

Westario Power Inc.



23rd Annual Electric Utility Customer Satisfaction Survey

The purpose of this report is to profile the connection between Westario Power Inc. (Westario Power) and its customers.

The primary objective of the Electric Utility Customer Satisfaction Survey is to provide information to support discussions about improving customer care at every level in your utility.

The UtilityPULSE Report Card® and survey analysis in this report are intended to capture the state of mind or perceptions about your customers' need and wants – the information in this report will help guide your discussions for making meaningful improvements.

This survey report is privileged and confidential material, and no part may be used outside of Westario Power Inc. without written permission from UtilityPULSE, the electric utility survey division of Simul Corporation.

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Continued Satisfaction and Rise of Increased Digital Communication

Nearly two years ago, the world was caught off-guard by the COVID-19 pandemic. While it may not be over quite yet, there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel, and a “new normal” appears to be emerging. There was fallout in many industries, but the pandemic has also brought about new changes to how the world conducts its business. Face-to-face communications and even telephone have decreased as more and more people opt to serve themselves online. Comfort and willingness to make purchases online, conduct online banking, and find answers to frequently asked questions have grown across the board.

Although e-commerce growth might not be as sky-high in 2020/21, online activities will continue to expand and accelerate far more than they did before pandemic-driven shutdowns and social distancing. Businesses have been more cognizant of online growth and technologies are being improved to meet the rising demand. The surge in accelerated digital transformation is expected to continue throughout the recovery from COVID-19, and electricity customers are no exception to this overall trend. Compared to before the pandemic, more electricity customers than ever before want to communicate via electronic means (e.g., email, text) with their utility. For example, customer preference for an email or text notification for an unexpected outage has grown by over 50% from 2019.





The sped-up transition to a digital world was not expected and not without its challenges. Companies, including utilities, have been forced to make changes to their websites and ensure that they can meet customers’ changing needs and demands. Pre-authorized automated payments and e-billing have also increased in importance. Many digital options that were once considered ‘nice to have’ options have become widely expected standards. “Inbound” methods of communication are very expensive, so although challenging, especially at an accelerated pace, ensuring an effective self-service strategy can help reduce costs and ensure customers are satisfied.

Customers are showing increased comfort levels with technology, but now they are not always knowledgeable about what they can do or get online from their LDC website. Any changes or enhancements should be consistently communicated as well as be easy to navigate and understand.

To better understand the self-service impact on utilities and track this metric going forward, a new question was added this year: “Before contacting your utility, did you visit the utility website to try to resolve your issue on your own, or to get more clarity on the issue before contacting the utility?” Prior to contacting the utility, 47% of Westario Power’s customers visited the website first to try to resolve their issue on their own or get more clarity.

| Visited website to try to resolve issue on own, or get more clarity, before contacting utility | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| | Westario Power | UP Database |
| Yes | 47% | 41% |
| No | 53% | 58% |

Base: total respondents; small data sample; total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database

The “COVID halo” continues. Scores were high last year, and people's utilities were one less worry on their plates during a terrible year. Scores remain high, which is very encouraging; for example, Westario Power's satisfaction score is 95%, and ‘delivers on its service commitments to customers’ is 88%.



Base: total respondents with an opinion

Going forward, we recommend continuing your efforts toward improving online ease and contactless self-service strategies, which are necessary to maintain a positive customer experience. Despite an appetite for more self-service, this does not mean the death of traditional forms, such as telephone. What is continually changing— are the many ways in which utilities can engage with their customers. Therefore, utilities will have to offer a wide mix of options to satisfy a customer base that increasingly wants the flexibility to interact with their utility based upon their preferences and situation. The result of all of this technological advancement is that customers are more informed and connected than ever before. Customer engagement is no longer characterized by one-way, utility-initiated communication. It's now a dynamic, multi-channel, two-way communication stream.

Customer Centric Engagement Index (CCEI)

Customer engagement is the emotional connection achieved by the ongoing interactions between a customer and the organization. Highly engaged customers are far more likely to support the LDC as it responds to changes than customers with little-to-no engagement. Highly engaged customers are less likely to complain publicly about disappointing shopping experiences, choosing to resolve issues with the company directly.

| Utility Customer Centric Engagement Index (CCEI) | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| CCEI | 85% | 83% | 82% |

Base: total respondents

Westario Power has scored well on this index.



The Core Responsibilities

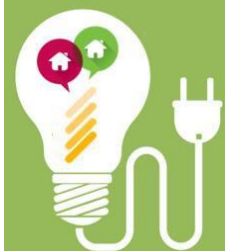
Survey respondents gave Westario Power excellent operational and representative scores.

| Core Operational Attributes | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| Provides consistent, reliable energy | 90% | 90% | 90% |
| Quickly handles outages and restores power | 88% | 87% | 87% |
| Has accurate billing | 89% | 87% | 88% |
| Has a standard of reliability that meets expectations | 90% | 88% | 88% |
| Makes electricity safety a top priority | 89% | 88% | 89% |

Base: total respondents with an opinion

| Core Customer Service Quality Attributes | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| Deals professionally with customers' problems | 86% | 84% | 84% |
| Is 'easy to do business with' | 87% | 84% | 84% |
| Customer-focused and treats customers as if they're valued | 83% | 79% | 79% |

Base: total respondents with an opinion



Customer Satisfaction

Measuring satisfaction is the bedrock, or starting point, for the creation of loyal customers. One must do the job as expected before there is an opportunity to emotionally connect in a positive way hence the need to focus on the overall customer experience. Customer satisfaction is an effectiveness measure (not an efficiency measure) on the historical relationship or delivery of services to customers.

| SATISFACTION SCORES – Electricity customers' satisfaction | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| Top 2 Boxes: 'very + fairly satisfied' | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| PRE: Initial Satisfaction Scores | 95% | 94% | 93% |
| POST: End of Interview | 94% | 93% | 92% |

Base: total respondents

When it comes to the question of satisfaction, UtilityPULSE has designed the survey so that customers are asked twice, once at the beginning – this is to garner first impressions and set the tone for the survey, and again at the end – because now the respondent has context of what is being asked and is more aptly ready to address it in an informed state of mind.

Customer Loyalty Model



Loyalty Groups – Customer Affinity

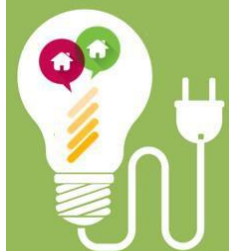
Customer loyalty (affinity) is an intangible asset with positive consequences or outcomes associated with it, no matter the industry. Data shows that Secure customers have fewer outages and billing issues than At Risk customers, i.e., those that hate the utility. In private industry, Loyalty is a behavioural metric; in a monopoly, it is an attitudinal metric.

| Customer Loyalty Groups | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|---------|
| | Secure | Favorable | Indifferent | At Risk |
| Westario Power | 35% | 17% | 43% | 5% |
| National | 29% | 17% | 47% | 7% |
| Ontario | 28% | 16% | 48% | 8% |

Base: total respondents

What is the importance of Net Supporter Score™ [NSS] for LDC's?

The NSS is a metric which measures how likely customers could **support** policy changes, actions, programs, or service changes or enhancements the LDC wishes to make. The NSS is a metric developed to help the organization, and its people, continue on a path of improving customer experiences, whether those experiences are in-person, over the telephone, online, or a combination. In a nutshell, the NSS reflects the net number of customers who have confidence in the LDC to continue to serve in their best interests.



Net Promoter Score™ (NPS)

The Net Promoter Score™ (NPS) is a popular metric that measures how likely customers are to recommend a business's products and services. Your NPS score, when compared to the benchmarks, can provide some insight into the affinity level of survey respondents towards your brand image. The NPS metric was developed by and is a registered trademark of Fred Reichheld, Bain & Company, and Satmetrix in 2003.

Westario Power has a Net Supporter Score™ (NSS) of 30%. The Ontario benchmark is 20%, and the UtilityPULSE database average is 26%.

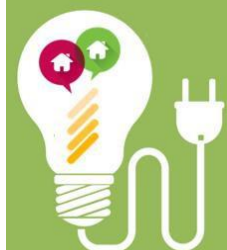
| Net Supporter Score™ (NSS) | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| | Opportunity Range <20% | Good Range 20-40% | Very Good Range 40+% |
| Westario Power | -- | 30% | -- |
| Ontario Benchmark | -- | 20% | -- |

Base: total respondents; range bands represent 2021 data and can change year-to-year

Westario Power has a Net Promoter Score™ (NPS) of 39%. The Ontario benchmark is 24%, and the UtilityPULSE database average is 35%.

| Net Promoter Score™ (NPS) | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| | Opportunity Range <5% | Good Range 5-25% | Very Good Range 25+% |
| Westario Power | -- | -- | 39% |
| Ontario Benchmark | -- | 24% | -- |

Base: total respondents; range bands represent 2021 data and can change year-to-year



Issues: Billing and Blackouts, the “Killer B’s”

The reliable and efficient delivery of electricity to homeowners and businesses is an essential service – especially during the personal and professional challenges of the past couple of years. Customers are comforted by the fact that standards for keeping the lights on and getting them up and running quickly have not deteriorated.

Problems: Blackouts

| Percentage of Respondents indicating that they had a Blackout or Outage problem in the last 12 months | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| 2021 | 48% | 39% | 36% |

Base: total respondents

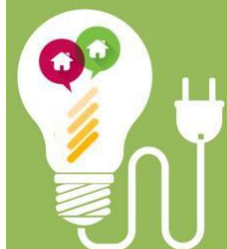
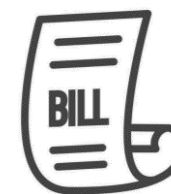


Inaccurate bills cause angst and, in some cases, anger, which is why accurate billing remains an important service imperative for all utilities. Westario Power performs billing well despite the number of changes in pricing, including the need to communicate about various financial support options.

Problems: Billing issues

| Percentage of Respondents indicating that they had a Billing problem in the last 12 months | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| 2021 | 10% | 4% | 6% |

Base: total respondents



Customer Service

Customers are more concerned about outcomes and want their issues, problems, or concerns to be dealt with in a professional, knowledgeable, and timely manner. Respondents were asked about six aspects of their more recent experience.

| Satisfaction with Customer Service | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| Top 2 Boxes: 'very + fairly satisfied' | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| The time it took to contact someone | 85% | 71% | 66% |
| The time it took someone to deal with your problem | 66% | 69% | 69% |
| The helpfulness of the staff who dealt with you | 70% | 73% | 75% |
| The knowledge of the staff who dealt with you | 70% | 76% | 75% |
| The level of courtesy of the staff who dealt with you | 79% | 85% | 88% |
| The quality of information provided by the staff who dealt with you | 68% | 79% | 75% |

Base: total respondents who contacted the utility; small data sample (n=47)

Communication channels preferred by customers to receive notice about Billing Issues (Other than payments owed)

UtilityPULSE database information tells us that the preferred channel for communications can change based on the type of issue, e.g., a billing issue versus an unplanned outage issue. Two things we believe LDCs must be mindful of:

1. The preferred communication channel is determined by the customer, not by the LDC.

2. There is a higher expectation that the LDC will become more “outbound” communications driven. UtilityPULSE data from findings in the Fall 2021 survey show the degree to which email and text are customers’ preferred or primary method for their LDC to contact them about billing issues.

| Preferred method of communication to receive notice of a Billing Issue (Other than payments owed) | |
|---|-----|
| Ontario LDCs | |
| Telephone | 45% |
| Voice Mail | 1% |
| Text | 10% |
| Email | 41% |
| Don't know | 1% |

Base: An aggregate of respondents from 2021 participating LDCs



LDCs, for the most part, are primarily set up as “inbound” problem solvers and communicators. The notion or idea that the LDC needs to become more “outbound” with personalized channel communication is a challenge from an organizational culture and operations perspective. Yet, if the LDC doesn’t become more outbound driven, it will have to invest more into inbound methods for solving problems – which is extremely expensive. As mentioned, increased focus on website design and self-service strategies will help alleviate potential future costs and is on trend to customer expectations.

Our data show “older” respondents have a heavier desire to communicate via the telephone, but youths, especially those in the 18-34 range, are far more comfortable getting and receiving information electronically. Preferences are changing and will continue to change as a result of previous pandemic-driven lockdowns and



increased social distancing. The UtilityPULSE database shows about 1 in 3 respondents in the 55+ age category prefer to receive notice about a billing issue via electronic means. In comparison, almost 2 in 3 respondents in the 18-34 age range prefer the electronic channels of email and text.

Communication during Unexpected Outages

In times of emergency, be they extreme weather events or major equipment failures that cause blackouts and unplanned outages, customer communication can help customers understand what to expect next and when disrupted electricity service might be restored. Early and effective communication helps increase confidence in and credibility of the electricity service provider.

Findings in the UtilityPULSE data show the importance of text and email, as preferred communication channels their LDC should use **during an unexpected outage**. Base: An aggregate of respondents from 2021 participating LDCs

| Preferred communication channel LDC should use during an UNEXPECTED Outage | |
|--|-----|
| Ontario LDCs | |
| Text message alert | 49% |
| Email alert | 38% |
| Recorded telephone message alert | 29% |
| Outage map on utility's website | 18% |
| Mobile APP alert | 15% |
| Social media alert on Twitter or Facebook, etc. | 14% |
| A toll-free outage line | 12% |
| Outage map posted on mobile APP | 2% |
| Smart assistant alert such as Alexa or Google | 1% |

UtilityPULSE data for 2019 shows that email was 26% and text was 31% as preferred channels. 2021 data shows a substantive change in just 2 years.



