sandy.



Figure 9: Tweet by ConEdison on Outage

Case Study

Nashville Electric Service (NES) — Build a Community of Support³

Crisis: 2010 Tennessee Floods (April 30-May 7, 2010). 19 inches of rain in some areas caused widespread flooding and 21 deaths. Flooding caused outages for at least three days in downtown Nashville, leaving 42,000 residents without power.

Response: Unable to reach the customer service phone line, customers looked to twitter for news on restoration efforts. NES put their social media plan into effect, originally created in 2009. The Social Media Manager and PR teams worked to answer each individual tweet, and continued working for two weeks to be sure all questions were answered.

Over the years, NES had built up a community of support through social media. Negative or critical comments left on Twitter were met with supportive comments from other users. NES further developed their social media calendar in 2010 to provide ongoing communication.

3. Increasing Customer Relationship

3.1 Customer Issues

Besides calling interactive voice response (IVR) / customer care, online web portal etc., customers can rely on social media websites or mobile applications to lodge complaints anywhere, anytime on issues related to billing, brown outs, fluctuations etc.

Billing complaints are one of the critical issues to be addressed by utilities. Using social media, utilities can encourage customers to switch to e-billing and online payments.

Benefits of e-billing

- Customers can receive bill through e-mail
- Avoids unnecessary delays
- E-billing system is eco-friendly - saves paper, resources and trees. Besides huge savings in bill distribution cost
- Issues can be addressed immediately
- Notice of payment delay or declined payments can be made faster through emails

³ <http://www.exacttarget.com/blog/how-4-utility-companies-used-social-media-for-crisis-communications/>

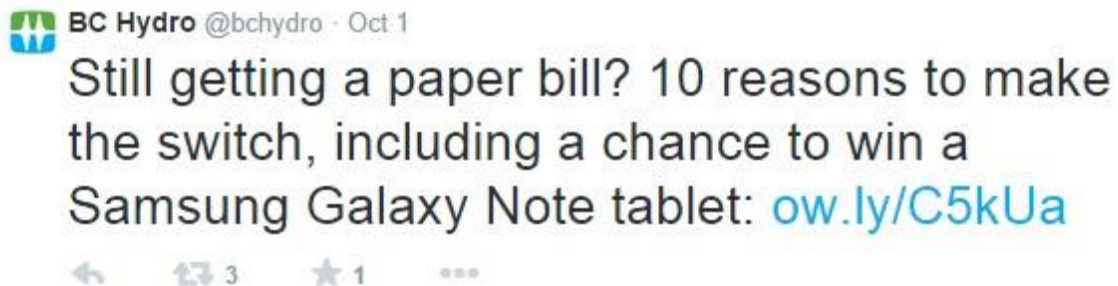


Figure 10: Tweet by BC Hydro on ebilling

3.2 Customer Behaviour/Feedback

The end-customer is the most important stakeholder in the entire value chain of electricity delivery and social media platforms are the voice of the new-age customer. For the utility, these platforms can be a very cost-effective means to understand their customer behaviour and how they perceive the utility. This can be helpful in planning customer services and DR programs with targeted pricing schemes and benefits.



Figure11: Tweet by SCE, USA asking for consumer feedback

4. Recruitment/Job Notification

Job vacancy announcements and recruitment details are generally updated on the utility website. However there are no mechanisms for candidates to reach out for clarifications and questions. Posting job openings on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook etc., also have a wider reach than traditional advertisements and improves the chances of hiring the best talent from a larger pool.



Figure 12: Tweet by BC Hydro, Canada on Recruitment

5. Branding

Social media is a very lucrative domain for branding. Resolving problems quickly, giving tips on energy saving, incentive schemes, smart grid programs, ease of payment options, social responsibility measures etc all spread a positive word-of-mouth for the utility among its customers. By engaging with their customers, utilities build trust and loyalty and therefore make ambassadors out of satisfied customers.

6. Immediate Possibilities for Electric Utilities in India

The energy sector has traditionally seen a unidirectional flow of electrons, information and money. However with breakthroughs in technology and the advent of the smart grid, a paradigm shift towards two-way communication between utilities and the end-consumers is taking place. So do with consumers becoming prosumers both electrons and money aslo started flowing in both directions. Utilities are starting to realize that in order to handle the increasing points of power injection and consumption, they will have to become smarter too.

