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Northern Energy Suppliers procure bespoke voice service from PageOne

Background

Established in 1932 Northern Energy Suppliers (NES) is one of the largest independent suppliers of oil and LP Gas, supplying domestic, agricultural and commercial customers across the north of England.

The company prides itself on providing excellent customer service and covers a wide geographic area including the large communities of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Durham, Teeside, Northumberland and the surrounding areas.

Challenge and Objective

As part of the health and safety code of practice for delivering LP Gas, NES is required to operate an efficient around the clock system for the reporting of gas leaks. Previously, North Yorkshire Police and the ambulance service had filtered these calls; if a customer noticed a gas leak, they would call the number on the side of the tank which went directly to North Yorkshire Police. The police service would then pass on the information to PageOne who paged the relevant details to the on-duty engineer at NES. However, due to government cut-backs, in September 2011 North Yorkshire Police announced it would no longer provide this service, giving NES just three months to find an alternative solution.

The winter months are traditionally NES's busiest period for customers reporting problems, due to many people switching on their heating for the first time. NES therefore needed to move quickly and upgrade its communication capabilities – with minimal disruption to its customers – to continue to

meet its legal obligations and ensure rapid response times for the NES on-call team in emergency situations.

Aside from speed of implementation, other key requirements for the upgrade were enhancement of the management of inbound calls and a faster and more resilient means of ensuring the correct information could be forwarded to the most appropriate engineer for resolution.

Strategy and implementation

For Northern Energy's inbound communications, PageOne developed a bespoke voice service that efficiently handles the initial process of a customer reporting a fault right through to an engineer being dispatched to rectify it. PageOne provides a single telephone number which can be used by all of NES's clients as well as the public to speak to a real person and deliver a message through to the NES duty manager by means of a pager. The duty manager then automatically escalates the message to the closest engineer with the appropriate skills, or alternatively can rectify the problem themselves.

Phil Lee, Operations Manager at NES says, 'If you have a big leak, people tend to panic and you don't want to make it confusing for anybody to report the problem. Having a single phone number printed on the side of our LP gas tanks and on all of our supporting documentation makes the process as simple as possible for everyone.'

The team at NES switched over to the tailored bespoke voice service in October 2011 and has praised PageOne for its efficient and responsive service. Phil Lee adds 'When

we found out the cuts were happening, we received three months notice and we therefore had to react fairly quickly. PageOne's service was fantastic and the new upgrade was implemented immediately'.

Outcomes

The new system means NES has been able to maintain its around the clock system for the reporting of gas leaks without the expense and difficulties of setting up and running its own 24/7 call centre.

Processes have also been streamlined and NES is able to communicate with key staff directly, allowing the person on duty to respond effectively from wherever they are. This has resulted in improved management of staff and resources and ensures gas leaks are fixed quickly and efficiently with minimal disruption.

Phil Lee concludes. 'It's quite stressful having someone on call 24/7 – I did it myself for a few years but this is a much better system. We know and trust PageOne to find solutions to our messaging challenges and this arrangement works well for both of us.'

For further information call now on:

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PageOne Case Study – Northern Energy Suppliers

Further Information

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