Communication during Planned Outages

UtilityPULSE data show the importance of email and text alerts as preferred communication channels their LDC should use **during a planned outage**; times when the utility needs to undertake work on their network (poles, wires, meters, transformers, substations, etc.) to maintain a safe and reliable supply.

| Preferred communication channel LDC should use during a PLANNED Outage | |
|--|-----|
| Ontario LDCs | |
| Email alert | 47% |
| Text message alert | 39% |
| Recorded telephone message | 25% |
| Hand delivered notice | 20% |
| Outage map on the utility's website | 15% |
| Mobile APP alert | 13% |
| A toll-free outage line | 12% |
| Social media alert on Twitter, Facebook, etc. | 12% |
| Outage map on mobile APP | 11% |
| Other | 1% |

Email and text alerts are very low effort methods for getting information. Both have grown as preferred channels in 2021 vs. 2019

Base: An aggregate of respondents from 2021 participating LDCs



Customers expect that the companies they deal with will be “pro-active” communicators. They know they don’t know everything, but they are hopeful that the companies they deal with will provide them with timely information. The reality is, Ontario LDCs have been pro-active communicators over the past couple of years.

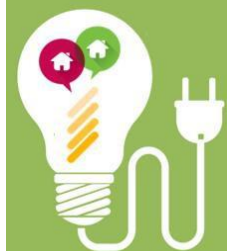
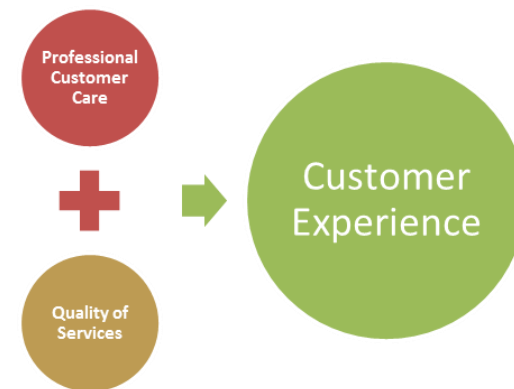
Westario Power received a respondent score of 81% for the attribute *“is pro-active in communicating changes and issues which may affect your electricity service.”*

We recommend that LDCs focus their investing on outbound communication channel technology and easy methods to look-up information or to get service because time-pressed customers appreciate when an organization is ‘easy to do business with’ – on this attribute, Westario Power received a respondent score of 87%.

Customer Experience Performance rating (CEPr)

Every touchpoint with customers on the phone, email, text, website, or in-person influences what customers think and feel about the organization. When an interaction with a customer meets their expectation, the opportunity to build loyalty (affinity) and support is strong. When the experience is a negative one, customers often conclude that the organization doesn’t care.

A positive experience today sets up the perception that future interactions will also be excellent.





| Customer Experience Performance rating (CEPr) | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| CEPr: all respondents | 87% | 84% | 85% |

Base: total respondents

The CEPr rating suggests that a very large majority of customers have a belief that they will have a good to excellent experience dealing with Westario Power professionals.

From an image point-of-view, Westario Power received very good scores for the attributes “keeps its promises to its customers and the community” and “overall the utility provides excellent quality services”.

Customer Effort & Experience Score™ (CEES)

Customers are time-pressed, and they want transactions related to getting questions answered or solving problems to be easy and fast. Customers dislike non-seamless handoffs when they have to deal with different people or departments to address their issues, and they dislike a slow response to their problem or concern. Customers also dislike “surprises,”; which is why they expect their utility to communicate with them pro-actively and, when needed, be ‘easy to do business with’.

The CEES as a metric is designed to help the organization remain focused on making things easy and fast for customers. The goal is to encourage improvements in all aspects of the customer’s journey from initial contact to completion of the issue. The central idea of CEES is about getting the most from your investments in people and technology.

Westario Power has rated a Customer Effort & Experience Score (CEES)[™] of 35%. The Ontario benchmark is 25%, and the UtilityPULSE database average is 34%.

| Customer Effort & Experience Score (CEES) | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| | Opportunity Range <15% | Good Range 15-35% | Very Good Range 35+% |
| Westario Power | -- | 35% | -- |
| Ontario Benchmark | -- | 25% | -- |

Base: total respondents; range bands represent 2021 data and can change year-to-year

The Customer Effort & Experience Score[™] is about encouraging your people to figure out how to speed up and simplify interactions. It is designed to encourage dialogue with all areas of the business to reduce customer effort. Busy, time-pressed customers consider CEES a bonafide reflection of the business. Most importantly, it has a direct correlation to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and NSS.

Our experience suggests that low-effort experiences, i.e., “easy” and “fast,” are highly correlated to customer affinity (loyalty). In contrast, high-effort experiences are correlated to low overall satisfaction and low company image.

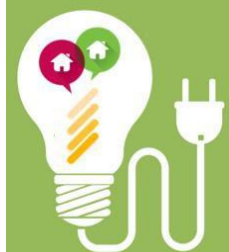


UtilityPULSE Report Card®

The purpose of the UtilityPULSE Report Card is to provide electric utilities with a snapshot of performance – on the criteria customers deem to be important.

| Westario Power's UtilityPULSE Report Card® | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Performance | | | | |
| | CATEGORY | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| 1 | Customer Care | B+ | B+ | B+ |
| | Price and Value | B+ | B+ | B+ |
| | Customer Service | A | B+ | A |
| 2 | Company Image | A | A | A |
| | Company Leadership | A | A | A |
| | Corporate Stewardship | A | A | A |
| 3 | Management Operations | A | A | A |
| | Operational Effectiveness | A | A | A |
| | Power Quality and Reliability | A | A | A |
| OVERALL | | A | A | A |

Base: total respondents

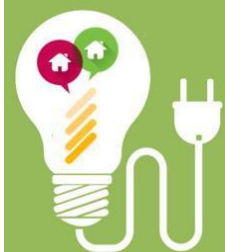


Priority Planning

Looking at a time horizon spanning five years, customers were asked to weigh in on the priority of Westario Power undertaking various projects or initiatives.

| Priority Planning within the next 5 years | | |
|--|----------------|--------------|
| Top 2 Boxes: 'very high + high priority' | Westario Power | Ontario LDCs |
| Maintaining and upgrading equipment to ensure a safe and reliable electricity supply | 92% | 92% |
| Investing to ensure that more frequent and severe weather events will cause less damage to distribution system | 89% | 86% |
| Preventing data breaches and system disruptions due to cyberattack | 84% | 84% |
| Reducing response times to outages | 83% | 84% |
| Investing more in the electricity grid to reduce outages | 82% | 83% |
| Investing more in vegetation management (clearing trees and brush around powerlines for increased safety and reliability) | 78% | 75% |
| Investing in projects to reduce the environmental impact of Westario Power's operations | 74% | 75% |
| Educating the public as it relates to electricity safety | 69% | 69% |
| Educating customers about energy conservation | 67% | 69% |
| Increasing the use of e-billing and paper-free communication options to reduce environmental impact and improve cost-effectiveness | 62% | 65% |
| Burying overhead wires | 60% | 62% |
| Providing sponsorships to local community causes | 57% | 52% |
| Developing a SMART phone application to allow you to view your electricity use and pay your bill | 49% | 52% |
| Providing more self-serve services on the website | 39% | 45% |
| Increasing the use of social media (such as Twitter, Facebook, and others) | 18% | 27% |

Base: total respondents / An aggregate of respondents from 2021 participating LDCs

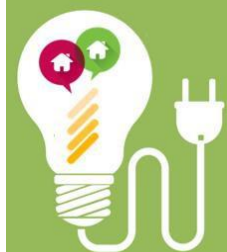


Respondents for Westario Power identified the following projects/initiatives as top items which Westario Power should focus attention and resources:

HIGH PRIORITY

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Maintaining and upgrading equipment to ensure a safe and reliable electricity supply | 92% |
| 2. Investing to ensure that more frequent and severe weather events will cause less damage to distribution system | 89% |
| 3. Preventing data breaches and system disruptions due to cyberattack | 84% |
| 4. Reducing response times to outages | 83% |
| 5. Investing more in the electricity grid to reduce outages | 82% |

Westario Power should take a look at their current strategic goals and assess whether any of the above contribute to said goals or what could be done to align any of the above mentioned programs/initiatives into Westario Power's operational plans. UtilityPULSE data shows from 2019 that developing a smart phone app has grown in priority from 46% to 52%. Providing more self-serve options has changed from 37% to 45%. More importantly, 84% said that preventing data breaches and system disruptions due to cyberattack was a priority.



Credibility & Trust Index

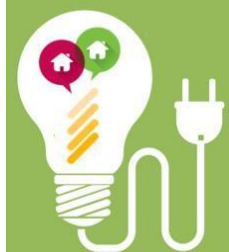
For most Ontario LDCs, over 40% of the customer base has been affected by the events of the past couple of years. As such, in a world with heightened unknowns, people will look for credible organizations that can be trusted. 87% of respondents agree strongly or somewhat that Westario Power is trusted and trustworthy. Your Credibility & Trust score is 86%, while the Ontario and National benchmarks sit at 84%.



Numbers at a Glance for 2021

| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
|--|----------------|----------|---------|
| Customer Satisfaction: Initial | 95% | 94% | 93% |
| Customer Satisfaction: Post | 94% | 93% | 92% |
| Would recommend | 85% | 83% | 82% |
| Customer Experience Performance Rating (CEPr) | 87% | 84% | 85% |
| Customer Centric Engagement Index (CCEI) | 85% | 83% | 82% |
| Credibility & Trust Index | 86% | 84% | 84% |
| UtilityPULSE Report Card® | A | A | A |

As with the previous 23 years, the number one suggestion, by a wide margin, has been “better prices”. Price will always be top of mind for customers. For 2021, the second-highest suggestion was “better communications.” The third suggestion was “simplified billing.” Customers want increased ease, and we have



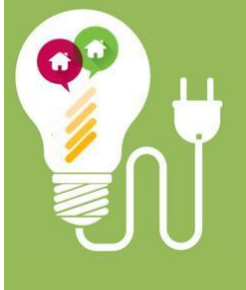
seen that many want the ability to self-serve. These results make sense in light of an increasing push toward and need for digitization.

People want to be recognized as individuals AND get what they perceive to be good value. By allowing customers to choose whether they want to receive communication notices via email, text, or snail mail, etc., The more specific you can be with your communications, the more likely you are to engage your customers and build an ongoing relationship with your brand.

We recommend that LDCs continue to work as fast as possible to digitize service. The goal is to provide options for customers to access help. As stated, customers who were previously resistant to doing things online are no longer resisting; they are adapting to using online methods with much more enthusiasm. This is the “new normal” and one that must be embraced and pro-actively addressed to meet the tastes and demands of customers better.

It is true the customer base still has lots of concerns and worries, such as getting ill or having a family member or friend get ill. Losing their job, or having a reduced pay cheque, or product shortages, etc. Fortunately, Westario Power is not at the top of the list of day-to-day concerns. 84% believe Westario Power ‘efficiently manages the electricity system’ - it continues to be a source of stability and reliability.

Your survey was conducted from October 13 - 21, 2021, and is based on 402 one-on-one telephone interviews with residential and small commercial customers who pay or look after the electricity bill. In addition, survey findings for Westario Power are enhanced with the inclusion of data from our UtilityPULSE database and the independently produced Ontario and National Benchmarks.



The pandemic may not be fully over, but we are seeing some light. Your customers continue to be satisfied with the operations and image of Westario Power has done during this pandemic. One key for maintaining excellent scores resides in the next steps you take to ensure a continued positive customer experience in an increasingly digital world.

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November 2021

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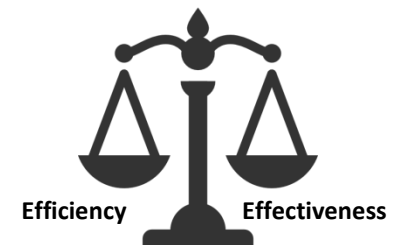
Satisfaction (pre & post)

As stated multiple times over many years, measuring satisfaction is an important starting point for creating loyal customers. However, it is a misnomer to conclude that highly satisfied customers are also customers with a high affinity or loyalty quotient. One can be satisfied but not necessarily loyal. But it is proper to conclude that the LDC (its people) must do the job as expected and required before there can be a positive emotional connection.

We've stated in the past, a focus on satisfaction prompts an organization to continue to evolve in ways that make sense to those who pay the bills. A focus on satisfaction is a focus on effectiveness in the delivery of service to the customer. Satisfied customers who trust their LDC may be more likely to seek advice, i.e., energy efficiency methods, and be more receptive to important messages, i.e. safety, new capital projects, etc.

About ratings/measures:

- Satisfaction is not a program; it is an outcome.
- **Efficiency** is about achieving objectives with the minimum amount of people, time, money, and other resources; doing things right; resource usage
- **Effectiveness** ratings are measures keeping the organization and its people more future-focused than efficiency ratings; doing the right things; goal attainment

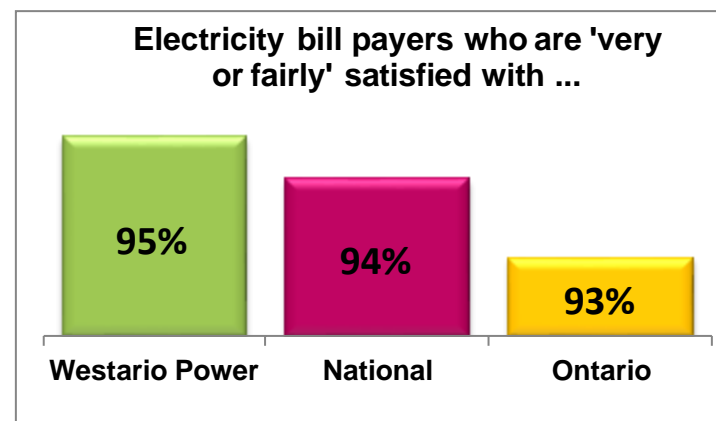


Finding the right balance between efficiency and effectiveness measures is difficult.

Efficiency ratings won't lead to satisfaction, but they can lead to dissatisfaction. Taking 90 seconds to answer the phone will create an agitated customer who, for the most part, starts off being dissatisfied with the service – before you've even had a chance to deal with or solve their problem. Answering the phone in 20 seconds but not solving the customer's problem will not ameliorate the customer's perception of the transaction.

Customer expectations of their electricity LDC have evolved past the “provide electricity reliably, safely, and billed both accurately with fair pricing.” They do expect their LDC to be ethical, forward-thinking, competent, and trustworthy.