The simplest of steps taken by utilities today is making the bill payment mechanisms easier. Earlier consumers had to stand in long queues while today there are several consumer touch points such as online bill payments, cheque/cash drop off kiosks, community billing for large gated communities, payment desks at local banks etc. Few utilities offer the facilities to customers to check their bill status online and calculate the bill online too. Utilities offer all these services in the local languages as well making it easier for the non-english speaking customers to use these platforms.



Figure 13: TNEB Web Portal, Tamilnadu

As an extension to these services, in the future the customers can be allowed to arrange for their bills to be linked to their cell phone numbers. Text messages alerts and reminders could be sent regarding payment deadlines, scheduled power cuts, outage restoration times etc. to begin with. The service can be extended to alert consumers to a Demand Response call or intimate about dynamic tariff plans.

Under the on-going R-APDRP program all state owned distribution utilities are building IT infrastructure, IT applications and automation systems. These existing systems can be used to collate cell phone numbers and email addresses of customers in the R-APDRP

towns. This can be achieved by simply introducing this service in the next few billing cycles and requesting customers to submit the information.

Electricity theft is a huge problem in India, and several of our utilities have come up with innovative methods to curb the menace. KSEB, Kerala offers incentives for reporting power thefts while MSEDCL, Maharashtra came out with this catchy slogan that offers the customers the chance to win a million rupees just by reporting a theft! All reports can be filed online, with the identity of the individual reporting the theft kept confidential of course.

Vij chori Kalawa Aani Lakho rupaye Milawa*
 Inform Power theft & win millions!!!

- Energy thieves are our social enemies Should we allow them to harm us?
- Only with your support we can succeed better.
- Are your neighbours stealing electricity? Why don't you inform us?
- Inform us & win cash prize.
- Confidentiality of information is assured. Information will always remain secret.



Power theft is a nonbailable offence , choice is yours!!!!

Don't do & don't allow others to do.

Avoid doing following

- Do not use power for a purpose other than sanctioned
- Do not use power in excess of the sanctioned quantum of load
- Do not tamper with the company's meters, seals on meters, fuse box or with the service apparatus

Click here to inform us.

*conditions apply

Figure 14: MSEDCL, Maharashtra



Figure 15: Questions on Quora

Social media is becoming an increasingly popular platform to address this issue as well as can be seen in the example where a Quora user seeks information as to how to lodge an electricity theft complaint.

Even with 24x7 customer service helplines, IVR facilities and interactive webpages, sometimes a customer is unable to get across their concerns to the utility. As a result they turn to twitter, facebook, quora and other such social media platforms to express their opinions.

Electricity is a topic that is widely discussed on social media, especially in a country like ours where the outages are rampant and losses are huge. In some cases such as major power outages and power system breakdown customers look for news on restoration efforts on the internet.



Figure 16: Tweets on the Indian Power Sector

A good social media presence that addresses the customers concerns satisfactorily can do wonders for the entire sector, as the customers start to perceive the grid as reliable and starts reducing his dependency on DG and backup power. Energy saving tips and efficiency programs can also garner better attention and traction due to the sheer numbers a social media platform can reach.



Figure 17: Tweets with billing tips

At present, the print media is used to reach out to the customers. Utilities regularly give out public notices in local newspapers, often in local languages to educate the customers. Information on new tariffs, energy conservation etc are often issued as short advertisements in leading dailies.

With smart meters slowly replacing conventional meters, information bulletins detailing the benefits of the smart meter are also being released, such as the one carried out by Delhi Discoms along with the New Delhi Government.

