



KAUKAUNA BUILDS NEW EFFICIENCY INTO OUTAGE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

ABOUT:

Kaukauna Utilities is a community-owned power and water provider in Wisconsin. It provides water services to 7,000 people in the city of Kaukauna and electricity to 16,000 residents of the area.

CHALLENGES:

Kaukauna Utilities' legacy outage management system was highly dependent on paper record-keeping. This represented several disadvantages that could be alleviated with a modern, digital approach – personnel found themselves making multiple visits to multiple sites to resolve problems. With an overreliance on manual processes, issues were not being placed on a master list.

Lacking a quick and simple way to identify customers suffering outages, those customers were calling in large numbers to report problems, and had to sit on hold. To enable better communication while also streamlining internal workflows, Kaukauna Utilities decided on technology modernization.

SOLUTION:

The provider opted to integrate two complementary pieces of technology from dataVoice: an outage management system (OMS) paired with an interactive voice response (IVR) solution. The customer interface facilitated by these deployments, enabling employees to connect with customers across multiple channels and give them updates regarding the status and timeline of an outage, convinced Kaukauna Utilities to add these particular solutions.

Despite the worldwide disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the team at Kaukauna Utilities was still able to integrate the new technology and go live after roughly four months. By changing to remote training sessions, employees were able to get up to speed on the new solutions and transform the way they manage outages.



“Communication between us and the operational staff should make outages shorter in time duration,” said Dave Pahl, manager of generation and substations at Kaukauna Utilities on the go-live date. “We should be able to be more efficient in our roles.”

Since the utility provider is a small organization with limited staff, everybody across all departments has access to the new systems, from billing to customer service, management to operations. Linemen in the field can access the OMS web application through tablets, gaining real-time information about the issues they’re tasked with resolving, including positioning data through geographic information system (GIS) integration.

Having gone through a smooth rollout process despite the pressures of the pandemic environment, Kaukauna Utilities is now considering further deployments to add new functionality. The next priorities are key account and threshold notifications, enabling customer service personnel to reach out directly to

customers when certain amounts of power use are detected by their meters.

OUTCOMES:

The new deployment has revolutionized the way communications work for Kaukauna Utilities, both internally and externally. The OMS has enabled data sharing between team members and departments, gathering accurate information from the grid and placing it in the hands of the people who need it. This has enabled shorter outage duration and prompt restoration of service.

With an IVR to take customer calls, customers can now receive information and report issues without dealing with live operators in many cases. This allows the small team in the office to stay productive and proactive about their own duties during outages and any time of high demand.

By banishing the paper-based processes that took away from quick response times and weakened both internal and external communication, the utility provider has set itself up to be a more helpful and dependable partner to its customers, now and in the years to come.