- **Satisfaction** happens when utility core services meet or exceed customers' needs, wants, or expectations.
- **Loyalty** occurs when a customer makes an emotional connection with their electric utility on a diverse range of expectations beyond core services.



Base: total respondents

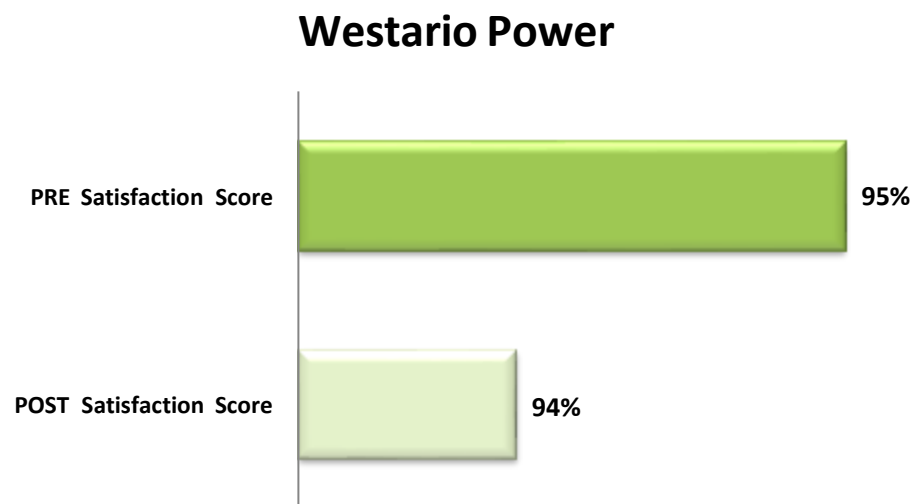
Satisfaction alone does not make a customer loyal; a willingness to commit and advocate for a company, along with satisfaction, identifies the three basic customer attitudes which underpin loyalty profiles. While satisfaction

is an important component of loyalty, the loyalty definition needs to incorporate more attitudinal and emotive components.

| Electricity bill payers who are 'very or fairly' satisfied with... | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
| Westario Power | 95% | - | 95% | - | - |
| National | 94% | 96% | 93% | 91% | 90% |
| Ontario | 93% | 95% | 92% | 91% | 85% |

Base: total respondents / (-) not a participant of the survey year

In the Simul/UtilityPULSE Customer Satisfaction survey, the overall satisfaction question is asked both at the beginning (PRE) and the end (POST). Asking the general satisfaction question at the start of the survey avoids bias, obtaining a spontaneous rating. This allows measurement of customers' overall impressions of the utility before prompting them to think of specific aspects of the relationship. After asking about specific aspects of the customer experience, we gain a more *considered* (or conditioned) response.



Base: total respondents

As with any enterprise, Westario Power is obligated to satisfy its customers. But the rewards for satisfying customers go far beyond “obligation.” Customers with high levels of satisfaction handle problems far better than customers with low satisfaction. Stronger relationships with customers generate higher levels of involvement and participation. For employees serving customers who are very satisfied, those interactions are more enjoyable than those with customers who are very dissatisfied. Satisfied and engaged employees who work in an organizational culture that promotes service excellence, with empowerment, is an important key for completing the job both efficiently and effectively.



| SATISFACTION SCORES – Electricity customers’ satisfaction | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| Top 2 Boxes: ‘very + fairly satisfied’ | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| PRE: Initial Satisfaction Scores | 95% | 94% | 93% |
| POST: End of Interview | 94% | 93% | 92% |

Base: total respondents

A mutual correlation exists between employee and customer attitudes and loyalty. Employees who are trained well, have the right tools, and are focused on successful outcomes for customers contribute significantly to the customers' perception of their utility. There is a direct, irrefutable link between empowered and engaged employees and customer satisfaction – after all -- *your employees are part of your brand, and they deliver the promises you make.*

Westario Power

| SATISFACTION SCORES – Electricity customers' satisfaction | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| Top 2 Boxes: 'very + fairly satisfied' | Residential | Commercial |
| Satisfaction Scores | 94% | 97% |

Base: total respondents

| SATISFACTION SCORES – Electricity customers' satisfaction [kwh usage] | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Top 2 Boxes: 'very + fairly satisfied' | kWh Group 1 | kWh Group 2 | kWh Group 3 |
| Satisfaction Scores | 94% | 94% | 97% |

Base: total respondents

| SATISFACTION SCORES – Electricity customers' satisfaction [Income] | | | |
|--|--------|------------|---------|
| Top 2 Boxes: 'very + fairly satisfied' | <\$30K | \$30 – 75K | \$75K + |
| Satisfaction Scores | 100% | 91% | 94% |

Base: total respondents

Customer Service

As written in previous years, given the rapidly expanding availability and use of technology, finding an appropriate balance between automated self-service and human-interactive service is a huge challenge for all involved in providing service to customers. Customer Service is about the experience your customers have with your utility, your products, and your service – regardless of the channel used for delivering customer service. The goal is to ensure that your customers receive high-quality customer service and an experience that meets or exceeds their expectations - on every interaction with the LDC.

Given the increased complexity of delivering customer service, we have seen a shift towards a stronger focus on the touchpoints which create the customer experience.

Most of us want the same things when we are customers: We want to be treated with respect. We want to be listened to. We don't want to be bounced around or ignored, or treated as inferior. The customer experience is largely defined by the outcomes generated when customers have a need, want to solve a problem, or want answers to issues or concerns they face.

With more technology, there will be more shifting of calls away from the call centre. However, the volume of calls that remain are and will be more complex and challenging. We're already witnessing the fact that calls are taking longer to deal with customer issues.



Customers are more concerned about outcomes, and they want their issue, problem, or concern to be dealt with in a professional, knowledgeable, and timely manner. Respondents were asked about six aspects of their most recent experience with a representative from Westario Power.

- Information – the quality of the information provided
- Staff attitude – the level of courtesy
- Professionalism – the knowledge of the staff
- Delivery – helpfulness of the staff
- Timeliness – the length of time it took to get what they needed
- Accessibility – how easy it was to contact someone



Base: total respondents who contacted the utility; small data sample (n=47)

| Satisfaction with Customer Service | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| Top 2 Boxes: 'very + fairly satisfied' | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| The time it took to contact someone | 85% | 71% | 66% |
| The time it took someone to deal with your problem | 66% | 69% | 69% |
| The helpfulness of the staff who dealt with you | 70% | 73% | 75% |
| The knowledge of the staff who dealt with you | 70% | 76% | 75% |
| The level of courtesy of the staff who dealt with you | 79% | 85% | 88% |
| The quality of information provided by the staff who dealt with you | 68% | 79% | 75% |

Base: total respondents who contacted the utility; small data sample (n=47)

| Overall satisfaction with most recent experience | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| Top 2 Boxes: 'very + fairly satisfied' | 64% | 78% | 74% |

Base: total respondents who contacted the utility; small data sample (n=47)

Every interaction with a customer is an opportunity to generate higher levels of affinity. It is fool-hardy to view the ratings shown above as ratings for the “call-centre” because every person in Westario Power interacts with a customer or supports those who do have person-to-person contact with a customer. Empowerment is the backbone of the service recovery principle. In the face of error or problems, acting quickly and decisively, being empowered, and turning a dissatisfied customer into a satisfied one tends to have a positive impact.

Customer Focus – Service Quality



Current measures in the LDC scorecard are: New Residential Services Connected on Time; Scheduled Appointments Met on Time; and Telephone Calls Answered on Time. These are good examples of efficiency measures, as all are time-based. Showing up on time may not create satisfaction (in fact, it is what is expected); not showing up on time will cause dissatisfaction.

UtilityPULSE findings from working with many LDCs over the past few years indicate it is much harder to get great ratings from customers who may not know much about their LDC's standards for service. Despite this, service quality ratings for Westario Power are very good compared to the Ontario benchmark.

Other dimensions of Service Quality that customers value include:

| Core Customer Service Quality Attributes | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|---------|
| Top 2 boxes, 'strongly + somewhat agree' | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| Deals professionally with customers' problems | 86% | 84% | 84% |
| Customer-focused and treats customers as if they're valued | 83% | 79% | 79% |
| Is a company that is 'easy to do business with' | 87% | 84% | 84% |

Base: total respondents with an opinion

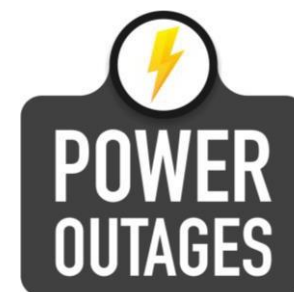
We live in an imperfect world, so mistakes are bound to happen. In the LDC world, not all customer problems are mistakes; some are externally driven. Nonetheless, customers expect professionalism when interacting with "their" LDC.

Bill Payers' Problems and Problem Resolution

As previously written over multiple years, we call blackouts (outages) and billing problems the “Killer B’s,” the two issues most likely to cause grief to utility customers.

At one time, if the power went off for a few minutes, it was considered annoying and inconvenient. However, for most people, a power outage is now unbearable with the onset of computers and smart appliances in homes and businesses. Customers have little tolerance for an interruption in their flow of electricity.

48% of Westario Power respondents claimed they experienced an outage problem in the past 12 months.



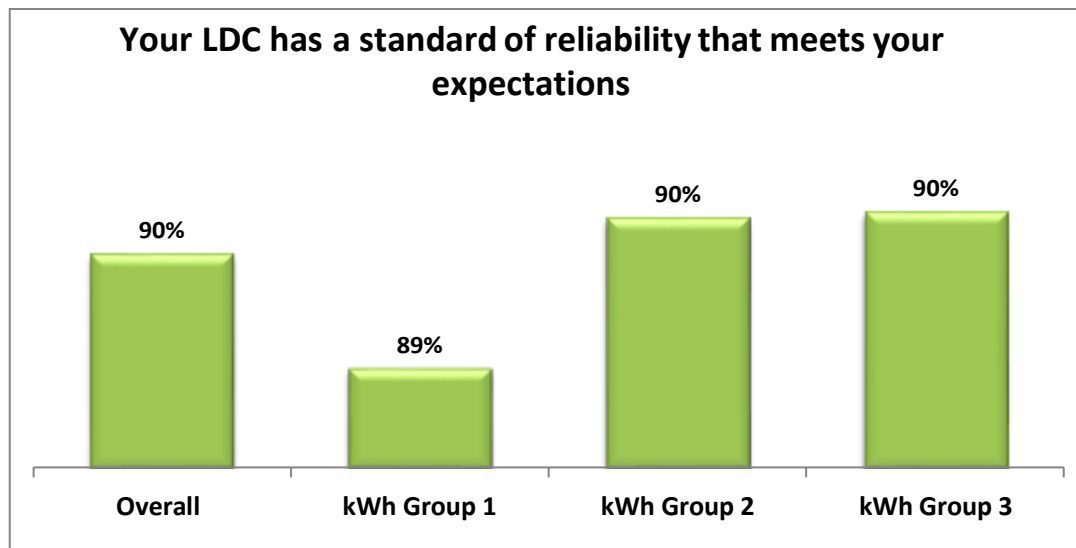
| How many outages have you had in the last 12 months | |
|---|-----|
| Westario Power | |
| One | 23% |
| Two | 9% |
| Three | 36% |
| More than three | 32% |
| Don't know | 0% |

Base: total respondents who contacted the utility

| Percentage of Respondents indicating that they had a Blackout or Outage problem in the last 12 months | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| 2021 | 48% | 39% | 36% |
| 2020 | - | 40% | 43% |
| 2019 | 30% | 44% | 45% |
| 2018 | - | 39% | 44% |
| 2017 | 37% | 37% | 38% |

Base: total respondents / (-) not a participant of the survey year

90% of Westario Power respondents agree ('strongly + somewhat') the utility's standard of reliability is consistent with their expectations.



Base: total respondents

For nearly every business, the simple act of collecting payments from customers is quite complex. Organizations want to make it easy and convenient for customers to pay, so they offer multiple choices of payment types and channels. However, making it easy for the customer often makes it more complex—and costly—for the business and is certainly not without its problems or flaws.

| Percentage of Respondents indicating that they had a Billing problem in the last 12 months | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| 2021 | 10% | 4% | 6% |
| 2020 | - | 5% | 6% |
| 2019 | 8% | 9% | 9% |
| 2018 | - | 9% | 9% |
| 2017 | 12% | 12% | 15% |

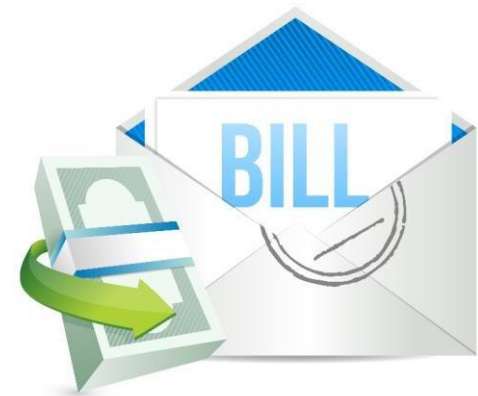
Base: total respondents / (-) not a participant of the survey year



The impact of poor billing on a utility's business is considerable in terms of costs incurred handling customer queries and complaints. The quality of billing remains a driving force behind managing customer satisfaction and can help utilities reduce costs associated with customer service. By reducing the total number of calls to a utility by providing accurate, easily understood bills, a utility stems the flow of billing-related complaints into its call-centre. However, customers have a different definition than their utility as to what constitutes a billing problem.

| Types of Billing Problems | |
|--|----------------|
| | Westario Power |
| Did not receive the bill | 27% |
| Owed too high | 18% |
| Change in billing cycle | 14% |
| Missed payment | 14% |
| Online billing issues | 9% |
| Issues with automatic/direct payment | 9% |
| Bill arrived late | 9% |
| Complaint about rates or charges | 9% |
| Payment recorded incorrectly | 5% |
| Wrong information on bill | 5% |
| Understanding pricing | 5% |
| Understanding how the bill is calculated | 5% |

Base: total respondents with billing problems





47% of Westario Power respondents visited the utility website to try on their own to either resolve or get more clarity on the issue of concern before attempting to contact the utility.