हिन्दुस्तान
सूचना 22 अक्टूबर 2013

सार्वजनिक सूचना
पॉवर-फुल दिल्ली

मीटर केवल खपत ही रिकार्ड नहीं करता

चमकता इंडीकेटर का मतलब अनुरक्षित वायरिंग

पॉवर ऑन एलसीडी पॉवर सप्लाय चकू है

मीटर क्रमांक संख्या

टर्मिनल बाक्स

एलसीडी डिस्प्ले मुख्य मानक के लिए

जलता-डुबता संकेत ऊर्जा खपत का प्रतीक

ऑप्टिकल पोर्ट मीटर द्वारा वास्तविकता के लिए

मीटर एक्ज्यूसी की जांच करने के लिए:

- बिजली वितरण कम्पनियों के मान्यता प्राप्त प्रयोगशालाओं में या एक्स्प्रेस
- सीपीआरआई या एनपीएल मीटर टेस्टिंग प्रयोगशालाओं की सुविधा का लाभ उठाये

घरेलू आंतरिक वायरिंग सुरक्षा

घरेलू आंतरिक वायरिंग सुरक्षा के लिए:

- अपने मीटर की अर्थ लीकिंग एलसीडी की जांच करें: इंडीकेटर में लाईट नहीं तो सुरक्षित है।
- डिस्कॉम के द्वारा ईएलसीडी लगवाने की सहायता का फायदा लें और सुरक्षित रहें।

कॉल / ई-मेल / वेबसाइट / एसएमएस के माध्यम से 24x7 शिकायत निवारण

क्षेत्र	कॉल	ई-मेल	वेबसाइट	एसएमएस
दोहाद्वीय	39999707	brpl.customercare@relianceada.com	www.bsedelhi.com	5616107
दोहाद्वीय	39999808	bypl.customercare@relianceada.com	www.bsedelhi.com	5616108
दोहाद्वीय	66111912	consumercare@tatapower-dcl.com	www.tatapower-dcl.com	56161

बीएसईडी पर विप्लव निवारण

BSES
BSES Yamuna Power Limited

TATA POWER-DCL
TATA POWER DELHI DISTRIBUTION LIMITED
A Tata Power and Delhi Government Joint Venture

BSES
BSES Rajdhani Power Limited

BSES
BSES Yamuna Power Limited

Door Step Service
Avail our services from the comfort of your home

BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) introduces Door Step Service (DSS). Now you can avail a host of services from the comfort of your home. Just get in touch and our team will assist you. No waiting in queues or repeat visits to our offices.

What are the services that I can avail on DSS?

You can apply for a host of services including: Category/Tariff/Name change, New Connection, Load enhancement/reduction, Address correction etc.

How do I apply for it?

Simply dial 399-99-808, press option #4 and request for DSS or log onto www.bsedelhi.com Customer Service

What happens after I apply?

A BYPL representative will visit your residence to facilitate you to complete necessary documentation and formalities.

What do I do incase, I need further assistance?

In case of further assistance, please call 399-99-808 or email at bypl.customercare@relianceada.com

Call 399-99-808
Press option #4

Call 399-99-808

Call 399-99-808

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI
MONDAY, MAY 22, 2011

PUBLIC NOTICE

At your service 24X7

We remain alert and sensitive to your needs

- Delhi Power distribution companies are committed to provide reliable power supply to over 42 lakh customers
- With temperatures touching 46 degrees Celsius, the summer of 2013 is already turning out to be unprecedented
- Though, Delhi discoms are fully geared up to meet the city's power demand, at times our efforts are constrained due to factors, many of which are beyond our control
- However, we remain alert and seek your support, while we attend to your calls. In case you have any electricity supply related issues, you can reach us in multiple ways

	BRPL	BYPL	TFDDL
Call 24 x 7	399 99 707	399 99 808	666 04 040
SMS	Type BSESUP <SPACE> NC <SPACE> Your 9 digit CA # and SMS to 5-01-01-07	Type BSISYP <SPACE> NC <SPACE> Your 9 digit CA # and SMS to 5-01-01-08	Type TFDDL <SPACE> NC <SPACE> CA number and SMS to 56161
IVRS	Call 399 99 707 from your registered contact no. and press 1 for 'no supply' and choose option 2 for IVRS based services. Your request will be automatically registered. If you are not calling from your registered no., please punch your CA/CRN no. for registering the request.	Call 399 99 808 from your registered contact no. and press 1 for 'no supply' and choose option 2 for IVRS based services. Your request will be automatically registered. If you are not calling from your registered no., please punch the CA/CRN no. for registering the request.	Call 666 04 040 from your registered contact no. and press 1 for 'no supply' and choose option 1 for registering the request. Your request will be automatically registered. If you are not calling from your registered number due to change of your request, in case you are calling from an area where fault restoration is in process, then the message will be played automatically on IVRS with estimated time of restoration.

