



Account Management Transformation for SMUD

Consulting Case Study



Key Highlights

- Reorganized the account management team to better suit business customers' needs, using market research, customer segmentation, and modeling techniques
- Established a customer-focused approach to product and service delivery



Challenges

As one of the largest publicly owned utilities in the US, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) serves approximately 1.5 million residents in a 900-square-mile territory in Sacramento County and neighboring Placer County in California. SMUD owns and operates the 500-megawatt, gas-powered Cosumnes Power Plant in southern Sacramento County as well as 1 reservoir and 8 powerhouses as part of the hydro-electric Upper American River Project. SMUD is taking steps to curtail its reliance on carbon-based fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by giving customers the option to get their power from 100% green energy sources. The utility is also installing 600,000 smart meters at customer locations across its service area to help create a more efficient smart grid.

SMUD's pressing challenges include increased competition from other energy providers, particularly solar, for enterprise customers as well as the potential for changes in the regulatory environment. To prepare for these challenges, SMUD wanted to truly understand its business customers' interests, needs, and pain points. The utility also wanted to organize its key account groups to better serve customer needs and mitigate the risk of losing customers to other regions or providers.

Solution

The E Source consulting team led the effort by using a variety of market research, customer segmentation, and modeling techniques. To establish areas of focus, the team conducted discovery interviews with account managers and SMUD leadership and fielded customer gap and priority surveys. Working closely with SMUD, E Source redesigned the utility's account management organization and integrated cross-functional working groups to establish a customer-focused approach to product and service delivery. This included a new process for determining the level of service each customer needs in order to pair them with the appropriate account manager. Additionally, E Source helped SMUD identify new energy-efficiency offerings and growth opportunities in its territory.

- “ Guiding SMUD through a truly enterprisewide effort to develop holistic offerings, customer-centered products, and go-to-market strategies—and seeing what's possible within a utility environment—was very powerful and an indication of where the industry needs to head.”

—Chad Garrett, Managing Director, Analytics Consulting, E Source

Results

- “ E Source and its team of experts have been instrumental in shaping SMUD's business customer strategy going forward. The E Source team worked very closely with our Market Research staff to collect and analyze survey and customer data to utilize in their segmentation models. Their results, recommendations, and advice have been key factors in helping us design an organizational structure for our account management teams to improve engagement with our business customers and to better match our service and program offerings to their needs.”

—Ed Hamzawi, Manager, Customer Solutions, SMUD



For more information about E Source Consulting Solutions, visit www.esource.com/consulting or contact us at esource@esource.com or 1-800-ESOURCE.