Did you try to contact your electric utility about any issues over the past 12 months?



23%



76%

Base: total respondents

| How many times did you contact your utility? | |
|--|-----|
| Westario Power | |
| One | 50% |
| Two | 28% |
| Three | 10% |
| More than three | 10% |
| Don't know | 2% |

Base: total respondents who contacted the utility



- 45% of Westario Power respondents contacted the utility about an outage problem;
- 45% of Westario Power respondents contacted the utility about a billing problem;
- 12% of Westario Power respondents contacted the utility about a problem other billing or an outage.

| Communication methods used to contact local utility | |
|---|-----|
| Westario Power | |
| Telephone | 89% |
| Email | 6% |
| The utility's website | 2% |
| Mail | 2% |
| In-person | 2% |
| Social media i.e. Twitter, Facebook | 0% |
| Live Chat | 0% |

Base: total respondents

Providing communication platforms that are effective and meet customers' needs is key to improving the customer experience. To do this, Westario Power must understand how customers communicate with you, and how they would like Westario Power to communicate with them in future. Knowing this will allow Westario Power to: allocate resources where they are most needed; tailor services to meet customers' needs; and, identify where improvements can be made.

First Contact Resolution (FCR) rates are an important metric for improving call center performance. The first step in improving "FCR" is to survey your front-line customer touchpoints and understand what kind of assistance and information customers are seeking in these situations. Once you clearly understand what kinds of interactions are taking place at each of your initial customer touchpoints, you can then improve those interactions.

| Percentage of Respondents who contacted their utility and had their problem solved in the last 12 months | |
|--|-----|
| Westario Power | |
| Yes | 77% |
| No | 23% |

Base: total respondents with a problem who contacted their utility



Communication when there is an Issue

Utilities need to know what response they are seeking from customers when planning their communications and outreach. Sending inserts with monthly bills that provide information to a customer is passive and not very effective. Although your customer audience is captive, a poorly targeted message is often ignored. Unless a customer is actively searching for it, posting information on a website will likely not be found. Email blasts and social media campaigns will reach customers but may not necessarily lead to action. Such messages are typically read when in transit or multitasking, making them an afterthought. So, it often takes several pushes for these messages to resonate before action is taken. Successful marketing and messaging are about keeping communications simple, consistent, and continually reinforced.

Communication channels preferred by customers to receive notice about Billing Issue (Other than payments owed)

Billing issues have long been a major cause of customer inquiry and complaint. Not only are bills a key part of an LDC's revenue management process, but they're also an essential element and touchpoint in their relationship with their customers. For many customers, it is one of the very few touchpoints they have with their LDC. Because of its nature, the bill is usually viewed by customers as a wholly negative communication.

Therefore, when problems do occur, and the LDC must initiate contact with their customer, it would be beneficial to the process if customers were contacted via channels they most prefer.

UtilityPULSE database information tells us that the preferred channel for communications can change based on the type of issue which exists, e.g., a billing issue versus an unplanned outage issue. Two things we believe LDCs must be mindful of:

1. The preferred communication channel is determined by the customer, not by the LDC.
2. There is a higher expectation that the LDC will become more “outbound” communications driven.

Ontario LDCs’ customers’ preferred or primary method for their respective LDC to contact them about billing issues are as follows:

| Preferred method of communication to receive notice of a Billing Issue (Other than payments owed) | |
|---|-----|
| Ontario LDCs | |
| Telephone | 45% |
| Voice Mail | 1% |
| Text | 10% |
| Email | 41% |
| Don't know | 1% |

Base: An aggregate of respondents from 2021 participating LDCs



Effective communication is essential to provide good customer service, improve efficiency and reduce costs. LDCs must maximize the effectiveness of their communications and improve customer interactions consistently across some media channels and customer touch points.

LDCs, for the most part, are primarily set up as “inbound” problem solvers and communicators. The notion or idea that the LDC needs to become more “outbound” with personalized channel communication is a challenge from an organizational culture and operations perspective. Yet, if the LDC doesn’t become more outbound driven, it will have to invest more into inbound methods for solving problems – which is extremely expensive.

Our data show “older” respondents have a heavier desire to communicate via the telephone, but youths, especially those in the 18-34 range, are far more comfortable getting and receiving information electronically. Preferences are changing. The UtilityPULSE database shows about 1 in 3 respondents in the 55+ age category prefers to receive notice about a billing issue via electronic means. In comparison, almost 2 in 3 respondents in the 18-34 age range prefer the electronic channels of email and text.

Communication during an Unexpected Outage

In times of emergency, be they extreme weather events or major equipment failures that cause blackouts and unplanned outages, customer communication can help customers understand what to expect next and when disrupted electricity service might be restored. Early and effective communication helps increase confidence in and credibility of the electricity service provider.

Respondents were asked the preferred communication channel their LDC should use **during an unexpected outage**.

| Preferred communication channel LDC should use during an UNEXPECTED Outage | |
|--|-----|
| Ontario LDCs | |
| Text message alert | 49% |
| Email alert | 38% |
| Recorded telephone message alert | 29% |
| Outage map on utility's website | 18% |
| Mobile APP alert | 15% |
| Social media alert on Twitter or Facebook, etc. | 14% |
| A toll-free outage line | 12% |
| Outage map posted on mobile APP | 2% |
| Smart assistant alert such as Alexa or Google | 1% |

Base: An aggregate of respondents from 2021 participating LDCs



Communication during a Planned Outage

Respondents were asked the preferred communication channel Westario Power should use **during a planned outage**; times when the utility needs to undertake works on their network (poles, wires, meters, transformers, substations, etc.) to maintain a safe and reliable supply.

| Preferred communication channel LDC should use during a PLANNED Outage | |
|--|-----|
| Ontario LDCs | |
| Email alert | 47% |
| Text message alert | 39% |
| Recorded telephone message | 25% |
| Hand delivered notice | 20% |
| Outage map on the utility's website | 15% |
| Mobile APP alert | 13% |
| A toll-free outage line | 12% |
| Social media alert on Twitter, Facebook, etc. | 12% |
| Outage map on mobile APP | 11% |
| Other | 1% |

Base: An aggregate of respondents from 2021 participating LDCs



While there are many ways to communicate, information and messaging is most effective when delivered through channels preferred by customers and the LDC's messaging should be simple, clear, fact-based, and consistent.

LDCs must understand how customers communicate with them, and how they would like their LDC to communicate with them in the future. Knowing this will allow LDCs to: allocate resources where they are most needed; tailor services to meet customers' needs; and, identify where improvements can be made.

However, while most customers appear to have capacity and willingness to use digital channels, there are also customers who do not access digital platforms for a variety of reasons, such as a lack of ability or resources, or due to a preference for other channels. LDCs will need to consider how these customers can be supported and encouraged to use digital services in the future.


Customer Experience Performance rating (CEPr)

The CEPr score is an effectiveness rating and is affected by many dimensions of service. Every touchpoint with customers on the phone, website, or in-person influences what customers think and feel about the organization. While an excellent transaction today creates a positive experience, the perception created is future transactions will be excellent too. Of course, a negative transaction creates the perception that future transactions will be negative.

When the customer experience is strong, the opportunity to build loyalty is great. When the experience is a negative one, customers often conclude the organization doesn't care. When a customer believes the organization doesn't care, outrage and anger are a very real possibility.

Understanding your customer's expectations for service is the first step in providing an amazing customer experience. It is essential customer care call centres develop a comprehensive understanding of what

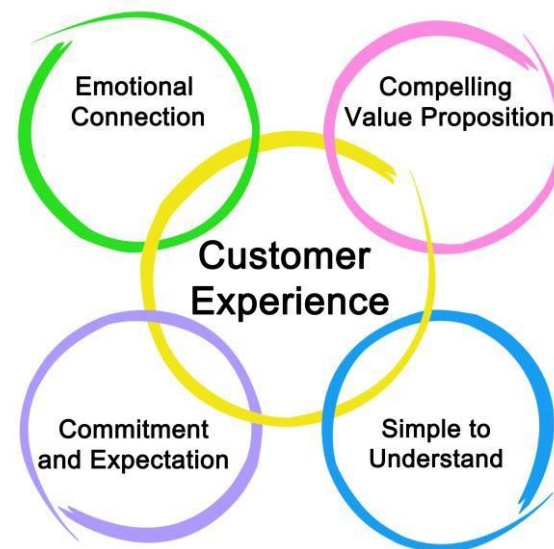
At the heart of the CEPr are 4 central questions:

- 
- 1. Are interactions with the organization professional and productive?*
 - 2. Is the organization 'easy to deal with'?*
 - 3. Does the organization effectively meet your needs?*
 - 4. Does the organization provide high quality services?*

customers expect from them, whether their needs are being met and how they can improve their service to meet their expectations.

Some of the factors which contribute to the overall customer experience:

- Delivering accessible and consistent customer service (multi-channel)
- Understanding customer expectations
- Maintaining timely resolution timelines
- Providing effective communication(s) according to customer needs
- Demonstrating responsiveness
- Speeding up problem resolution
- Conducting problem analysis to prevent recurring issues
- Easy to do business with
- Seeking customer feedback and following through on recommendations



| Customer Experience Performance rating (CEPr) | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| CEPr: all respondents | 87% | 84% | 85% |

Base: total respondents

The CEPr for Westario Power is 87%. This rating would suggest that a very large majority of customers have a belief they will have a good to excellent experience dealing with Westario Power professionals.

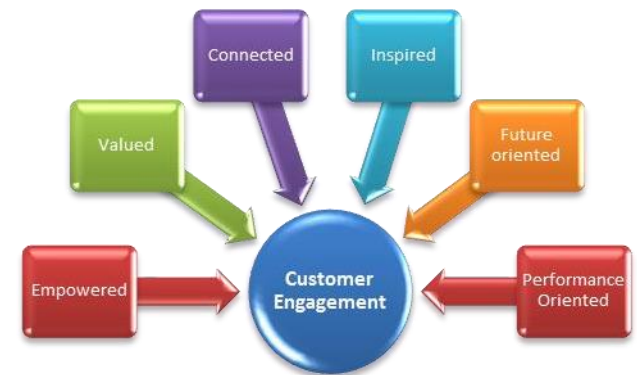
Customer Centric Engagement Index (CCEI)

Customer engagement and customer satisfaction are very different measures. We believe generating high scores in customer engagement is more difficult than customer satisfaction. For example, a customer can be highly satisfied when the LDC reliability delivers electricity, bills the customer properly, and quickly deals with outages. Essentially when the LDC does what it promises to do, then satisfaction follows.

Customer engagement is about connecting with customers to demonstrate that the LDC has heard the customer and understands the customer's needs, wants, desires, and issues. When the LDC does demonstrate listening and understanding, the result is higher levels of emotional connection, i.e., feelings that the people at the LDC care, respect, and value their customers or are prepared to go-out-of-their-way (if necessary) to help.

Customer engagement is often thought of as a series of activities involving the customer, such as conducting a survey, holding town hall type meetings, focus groups, etc. One could call these types of activities as the behaviour side of engagement. However, there is an emotional side to engagement.

UtilityPULSE has identified the six key dimensions of what defines customer engagement. They are: empowered, valued, connected,



inspired, future-oriented, and performance-oriented. Customer-centric engagement is a measure of “goodwill” towards the utility. The UP database does show Secure customers believe they are more highly engaged with their LDC than customers who are At Risk.

This survey also provides you with an emotional look at engagement. The UtilityPULSE CCEI is a gauge of the amount of goodwill which has been generated. High numbers in CCEI suggest there is a high level of goodwill amongst your customers – this is important for two reasons. First, when something goes awry for the utility, goodwill helps the utility to be resilient. Second, goodwill encourages active participation in requests to participate in engagement activities or program offerings from the utility. The CCEI is a metric designed to get a more in-depth look at the attachment a customer has with your LDC and its brand. High levels of customer engagement (emotional) correlate strongly to high levels of Secure and Favourable customer numbers.

Engagement is how customers think, feel, and act

towards the organization. As such, ensuring customers respond positively requires they are rationally satisfied with the services provided AND emotionally connected to your LDC and its brand. The more frequently and



consistently an organization’s products and services can connect with a customer, especially on an emotional level, the stronger and deeper the customer becomes engaged with the organization.

| Utility Customer Centric Engagement Index (CCEI) | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| CCEI | 85% | 83% | 82% |

Base: total respondents

As measured by the CCEI, less engaged customers are more likely to let costs and/or price impact their perceptions of their LDC. Customers who are highly engaged are more inclined to look past costs and money issues and use a rational approach to make values-based decisions. Highly engaged customers have a stronger emotional connection to your utility. It’s this emotional connection that drives commitment, loyalty, and advocacy.

Using the measures of Satisfaction and Engagement, the LDC’s relationship with its customers would fall into one of four quadrants: Q1- low satisfaction/low engagement; Q2- high satisfaction/low engagement; Q3- low satisfaction/high engagement and Q4- high satisfaction/high engagement. Most LDCs would agree that having customers fall into the Q1 quadrant isn’t good and that customers fall into Q4 is ideal.

When LDCs have candid conversations with customers and employees about their joint and different needs & perspectives, the better the LDC can be for creating an excellent place to do business with and to work.

Customer Effort & Experience Score™ (CEES)

Customers want the processes involved in solving problems or arranging service to be both fast and easy. For the most part, they already know they have a problem or need assistance, hence their dislike/displeasure when being transferred between people or departments, receiving a slow response, or receiving uncaring service.

They also dislike “surprises,” which is a potential reason why utilities are expected to be “pro-active communicators.”

The more time and effort a customer exerts to get questions answered or problems solved, the less happy they are, and the more likely they are to view their LDC as incompetent or lacking in customer-focus.