BSES
BSES Yamuna Power Limited

BSES
BSES Rajdhani Power Limited

TATA POWER-DCL
TATA POWER DELHI DISTRIBUTION LIMITED
A Tata Power and Delhi Government Joint Venture

Transforming Delhi

A joint venture of Tata Power and Delhi Government

www.bsedelhi.com

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www.bsedelhi.com

Figure 18: Measures being taken by Indian utilities to reach out to their consumers

BSES
BSES Yamuna Power Limited
Regd. Off: Shakti Nagar Building, Kirti Vihar, Delhi-110022

Offering electric vehicle owners largest network of charge ports in East & Central Delhi

East Delhi

1. 66 KV Gokul, IPE Extension, Delhi-110092 (Behind Kirti Vihar Bus Depot)
2. Mayapuri Vihar Phase-3 division office, Vasundhara Enclave (Near Somvi Vihar School)
3. 66 KV Chilla Grid, Mayapuri Vihar Phase-1 (Near Riverside Club)
4. 33 KV Kankardoma Grid, Red Building, Next to Shakti Kirti Building, Kankardoma, Delhi-110092 (Opp Kankardoma Court)
5. 33 KV Preet Vihar Grid, Hargobind Enclave, Delhi-110092 (Near Railway Reservation Centre)
6. 66 KV Tahirpur Grid, Tahirpur (Opp Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital)
7. 66 KV Dhand Garden Grid (Opp Deer Park, Dhand Garden)
8. Sub-station No-7, IPE Extension, Delhi-110091 (Near AVB Public School)
9. 33 KV GT Road Grid, Main GT Road Shakti Nagar, Delhi-110095 (Near Hind Pocket Bridge)
10. 66 KV Vihar Vihar Grid, Road No-55, Near Surya Nagar Gas Station
11. 66 KV Loni Road Grid, Near CNG Pump, Main Loni Road, Delhi-110093
12. Technical Training Centre, Patparganj Industrial Area
13. 11 KV sub-station No-4, CGHS, IPE Extension
14. 66 KV Bhagathi Grid, Karawal Nagar, Wazirpur Road, Near Gokul Police Station
15. 33 KV Deshpur Grid, Near MCD office, Subhash Park, Delhi-110032
16. 66 KV Durgapuri Grid, Vasundhara Enclave, Near Preet Vihar Apartments
17. 66 KV Ghonda Grid, Main Loni Road, Delhi-110093 (Near Delhi Transport Authority)
18. Sub-station at BB block, Preet Vihar, Opp. Preet Vihar Police Station
19. Sacha Vihar meter testing lab, Vihar Vihar (Near JSC market)
20. Substation building, main road, Sacha Vihar, Delhi-110092 (Opp Jagti Enclave Gate)
21. 66 KV Kirti Vihar Grid, Mayapuri Vihar Phase-2, Delhi-110091 (Near Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital)
22. OTR hospital sub-station gate no-10, OTR campus, Delhi-110098 (Opp Ramita Ground)
23. Corporate Annexe office, CBD-3 (Central Business District Shakti Nagar), Kankardoma, Delhi-110032 (Opp Agarwal Fundy Mall)

Central Delhi

1. IPE Extension Grid, Near PWD Y-Shaped Building, IT Vihar Minar Building
2. Shankar Road OMM Office, Shankar Road (Near Sanjay Chaudhary Mandir)
3. 33 KV GB Pant Grid, adjacent to GB Pant Hospital, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, New Delhi-110002
4. 33 KV Media Khan Grid, Ram Kumar Marg, Moti Khan
5. 66/33 KV Shakti Park Grid, Kirti Vihar
6. 33 KV Preet Vihar Grid, Near Preet Vihar Police Station, New Delhi-110095
7. 33 KV DMS Grid, Adjoining DMS plant, Near Shakti DTC Bus Depot, Delhi-110098
8. 10-B Rajendra Place, Near Patel Auto workshop, Patel Nagar

Helping Delhi's Green Drive...



Welcome to
-Prepaid Meter



Prepaid Meter Recharge

Prepaid Meter Online Recharge. Generate Meter recharge Token on internet and make payments through debit or credit cards.

