

Sierra Pacific Power Company

Mastering the Art of Outage Reporting

WALKING IN THE CUSTOMER'S SHOES

It's 5:30 am on a cold and blustery morning. You awake to find the power out. Daylight is hours away. Stumbling toward the phone, you call to report the outage and are asked for your phone number. The system, unable to locate the outage address based on that information, now asks for ... an *account number*. Frustrated, you press zero and are put in queue for agent assistance. Meanwhile, in the call center, traffic is increasing—and so are customer wait times.

Avoiding this type of customer service scenario was one reason Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPPC) chose to implement Syntellect's speech recognition based outage reporting solution with name and address capture. Timely, accurate communication and efficient call center operations were two other driving factors for an improved self-service application.

“Implementing this system has vastly improved our ability to pinpoint outages and the customer affected. With this system, customers both report their outage and confirm their report has been received.”

CRAIG PINNEO

Manager of System Maintenance
Sierra Pacific Power Company

THE DECISION TO AUTOMATE

The decision to automate outage reporting was straightforward. Previously, customers experiencing outages would leave their phone numbers on the outage reporting hotline. Dispatchers then called the customers back to get their addresses. Further, reporting was paper-based and there was no integration to the SPPC Customer Information System.

It was clear that a robust self-service solution – supplemented by desktop applications to help visualize outages for managers, dispatchers, and call center agents – could help increase efficiency and customer satisfaction. But was entering information using touchtone the best option?



CASE STUDY overview

INDUSTRY

Utilities

CUSTOMER PROFILE

In business since 1865 with a service area covering 54,531 square miles

Provides electricity to over 1 million electric customers throughout Nevada and Northeastern California

GOALS

Develop a holistic, automated outage reporting system

Work within budgetary constraints

Accommodate significant growth in power sales

SOLUTIONS

Syntellect Communications Portal with Speech Recognition and Name and Address Capture

BENEFITS

Outage reporting goes from zero automation to 90% call completion

Increased productivity

Electronic reporting

Integration to Customer Information System

Increased customer satisfaction and 24/7 customer support



OUTAGE REPORTING - THE SPEECH ADVANTAGE

As SPPC investigated its choices, they recognized the customer focus a speech enabled outage reporting solution would provide. Adding name & address capture technology would allow customers to report outages naturally by speaking their address and/or phone number, with no need to provide an account number.

After conducting a rigorous vendor selection process, SPPC chose Syntellect to provide the self-service portion of its solution using the Syntellect Communication Portal. Today, when a customer calls SPPC to report an outage, they are requested to speak or enter the phone number of the affected service address. If the phone number is not matched with a location in the system, the customer is asked a series of questions to confirm the address and details of the outage. The information is then automatically loaded into the system where service personnel can immediately analyze the problem and dispatch workers to correct it, if necessary. A customer can even arrange for a call to confirm when the power is restored.

THE BOTTOM LINE

“We find our voice-activated system is more customer friendly and easier to use than touchtone. As a result, we’ve seen significant improvements in customer satisfaction.”

CRAIG PINNEO

Manager of System Maintenance
Sierra Pacific Power Company

RESULTS

Implementing speech automation that processes address grammars and complex postal addressing schemes can be a challenge. Syntellect’s speech services department partnered closely with SPPC, putting into place a program that took into account its unique business requirements while employing a comprehensive testing program and periodic tuning based on caller usage.

In addition to improved customer satisfaction, SPPC has achieved 90% call completion rates for automated outage reporting and has engaged Syntellect to add speech-enabled functionality to enhance its automated bill payment, move-in and move-out, and transfer transactions.

ABOUT SYNTELLECT

At Syntellect, we help our customers create, maintain and continuously improve superior end-to-end service for their customers. With over two decades of pioneering leadership and thousands of solutions deployed globally, Syntellect is a premier provider of enterprise-class contact center solutions for the utilities, financial services, government, high-technology, help desk, consumer products and healthcare industries.



VOICE



EMAIL



WEB



FAX



TASK

CORPORATE OFFICE

16610 North Black Canyon Highway
Suite 100
Phoenix, Arizona 85053

TEL 800.788.9733
WEB SYNTELLECT.COM

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Technology House
Fleetwood Park
Barley Way
Fleet, Hampshire
RG24 8WH

TEL +44 (0) 1252 61 8853
WEB SYNTELLECT.COM/INTERNATIONAL