The CEES as a metric is designed to help the organization remain focused on making things easy and fast for customers. The goal is to encourage improvements in all aspects of the customer’s journey from initial contact to



completion of the issue. The central idea of CEES is about getting the most from your investments in people and technology.

As Richard Sharpe, the CEO of Sears Canada during its heyday, said, “A little TLC goes a long way.” He meant that when everyone attempts to Think Like a Customer (TLC), good things happen.

What is the difference between CEES and First Call Resolution, i.e., Problem Solved?

First-call or First-contact resolution (FCR) is a focus and metric for LDCs. What the FCR doesn't measure is the repeat or follow-up calls regarding the resolution to the problem. For example, a customer may have requested a particular service, and the CSR arranged it – the first time – within a timeline agreed upon by the customer. However, the customer may have additional follow-up questions regarding the requested service and will, therefore, contact the utility again.

The CEES metric helps the organization focus on making things easy and fast for customers by taking into account typical follow-up issues/calls that customers make. LDCs could make better use of processes such as auto dialing reminders of dates/times, emailing information about being prepared, what to do while the electricity is off when the crew is working, etc.

With every passing year, the shift away from phone service to self-service continues. Throwing forms and information on the website **isn't** “self-service.” We believe LDCs should rebuild their organization around self-service and do so by making it “easy” and “fast” for customers to get information and solve problems.

The CEES is complimentary to the Net Supporter Score. In other words, improvements in CEES scores translate to improvements in Net Supporter Scores. Westario Power has rated a Customer Effort & Experience Score (CEES)TM of 35%, and the Ontario benchmark is 25%, and the UtilityPULSE database average is 34%.

| Customer Effort & Experience Score (CEES) | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| | Opportunity Range <15% | Good Range 15-35% | Very Good Range 35+% |
| Westario Power | -- | 35% | -- |
| Ontario Benchmark | -- | 25% | -- |

Base: total respondents; range bands represent 2021 data and can change year-to-year

The Customer Effort & Experience ScoreTM is about encouraging your people to figure out how to speed up and simplify interactions. It is designed to encourage dialogue with all areas of the business to reduce customer effort. Busy, time-pressed customers consider CEES a bona-fide reflection of the business. Most importantly, it has a direct correlation to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and NSS.

UtilityPULSE Report Card®

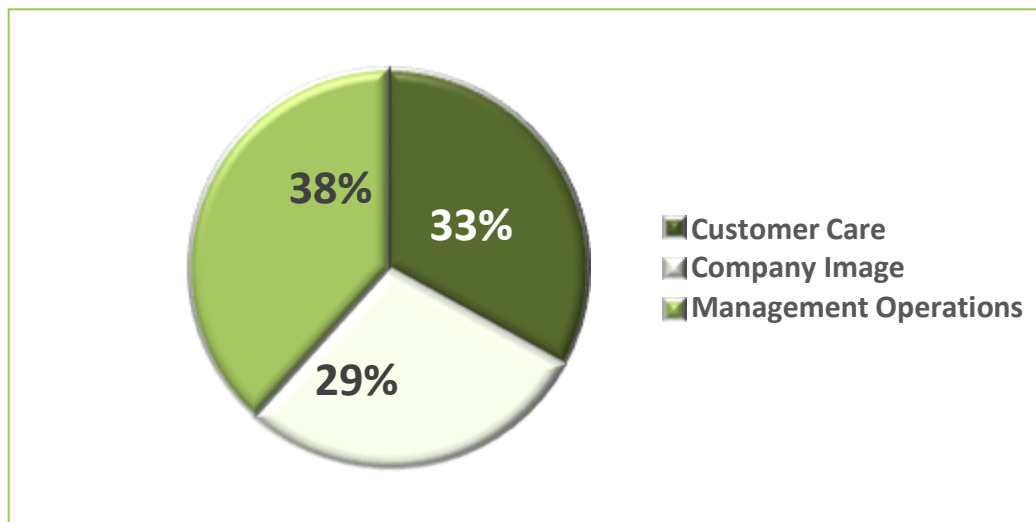
Simul's UtilityPULSE Report Card® is based on tens of thousands of customer interviews gathered over eighteen years. The purpose of the UtilityPULSE Report Card® is to provide electric utilities with a snapshot of performance – on the things customers deem to be important. Research has identified over 20 attributes, sorted into six topic categories (we call these drivers), which customers have used to describe their utility when they have been satisfied or very satisfied with their utility. These attributes form the nucleus, or base, from which “scores” are assigned. Customer satisfaction and loyalty also play a major role in the calculations.

There are two main dimensions of the UtilityPULSE Report Card®. The first is the customer psyche, and the other is customer perceptions about how the utility executes its business.

The Psyche of Customers

Every utility has virtually the same responsibility – provide safe and reliable electricity – yet not all customers are the same. The following chart shows the weight or significance of each category to the customer when forming their overall impression of the utility. Three major themes, each with two major categories, make up the UtilityPULSE Report Card®. In effect, the Report Card provides feedback about how customers perceive the importance of each category.

UtilityPULSE Report Card® Weighting



Base: total respondents

The UtilityPULSE Report Card® also provides customer perceptions about how your utility executes or performs its responsibilities. This is different, very different, from what a customer might say about a major concern or worry they have about electricity. Since its inception, our survey has shown that the primary suggestion for improvement is “reduce prices,” which is also a major concern that your customers have about municipal taxes, gas for the vehicle, and other utilities.

Readers of this report should note that the categories and drivers are interdependent. This means, for example, failure to provide high levels of power quality and reliability will have a negative impact on customer perceptions as it relates to customer service. Customer care, when it does not meet customer expectations has a negative impact on Company Image, etc.

Defining the categories and major drivers:

Category: Customer Care

Drivers: Price and Value; Customer Service

Just because everyone likes good customer care, that in and by itself is not a reason to provide it – though it may be important to do so. In highly competitive industries, good customer service may be a differentiating factor. The case for electric utilities is simple, high levels of customer care result in less work (hence cost) of responding to customer inquiries and higher levels of acceptance of the utility's actions.

Price and Value:

Customers have to purchase electricity because life and lifestyle depend on it. This driver measures customer perceptions as to whether the total costs of electricity represent good value and whether the utility is seen as working in the best interests of its customers as it relates to keeping costs affordable.

Customer Service:

Customers do have needs, and every now and again will interact with their utility. How the utility handles various customers' requests and concerns are what this driver is all about. Promptly answering inquiries, providing sound information, keeping customers informed, and doing so in a professional manner are the major components of this driver.

Category: Company Image

Drivers: Company Leadership; Corporate Stewardship

Utilities have an image even if they do not undertake any activities to try to build it. A company's image is both a simple and complex concept. It is simple because companies do create images that are easily described and recognized by their target customers. It is complex because it takes many discrete elements to create an image, which includes, but is not limited to: advertising, marketing communications, publicity, service offering, and pricing.

An electric utility trying to manage its image has one more challenge to deal with, and that is the electric industry itself. There are so many players; residential customers (in particular) don't know who does what or who is responsible for what. So, when there are political or regulatory announcements, the local utility is often swept up into the collective reaction of the population.

Company Leadership

This driver is comprised of customer perceptions as it relates to industry leadership, keeping promises, and being a respected company in the community.

Corporate Stewardship

Customers rely on electricity and want to know their utility is both a trusted and credible organization that is well managed, accountable, socially responsible, and has its financial house in order.

Category: Management Operations

Drivers: Operational Effectiveness; Power Quality and Reliability

Electrical power is the primary product utilities provide their customers. Customers have very high expectations that the power will be there when they need it. Customers have little tolerance for outages. The reality is, every utility must get this part right...no excuses. It is the utility's core business. This category and its drivers are the most important for fulfilling the rational needs of a utility's customers.

Operational Effectiveness

This driver measures customers' perceptions as they relate to ensuring their utility runs smoothly. Attributes such as accurate billing and meter reading, completing service work in a professional and timely manner, and maintaining equipment in good repair are deemed important to customers.

Power Quality and Reliability

Power outages are a fact of life – and customers know it. They expect their utility to provide consistent, reliable electricity, handle outages, restore power quickly, and make using electricity safely an important priority.

Westario Power's UtilityPULSE Report Card®

Performance

| | CATEGORY | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Customer Care | B+ | B+ | B+ |
| | Price and Value | B+ | B+ | B+ |
| | Customer Service | A | B+ | A |
| 2 | Company Image | A | A | A |
| | Company Leadership | A | A | A |
| | Corporate Stewardship | A | A | A |
| 3 | Management Operations | A | A | A |
| | Operational Effectiveness | A | A | A |
| | Power Quality and Reliability | A | A | A |
| OVERALL | | A | A | A |

Base: total respondents

As the UtilityPULSE Report Card® shows, the total customer experience with an electric utility is defined as more than “keeping the lights on.” Customers deal with your utility every day for a variety of reasons, most likely because they need someone to help them solve a problem, answer a question, or take their order for service. All your employees, from customer service representatives to linemen, leave a lasting impression on the customers they interact with. In effect, there are many moments of truth. Moments of truth are every customer touchpoint a utility has with its customers. Therefore, managing these moments of truth creates higher levels of Secure customers while reducing the number of At Risk customers that exist.

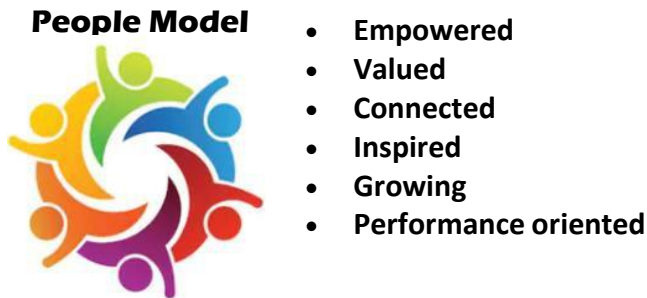
It's the small things done consistently that matter: Things like greeting every customer, whether on the phone or in person, in a friendly and helpful manner. Things like listening to the customer's needs, providing solutions to their problems, and showing appreciation for their business.

Utilities now recognize customer communications as a valuable aspect of their business. The better a utility communicates with customers in a manner that speaks to them; the more satisfied they are with their overall service. “Sending out information” is not the same as having a “conversation” with a customer. We believe it is increasingly important to channel your communications to the various customer segments which exist.

Employees – in every area – play a critical role in customer service success. Consequently, how they feel about their job responsibilities and role in the company will be communicated indirectly through the level of service they provide customers with. The reality is engaged employees are the key to excellent customer care.

Our survey work with employees shows there are many elements of organizational culture to support the people model needed to achieve high levels of engagement.

Our research has identified 6 main drivers which promote and support people giving their best:



There are 12 key processes from “attracting employees” to “saying goodbye to employees” are part of your people model to get the best performance from every employee.

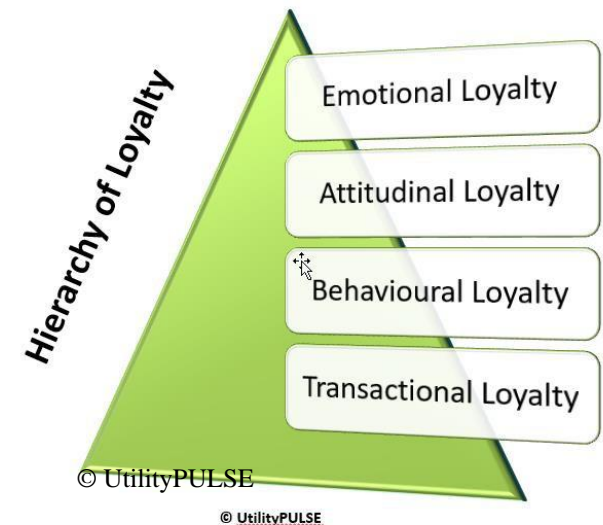
We believe taking the time to understand the difference between employee satisfaction and organizational culture is worthwhile from a resourcing perspective and a people development perspective. Every organization has a culture – we believe it is a leadership imperative to install and maintain a culture which ensures you attain the achievements and successes of your utility’s many investments in people, technology, and equipment. It is true, organization culture affects everyone, and everyone affects organization culture.

The Loyalty Factor

If a customer is satisfied, it doesn't necessarily mean they are loyal. Satisfaction is about fulfilling promises/expectations; loyalty goes way beyond that by creating exceptional experiences and long-lasting relationships. There is a reason why marketing campaigns strive to build brand loyalty, not brand satisfaction. Measuring customer loyalty in an industry where many customers don't have a choice of providers doesn't make sense. Or does it?

The answer depends on how you define "customer loyalty."

Private industry often equates customer loyalty with basic customer retention. If a customer continues to do business with a company, the customer is, by definition, considered to be loyal. If this definition were applied to many companies in the utility industry, all customers would automatically be considered loyal. As such, measuring customer loyalty would appear to be unnecessary. Natural monopolies (like LDCs) are not really different in what they should measure except that trying to determine which customers are "loyal" or "at-risk" is not about their future behaviour but more about their "attitudinal" loyalty (are they advocates?).

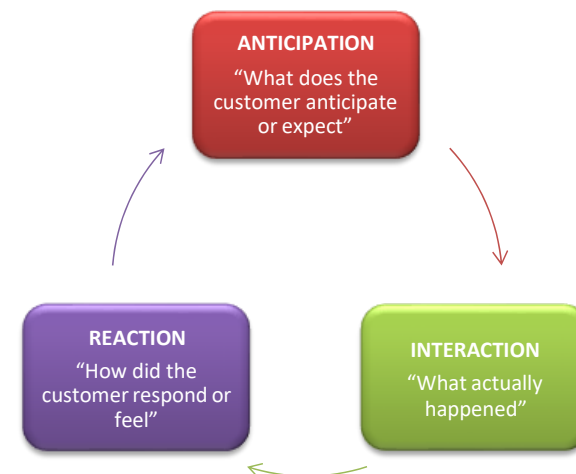


Customer Service, when done well, promotes satisfaction which builds the foundation towards loyalty. Whether a customer is loyal and/or satisfied will be determined by three realities:

ANTICIPATION – what your customer anticipates or expects;

INTERACTION – what actually happened with/to the customer;

and REACTION – how did the customer respond and how did it ultimately make the customer feel.