Centralized Call Center Toll Free No : 18002003435 / 18002333435

For queries related to Online Payment Transactions, please contact
helpdesk_pg@mahadiscom.in

For queries related to Prepaid Application, please contact
prepaid_support@mahadiscom.in

Figure 19: Measures taken by Indian utilities

Several Indian utilities have a Facebook presence, for e.g. KSEB has a Facebook page with 5640 likes; UHBVN has an fb page with 39 likes; TNEB has an fb page with 5019 likes. While the pages are not particularly used to make complaints or even actively managed and monitored by the utility, the utility names have generated enough interest among the community. A sure sign that these social media platforms can be effectively used to reach out to the consumer in a more powerful way than ever possible before.

Having a social media presence also means being under the scanner constantly. Utilities are held accountable. If a customer affected by a transformer outage tweets about his problem, the chances of it getting shared across a wider spectrum of people are very high. The common interest and sometimes even outrage that it generates could even escalate the situation into driving people onto the streets to protest against the recurring power cuts. At the same time, a utility can reach out to its customers and say "hey look at all the good work we are doing in your area", thereby building a community of support. An example of how BSES in Delhi reached out to tell its customers the great job they are doing is depicted in the ad they brought out in the newspapers.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Why Delhi's heart never misses a beat!



In 10 years, Delhi's peak power demand has increased by nearly 100% (2879 MW to 5642 MW), yet we manage reliable power supply to the city

Examine the facts since 2002

- Customer base increased by 80% from 24.51 lakh to over 42 lakh
- Delhi's per capita consumption at 1651* units / annum is more than twice the national average
- Generation and transmission costs have increased by about 300%
- Retail tariff has risen by only around 65%
- Revenue gap of Delhi discoms is in excess of Rs 19,000 crores**

Today, discoms' revenue (as per the approved DERC tariff) is barely sufficient to meet the overall power costs. Despite this yawning imbalance, Delhi discoms have worked relentlessly to meet Delhi's ever rising power demand year after year – touching an all-time high of 5642 MW*** in July 2012.

Sources: * PIB press release, August 2011.
 ** As per DERC's Statutory Advice to Delhi Government, dated February 1, 2013.
 *** Delhi SLDG website www.delhisldg.org

Tariff Comparison
 Delhi's retail power tariffs continue to be cheaper than many metros and cities

Delhi vs Metros				
Units/Month	Delhi	Kolkata	Bangalore	Mumbai
200	2.7*	5.6	3.9	4.3

*Includes government subsidy of Rs.1 upto 200 units. Source: AFRs of various states.

Delhi vs NCR Towns			
Units/Month	Delhi	Gurgaon/Faridabad	Noida
200	2.7*	4.1	3.5

*Includes government subsidy of Rs.1 upto 200 units. Source: AFRs of various states.

24X7 Grievance Redressal Through Call/E-mail/Website/SMS

DISCOM	CALL	E-MAIL	WEBSITE	SMS*
BRPL	39999707	brpl.customer@relianceada.com	www.bseddelhi.com	5616107
BYPL	39999808	bypl.customer@relianceada.com	www.bseddelhi.com	5616108
TPDDL	66111912	consumercare@tatapower-ddl.com	www.tatapower-ddl.com	56161

*Details on website

Transforming Delhi

BSES
 BSES Rajdhani Power Limited
 BSES Yamuna Power Limited
 A joint venture of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd with Govt of Delhi
 www.bseddelhi.com

TATA POWER DELHI DISTRIBUTION LIMITED
 A Tata Power and Delhi Government joint venture
 www.tatapower-ddl.com

Figure 20: Initiatives by Delhi Discoms

7. Conclusion

Unpredictable changes and circumstances can arise at any time for a utility. A key challenge for any utility is how they can handle these changes and respond to customers in such situations. Presently, communication with customers means sending a brochure in an envelope along with monthly bills or lodging complaints via phone lines during outages.

Social media platforms today give the utility the flexibility to touch the lives of customers both old and new over and beyond what are being done presently. While the developed nations actively use several platforms, India need to catch up. 1.2 billion people + telecom + internet + social media + all things cloud = world's largest social transformation era + unlimited business opportunities!