Perhaps a better or more relevant way for utilities to approach the definition of customer loyalty is to expand further how they think about loyalty. Consider the following definition:

Customer loyalty is an emotional disposition on the part of the customer, which affects the way(s) in which the customer (consistently) interacts, responds, or reacts towards the company – its products & services, and its brand.

So, what does it mean to respond favourably to a company? At a basic level, this can mean choosing to remain a customer. As previously mentioned, however, this is essentially a non-issue for many utility companies. It then becomes necessary to think beyond just customer retention. One needs to consider other ways in which customers can respond favourably toward a company.

Some Tips to build loyalty:

- ✓ Solve problems quickly
- ✓ Treat customers right
- ✓ Listen to complaints
- ✓ Be personal; create a great experience
- ✓ Friendly customer service
- ✓ Accessible information or help
- ✓ Good reputation
- ✓ Demonstrate your care

Other favourable responses or behaviours can be classified into one of three categories that reflect the concept of customer loyalty:

- Participation
- Compliance or Influence
- Advocacy

Specific examples of potential participatory behaviour in the electric utility industry include:

- Signing up for programs which help the customer reduce or manage their energy consumption
- Using the utility as a consultant when selecting energy products and services from a third party
- Participating in pilot programs or research studies.

Specific examples of potential compliance or influence behaviours utility customers might exhibit include:

- Seeking the utility's advice or expertise on an energy-related issue
- Voluntarily cutting back on electricity usage if the utility advised the customer to do so
- Accepting the utility's energy advice or referrals to energy contractors or equipment
- Being influenced by the utility's opinion regarding energy- management advice, equipment, or technologies
- Providing personal information which enables the utility to serve the customer better
- Paying bills online.

Creating customer advocates can be especially important for a company in a regulated industry. In the absence of customer advocates, or worse, in a situation where customers speak unfavourably about a company or actively work to support issues that are counter to those the company supports, companies can suffer a variety of negative consequences like increased business costs, lawsuits, fines, and construction delays. For an electric utility, specific examples of potential advocacy behaviour include:

- Supporting the utility's positions or actions on energy-related public issues, including the environment
- Supporting the utility's position on the location and construction of facilities
- Providing testimonials about positive experiences with the utility.

In sum, loyal behaviour in the utility industry may not be as evident as it is in a more competitive environment. Measuring customer loyalty in a generally non-competitive industry requires one to think about loyalty in non-traditional ways. Customer loyalty is an intangible asset with positive consequences or outcomes associated with it no matter what the industry. Properly measuring loyalty among utility customers requires thoughtful probing to thoroughly identify the range of participation, compliance, and advocacy behaviours that will ultimately benefit the company in meaningful ways and foster happier and more loyal customers.

Loyalty is driven primarily by a company's interaction with its customers and how well it delivers on their wants and needs.

Customer Loyalty Model



Loyalty is based on likelihood to:

- **Satisfaction:** overall satisfaction
- **Commitment:** continue as a customer
- **Advocacy:** willingness to recommend

The UtilityPULSE Customer Loyalty Performance Score segments customers into four groups: **Secure** – the most loyal - **Still Favorable**, **Indifferent**, and **At risk**.

Secure customers are “very satisfied” overall with their local electric utility. They have a very high emotional connection with their utility and “definitely” would recommend their local utility.

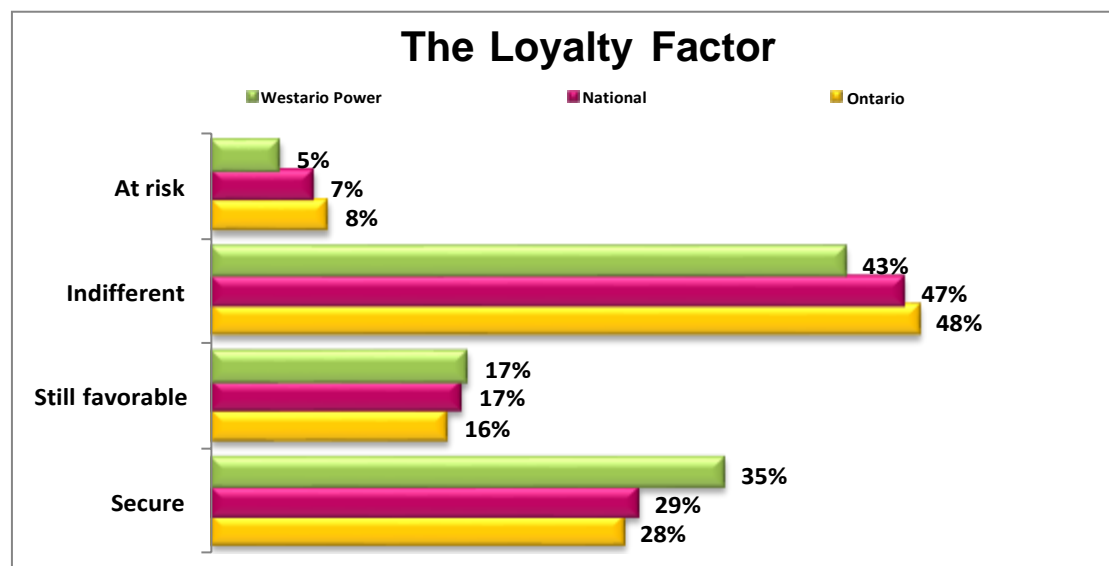
Still favorable customers are “very satisfied” overall, “definitely” or “probably” would recommend their local utility and not switch if they could.

Indifferent customers are less satisfied overall than secure and still-favorable customers and less inclined to recommend their local utility or say they would not switch.

At risk customers, who are “very dissatisfied” with their electric utility, “definitely” would switch and “definitely” would not recommend it.

| Customer Loyalty Groups | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|---------|
| | Secure | Favorable | Indifferent | At Risk |
| Westario Power | | | | |
| 2021 | 35% | 17% | 43% | 5% |
| 2020 | - | - | - | - |
| 2019 | 34% | 18% | 43% | 5% |
| 2018 | - | - | - | - |
| 2017 | 22% | 6% | 70% | 2% |

Base: total respondents / (-) not a participant of the survey year



Base: total respondents

| Customer Loyalty Groups | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|---------|
| | Secure | Favorable | Indifferent | At Risk |
| Ontario | | | | |
| 2021 | 28% | 16% | 48% | 8% |
| 2020 | 29% | 20% | 46% | 6% |
| 2019 | 27% | 16% | 48% | 9% |
| 2018 | 20% | 16% | 50% | 13% |
| 2017 | 19% | 13% | 52% | 17% |
| National | | | | |
| 2021 | 29% | 17% | 47% | 7% |
| 2020 | 30% | 18% | 48% | 5% |
| 2019 | 27% | 17% | 49% | 7% |
| 2018 | 24% | 15% | 51% | 10% |
| 2017 | 21% | 16% | 50% | 13% |

Base: total respondents

Customer commitment

Customer loyalty is a term used to embrace a range of customer attitudes and behaviours. One of the metrics used to gauge loyalty is the measure of **retention**, or intention to buy again; this loyalty attitude is termed **commitment**. For LDCs, commitment is not about behaviour; it is about attitude, i.e., do they want to remain your customer.

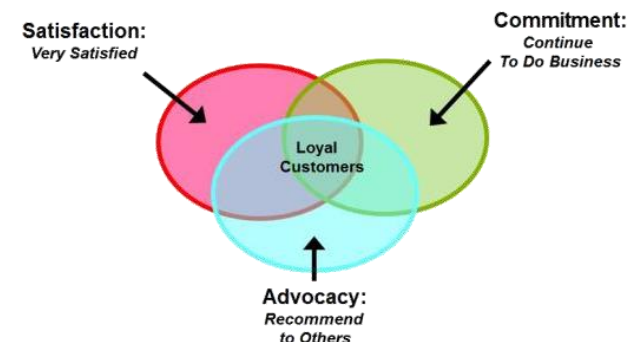
Customer commitment is a very important driver of customer loyalty in the electricity service industry. In a similar way to trust, commitment is considered an important ingredient in successful relationships. In simpler terms, commitment refers to the motivation to continue to do business with and maintain a relationship with a business partner, i.e., the local utility.

For electric utilities, this measurement is about identifying the number of customers who feel they “want to” vs. “have to” do business with you.

Potential benefits of commitment may include word of mouth communications - an important aspect of attitudinal loyalty. Committed customers have been known to demonstrate several beneficial behaviours; for example, committed customers tend to:

- Come to you. One of the key benefits of establishing a good level of customer loyalty is customers will come to you when they need a product or service

Customer Loyalty Model



- Validate information received from 3rd parties with information and expertise that you have
- Try new products/initiatives
- Perhaps they will even trust you when recommendations are made
- Be more price tolerant
- More receptivity of utility viewpoints on various issues
- More tolerance of errors or issues which inevitably take a swipe at the utility
- Stronger levels of perception regarding how the utility is managed.



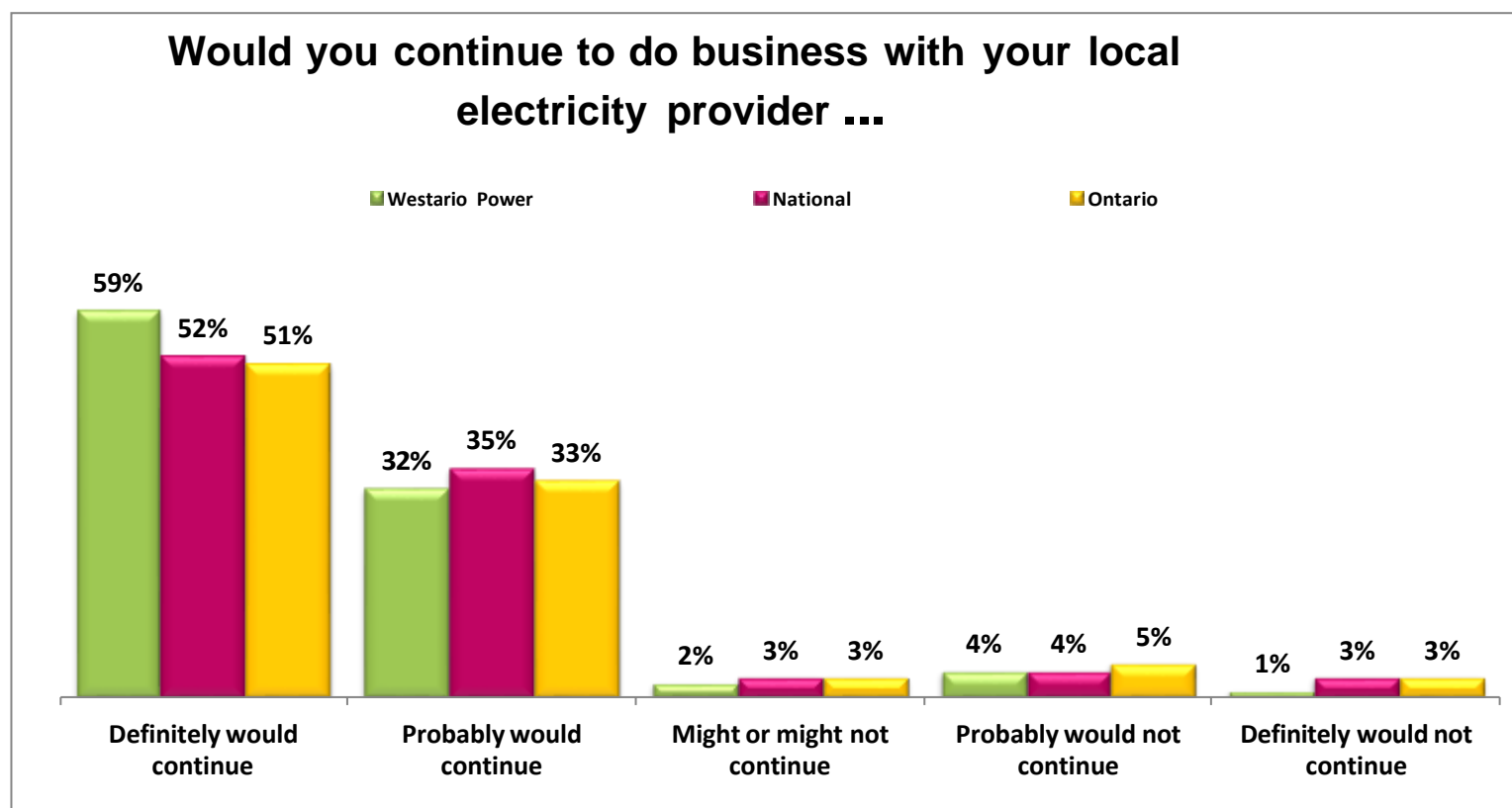
Though customers cannot physically leave you, they can emotionally leave you, and when they do, it becomes an extreme challenge to garner their participation or support for utility initiatives.

| Electricity customers' loyalty – ... Is a company that you would like to continue to do business with | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| Top 2 boxes: 'Agree Strongly + Somewhat' would recommend | 91% | 87% | 85% |
| Agree strongly | 59% | 52% | 51% |
| Agree somewhat | 32% | 35% | 33% |
| Neither agree or disagree | 2% | 3% | 3% |
| Disagree somewhat | 4% | 4% | 5% |
| Disagree strongly | 1% | 3% | 3% |

Base: total respondents

| Electricity customers' loyalty – ... Is a company that you would like to continue to do business with | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| Westario Power | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
| Top 2 boxes: 'Definitely + Probably' would continue | 91% | - | 88% | - | 88% |

Base: total respondents / (-) not a participant of the survey year



Base: total respondents

Word of mouth

Advocacy is one of the metrics measured in determining customer loyalty. Essentially, companies believe a loyal customer is one who is spreading the value of the business to others, leading new people to the business, and helping the company grow. Customer referrals, endorsements, and spreading the word are extremely important forms of customer behaviour. For LDCs, this is about generating positive referents about the LDC as a relevant and valuable enterprise.

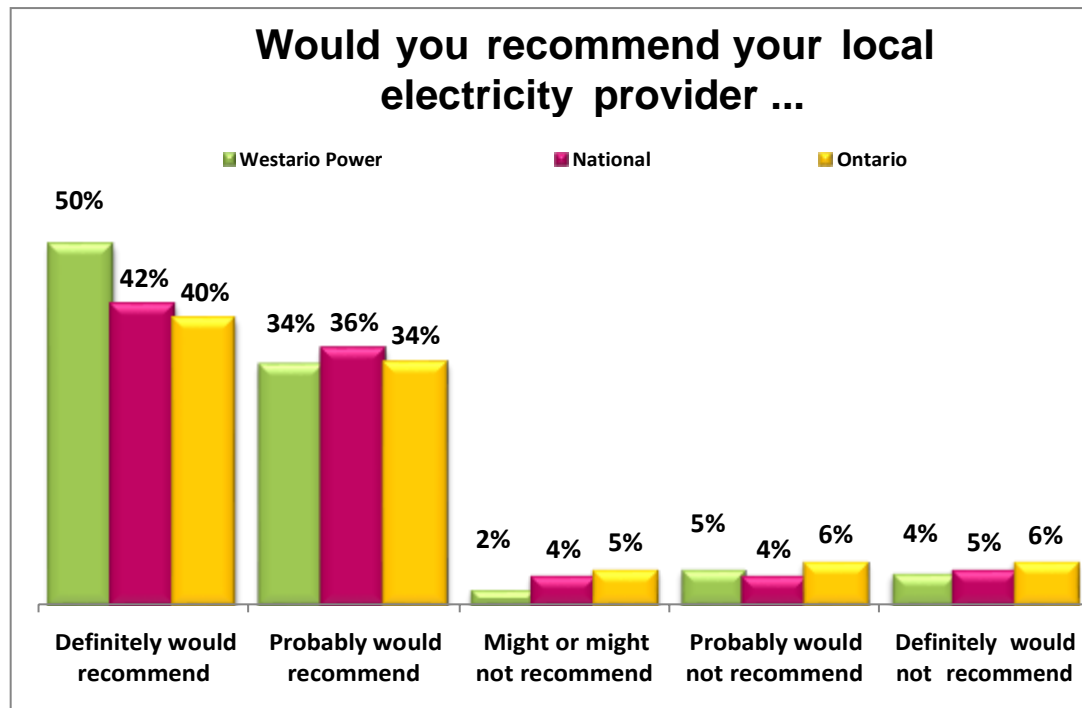


When customers are loyal to a company, product, or service, they are not only more likely to purchase from the company again, but they are more likely to recommend it to others – to openly share their positive feelings and experiences with others. In today's world, thanks to the Internet, they can tell and influence millions of people. The same holds true, if not more so, when customers are disloyal. Disgruntled customers could share their negative experiences with an ever-widening audience, jeopardizing a company's reputation and resulting in fewer engaged customers and/or customers who are Favourable or Secure. Secure customers typically are advocates, and they are deeply connected and brand-involved.

Customer Loyalty Model



Would you tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statement? Westario Power is a company that you would recommend to a friend or colleague ...



Base: total respondents

Word of mouth communication is a potent form of communication and influence. When customers speak to other customers (or their peers), it is more credible; it goes through fewer perceptual filters and can enhance the view of services or products better than marketing communication.

There are two forms of word of mouth which utilities need to understand. The first is **Experience-based word of mouth** which is the most common and most powerful form. It results from a customer's direct experience with the utility or the re-statement of a direct experience from a trusted source.

The second is **Relay-based word of mouth**. This is when customers pass along important messages to others based on what they have learned through the more traditional forms of communications. For example, if the utility was communicating an offer for "free LED lights" chances are high the offer will be "relayed" to others through word of mouth.

For an electric utility, specific examples of potential positive advocacy behaviour include:

- Recommending other customers specifically locate in the geographic area which is serviced by that utility
- Supporting the utility's positions or actions on energy-related public issues, including the environment
- Supporting the utility's position on the location and construction of facilities
- Providing testimonials about positive experiences with the utility

| Electricity customers' loyalty – ... is a company that you would recommend to a friend or colleague | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| Top 2 boxes: 'Agree Strongly + Somewhat' would recommend | 84% | 78% | 74% |
| Agree strongly | 50% | 42% | 40% |
| Agree somewhat | 34% | 36% | 34% |
| Neither agree or disagree | 2% | 4% | 5% |
| Disagree somewhat | 5% | 4% | 6% |
| Disagree strongly | 4% | 5% | 6% |

Base: total respondents

| Electricity customers' loyalty – is a company that you would recommend to a friend or colleague | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| Westario Power | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
| Top 2 boxes: 'Definitely + Probably' would recommend | 84% | - | 82% | - | 81% |

Base: total respondents / (-) not a participant of the survey year

Our survey research, as well as theory, backs up the fact that if your customers are willing to endorse you and put their reputation on the line to recommend you, they also trust you and are satisfied with the service you are providing.

Net Supporter Score (NSS) vs. Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Supporter

The Net Supporter Score™ (NSS) is a metric which measures how likely customers could **support** policy changes, actions, programs, or service changes or enhancements the LDC wishes to make.

The NSS is a metric developed to help the organization and its people continue on a path of improving customer experiences, whether those experiences are in-person, over the telephone, or online. In a nutshell, the NSS reflects the net number of customers who have confidence in the LDC to continue to serve in their best interests.

In a world where technology, societal, legislative, and regulatory changes can happen quickly, utilities need to adapt and respond professionally without causing customer disruption. Supporters may not “like” a change, but they are more likely to “support” the change because they believe the utility is operating in the best interests of all parties.

| Net Supporter Score™ (NSS) | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| | Opportunity Range <20% | Good Range 20-40% | Very Good Range 40+% |
| Westario Power | -- | 30% | -- |
| Ontario Benchmark | -- | 20% | -- |

Base: total respondents; range bands represent 2021 data and can change year-to-year

Westario Power has a Net Supporter Score™ (NSS) of 30%.

The Ontario benchmark is 20% and the UtilityPULSE database average is 26%.

The Net Promoter Score™ (NPS) is a well-known measurement that is respected for its simplicity and tendency to help an organization and its people focus on customer experiences. For utilities, customers with a high net promoter score may be good candidates for increased outreach and offer demand response and other utility programs. In a sense, it is a complementary measure to the well-established loyalty measure we call “Secure” customers.

Promoter

Nonetheless, the NPS is an easy calculation and is based on the score of one question. That question is about the subject of “recommend to others.” The NPS was designed to help companies sell more products and services. For utilities, the NPS is best suited as an affinity gauge. Like other measures, Satisfaction, Loyalty, CEES, CEPr, NSS, and others, NPS is another measure that can promote internal dialogue about how processes, policies, and service can evolve so that more customers would “recommend” the utility.

The NPS metric was developed by and is a registered trademark of Fred Reichheld, Bain & Company, and Satmetrix in 2003.

Westario Power has a Net Promoter Score™ (NSS) of 39%. The Ontario benchmark is 24%, and the UtilityPULSE database average is 35%.

| Net Promoter Score™ (NPS) | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| | Opportunity Range <5% | Good Range 5-25% | Very Good Range 25+% |
| Westario Power | -- | -- | 39% |
| Ontario Benchmark | -- | 24% | -- |

Base: total respondents; range bands represent 2021 data and can change year-to-year

Corporate image

Although reputation is an intangible concept, a strong corporate image makes it easier to capture the attention of more customers – more often. Also, to be seen as an independent organization, thereby making it easier to introduce new ideas. Employees appreciate a strong corporate image.

Attributes measured in the annual UtilityPULSE survey which are strongly linked to a utility's image include:

| Attributes linked to Company Image and Reputation | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| Keeps its promises to its customers and community | 86% | 83% | 83% |
| Adapts well to changes in customer expectations | 81% | 78% | 76% |
| Pro-active in communicating changes and issues which may affect service | 81% | 79% | 79% |
| Customer-focused and treats customers as if they're valued | 83% | 79% | 79% |
| Spends money prudently to keep the electricity system reliable | 82% | 77% | 76% |
| Is a socially responsible company | 86% | 83% | 82% |
| Company to recommend | 85% | 83% | 82% |
| Delivers on its service commitments | 88% | 86% | 86% |
| Is 'easy to do business with' | 87% | 84% | 84% |
| Operates a cost-effective electricity system | 76% | 75% | 70% |
| Is a trusted and trustworthy company | 87% | 84% | 84% |

Base: total respondents with an opinion

Corporate Credibility & Trust

Credibility is a judgment customers and others make about whether a person or an organization has the competencies and experience to do what they promise to do. Trust is a feeling or belief that a person or an organization they are dealing with is doing so in an honest, open manner with no hidden agendas. How customers and other stakeholders respond to your communications is affected by the person's perception. Without credibility and trust, everything you say to customers, employees, and others can be questioned.

Of paramount importance to maintaining credibility & trust is effectively managing expectations—customers, employees, and other stakeholders that matter to the business of the LDC. A key to this is open and honest communications. An important benefit of having a high degree of credibility & trust is, authentic collaboration can become a reality. Credibility & trust is a powerful currency for building relationships. Credibility & trust are outcomes based on what the LDC does, not what it might be doing.

| Attributes strongly linked to Credibility & Trust | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|---------|
| | Westario Power | National | Ontario |
| Efficiently manages the electricity system | 84% | 83% | 82% |
| Keeps its promises to customers and the community | 86% | 83% | 83% |
| Customer-focused and treats customers as if they're valued | 83% | 79% | 79% |
| Is a trusted and trustworthy company | 87% | 84% | 84% |

Base: total respondents with an opinion

Knowledge is captured by the utility's ability to demonstrate that it is actively aware of industry, regulatory and economic changes within the industry and how these might impact the lives of customers.

Knowledge

Simul/UtilityPULSE research shows the under-pinning components which lead customers to believe an organization has credibility and can be trusted are: Knowledge, Integrity, Involvement and Trust.

Trust — Trust is achieved through a track record of consistent and reliable performance, delivering on commitments and demonstrated accountability.

Trust

Involvement — Corporate Involvement is increasingly important to Canadian communities as it is an opportunity for their local utility to use their resources and man-power to benefit people at the community level. This helps to build credibility as customers see that the organization is acting and delivering on its commitments. This helps customers regard the utility with esteem and respect.

Integrity is established by demonstrating adherence to a code of conduct. It requires consistently acting in accordance with the values and goals that have been communicated to customers.

Integrity

Involvement

Credibility and Trust Index

Westario Power 86%

Ontario 84%

National 84%

Priority Planning

Customers are impatient, employees are impatient, company leadership is impatient, we want everything 'right now' and at 'no cost.' Priority planning is about having a (reasonably) clear focus on what is important to customers or other stakeholders, and to help people from feeling overwhelmed. By engaging stakeholders and obtaining their input in undertaking a priority planning process helps to build "prepared minds"—that is, to make sure that the LDC decision-makers have a solid understanding of customer priorities, and what things the business might need to change or make investments in.

Respondents were asked to comment on the priority level of the implementation or execution of different initiatives/projects which encompass operational aspects and/or financial commitment.



A well-communicated sense of organizational priorities helps to align most of the projects and programs in an organization to its strategies. Prioritizing increases the success rates of infrastructure projects or other capital initiatives, increases the alignment and focus of senior management teams around strategic goals, allows

operational teams to make better decisions, and, most important, has everyone aiming to complete set targets.

Looking at a time horizon spanning five years, customers were asked to weigh in on the priority of Westario Power undertaking various projects or initiatives.

| Priority Planning within the next 5 years | | |
|--|----------------|--------------|
| Top 2 Boxes: 'very high + high priority' | Westario Power | Ontario LDCs |
| Maintaining and upgrading equipment to ensure a safe and reliable electricity supply | 92% | 92% |
| Investing to ensure that more frequent and severe weather events will cause less damage to distribution system | 89% | 86% |
| Preventing data breaches and system disruptions due to cyberattack | 84% | 84% |
| Reducing response times to outages | 83% | 84% |
| Investing more in the electricity grid to reduce outages | 82% | 83% |
| Investing more in vegetation management (clearing trees and brush around powerlines for increased safety and reliability) | 78% | 75% |
| Investing in projects to reduce the environmental impact of Westario Power's operations | 74% | 75% |
| Educating the public as it relates to electricity safety | 69% | 69% |
| Educating customers about energy conservation | 67% | 69% |
| Increasing the use of e-billing and paper-free communication options to reduce environmental impact and improve cost-effectiveness | 62% | 65% |
| Burying overhead wires | 60% | 62% |
| Providing sponsorships to local community causes | 57% | 52% |
| Developing a SMART phone application to allow you to view your electricity use and pay your bill | 49% | 52% |
| Providing more self-serve services on the website | 39% | 45% |
| Increasing the use of social media (such as Twitter, Facebook, and others) | 18% | 27% |

Base: total respondents / An aggregate of respondents from 2021 participating LDCs

Respondents for Westario Power identified the following projects/initiatives as top items which Westario Power should focus attention and resources:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Maintaining and upgrading equipment to ensure a safe and reliable electricity supply | 92% |
| 2. Investing to ensure that more frequent and severe weather events will cause less damage to distribution system | 89% |
| 3. Preventing data breaches and system disruptions due to cyberattack | 84% |
| 4. Reducing response times to outages | 83% |
| 5. Investing more in the electricity grid to reduce outages | 82% |



How can service to customers be improved?

The electric utility industry is in a state of continuous transformation. External factors - including shifts in governmental policies, a global thrust to conserve energy, advances in new technologies, and power generation are driving massive changes throughout the industry. LDCs of today and the future can also expect a much more intense level of customer involvement. UtilityPULSE research shows customers want to be heard.

Despite all the talk today centered on quality, new processes and systems, continuous improvement, and costs unless all of this is aimed at obtaining customer satisfaction, it will not be worth much over the longer term.

Qualitative questions typically do not provide statistical richness, which is associated with a quantitative question. However, they do provide words, phrases, insights into the thinking patterns and/or feelings of customers. This means qualitative questions have an interpretive richness that assists in deriving meaning from the survey. The broader range of suggestions we are getting when conducting the survey is a sign the customer base is becoming more and more segmented. Not all customers are the same.

The struggle for electric utilities is finding the right balance between cost-effective, technology-enabled approaches to customer services and person-to-person contact.

Customers want their utility to focus on what matters most; offer products and services which “make a difference in their life,” “gives them peace of mind” and “delivered by trusted and credible people.”

We are interested in knowing what you think are the one or two most important things Westario Power could do to improve service to their customers?

| One or two most important things 'your local utility' could do to improve service | |
|---|----------------|
| | Westario Power |
| Better prices / lower rates | 32% |
| Better power reliability / less power outages | 16% |
| Create an online/mobile APP (i.e. report outages, access bill, etc.) | 7% |
| Better communications / be pro-active | 7% |
| Restore power faster | 7% |
| Better maintenance | 7% |
| Be more environmentally friendly | 6% |
| Improve billing/simplify bill | 5% |
| Better information on outages when they occur | 5% |
| Better website | 4% |
| Bury power lines | 3% |
| Be more efficient / cost-effective | 3% |
| More information & incentives on energy conservation | 3% |
| Pay bill online/other payment methods i.e. credit card | 2% |
| Educate customers more | 2% |

Base: total respondents with suggestions

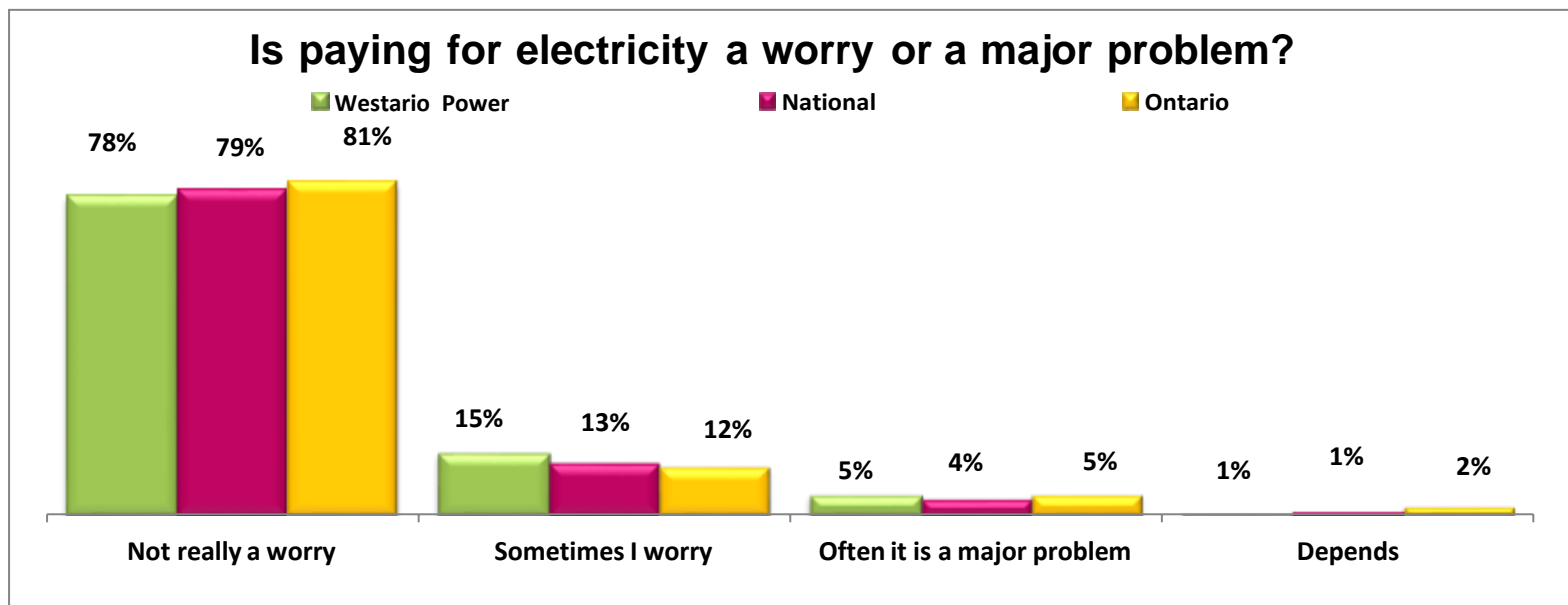
What do customers think about electricity costs?

A conversation with almost any LDC customer will migrate into a conversation around cost. The concern around cost has little to do with age or income, or whether the customer uses a little or a lot of electricity – they all have a concern over costs. Unfortunately, very few customers know how much their LDC gets, of the total electricity bill, to manage the electricity network safely. A customer concern over costs is first and foremost a concern over the total bill. It doesn't help that there have been industry issues, or frequent changes to the pricing of the electricity (as a commodity). The ability to pay is highly correlated to satisfaction.

Next, I am going to read several statements people might use about paying for their electricity. Which one comes closest to your own feelings, even if none is exactly right? Paying for electricity is not really a worry. Sometimes I worry about finding the money to pay for electricity, or Paying for electricity is often a major problem?

| Is paying for electricity a worry or a major problem? | | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------|-------|---------|
| | Not a worry | Sometimes | Often | Depends |
| Westario Power | 78% | 15% | 5% | - |
| National | 79% | 13% | 4% | 1% |
| Ontario | 81% | 12% | 5% | 1% |

Base: total respondents



Base: total respondents

| Is paying for electricity a worry or a major problem? | | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------|-------|---------|
| | Not a worry | Sometimes | Often | Depends |
| Westario Power | | | | |
| <\$30,000 | 49% | 37% | 12% | 2% |
| \$30<\$75,000 | 74% | 17% | 7% | 1% |
| \$75,000+ | 88% | 9% | 1% | 1% |

Base: total respondents

| Is paying for electricity a worry or a major problem? | | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------|-------|---------|
| | Not a worry | Sometimes | Often | Depends |
| Ontario | | | | |
| 2021 | 81% | 12% | 5% | 1% |
| 2020 | 78% | 16% | 3% | 0% |
| 2019 | 72% | 19% | 7% | 1% |
| 2018 | 68% | 21% | 8% | 1% |
| 2017 | 61% | 26% | 10% | 1% |
| National | | | | |
| 2021 | 79% | 13% | 4% | 1% |
| 2020 | 78% | 15% | 3% | 1% |
| 2019 | 74% | 18% | 6% | 0% |
| 2018 | 71% | 18% | 7% | 0% |
| 2017 | 67% | 19% | 11% | 1% |

Base: Ontario and National Benchmarks

Impact of COVID

The pandemic is ongoing, and the situation continues to evolve. Businesses and families continue to deal with the impact. Many businesses have seen a substantial reduction in revenues, lay-offs and even closures. Westario Power's customers have reported the following economic impacts:



| Economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| | Residential |
| Moved to work from home environment | 15% |
| Reduced hours or shifts per week | 8% |
| Increased hours or shifts | 6% |
| Closed business (for self-employed) | 5% |
| Reduced salary/pay cut | 4% |
| Lay-off | 4% |
| Leave of absence | 3% |
| Lost job | 2% |
| None of the above | 62% |

Base: total RESIDENTIAL respondents

REMOTE WORKING



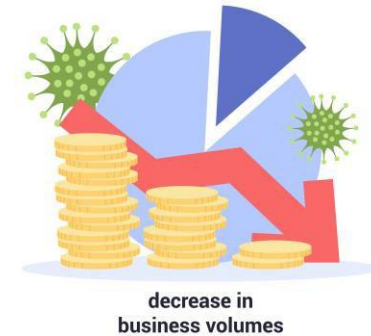
As reported by residential respondents of Westario Power:

8% experienced reduced hours or shifts at work while **15%** moved to a work from home environment.

Base: total RESIDENTIAL respondents

| Economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic | |
|--|------------|
| | Commercial |
| Experienced a significant decline in revenue | 47% |
| Business continued during the pandemic | 47% |
| Reduced employee hours or shifts | 40% |
| Employees worked from home where practical | 37% |
| Laid off employees | 27% |
| Closed the business | 25% |
| Increased employee hours or shifts | 13% |
| Experienced significant sales increase | 10% |
| None of the above | 0% |

Base: total COMMERCIAL respondents



As reported by commercial respondents of Westario Power:

47% experienced a significant decline in revenue while **25%** had to close their business.

Base: total COMMERCIAL respondents

Business owners have employed several strategies to continue operating. Currently, the most difficult aspect to manage is the uncertainty of the current day to day landscape. Whether business owners continue to face challenges or have an opportunity to capitalize and pivot their businesses, there is optimism we are navigating our way back to a “new” normal and the economy will rebound once the pandemic subsides.

What do small commercial customers think?

Based on data in the UtilityPULSE database, small commercial customers have relatively similar views to residential customers about their utility. The tables associated with this report will contain your LDC's specific information as it relates to residential and commercial customers. A word of caution, smaller data samples create greater swings or spreads in the data, hence mitigating the effect of a small data sample by using the UP database. Your specific data can be found in your tables. What follows are the findings from this cohort of LDCs.



Small Commercial Customer (General Service < 50kW Demand)

A small commercial customer is defined by the OEB as a non-residential customer in a less than 50 kW demand rate class. These customers are similar to the residential customer in that their bill does not have a demand component to it and their charges are based upon KWH of consumption. Most of these customers would occupy small storefront locations or offices

An area of concern is the LDC's ability to "target" its communications to the type of business. Beyond having a contact telephone number, company name, and address, there isn't much "knowledge" about the small commercial customer. In a time when "targeted" communication is important, knowing the type of category of small commercial accounts would assist LDCs in delivering meaningful messages in an effective way. This

could be particularly important in the area of managing consumption, i.e., day, or time of day when energy use is high. In time, LDCs will have to do a better job of segmenting their communication. After all, a small restaurant is different from a small accounting office.

| Satisfaction: Pre & Post | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| Satisfaction (Top 2 Boxes: 'very + somewhat satisfied') | Residential | Commercial |
| Initially | 93% | 95% |
| End of Interview | 93% | 93% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database



| Killer B's: Outages & Bills problems | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Respondents with outage problems | 36% | 30% |
| Respondents with billing problems | 7% | 10% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database

| Did you try to contact your electric utility about ANY issue over the past 12 months? | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Yes | 24% | 39% |
| No | 75% | 60% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database

| How many times did you contact your utility? | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| 1 | 38% | 29% |
| 2 | 28% | 28% |
| 3 | 14% | 13% |
| More than 3 | 17% | 28% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database who responded 'YES' to contact the utility over past 12 months

| Which issue prompted contact with the utility? | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Outages | 51% | 39% |
| Billing | 41% | 59% |
| An issue other than Billing or Outages | 19% | 17% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database who responded 'YES' to contact the utility over past 12 months

| How many outages have you had in last 12 months? | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| 1 | 17% | 12% |
| 2 | 22% | 27% |
| 3 | 20% | 9% |
| More than 3 | 40% | 49% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database who responded 'OUTAGES' to issue prompting contact to the utility

| Did you visit the utility's website to try to resolve your issue on your own, or to get more clarity before contacting the utility? | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Yes | 43% | 39% |
| No | 57% | 61% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database who responded 'YES' to contact the utility over past 12 months

| Communication methods used to contact local utility | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Telephone | 90% | 95% |
| Email | 8% | 16% |
| The utility's website | 7% | 3% |
| Social media i.e. Twitter, Facebook | 2% | 0% |
| Mail | 1% | 1% |
| In-person | 2% | 1% |

Base: total respondents

| Overall satisfaction with most recent experience | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Top 2 Boxes: 'very + somewhat satisfied' | 73% | 74% |
| Bottom 2 Boxes: 'somewhat + very dissatisfied' | 25% | 24% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database

As it relates to the six attributes associated with customer service:

| Very or fairly satisfied with... | Residential | Commercial |
|--|-------------|------------|
| The time it took to contact someone | 72% | 69% |
| The time it took someone to deal with your problem | 66% | 71% |
| The helpfulness of the staff who dealt with your problem | 71% | 79% |
| The knowledge of the staff who dealt with your problem | 72% | 82% |
| The level of courtesy of the staff who dealt with your problem | 81% | 89% |
| The quality of information provided by the staff member | 70% | 80% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database

| Comparisons between Residential and Commercial | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Loyalty Groups | Residential | Commercial |
| Secure | 32% | 34% |
| Still Favourable | 17% | 18% |
| Indifferent | 46% | 43% |
| At risk | 6% | 5% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database

| Loyalty Model Factors | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Very/somewhat satisfied | 93% | 95% |
| Definitely/probably would continue | 88% | 91% |
| Definitely/probably would recommend | 81% | 86% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database

| Is paying for electricity a worry or a major problem? | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Not a worry | 32% | 34% |
| Sometimes | 17% | 18% |
| Often | 46% | 43% |
| Depends | 6% | 5% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database

| Important attributes which describe operational effectiveness | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Provides consistent, reliable electricity | 91% | 92% |
| Delivers on its service commitments to customers | 88% | 89% |
| Has accurate billing | 88% | 88% |
| Quickly handles outages and restores power | 89% | 89% |
| Makes electrical safety a top priority | 89% | 91% |
| Efficiently manages the electricity system | 85% | 86% |
| Is a company that is 'easy to do business with' | 86% | 87% |
| Operates a cost-effective electricity distribution system | 75% | 75% |
| Standard of reliability meets expectations | 89% | 90% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database with an opinion

| Important attributes which shape perceptions about corporate image | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Keeps its promises to customers and the community | 85% | 86% |
| Is a socially responsible company | 85% | 85% |
| Is a trusted and trustworthy company | 87% | 87% |
| Adapts well to changes in customer expectations | 80% | 82% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database with an opinion

| Important attributes which shape perceptions about service quality and value | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| | Residential | Commercial |
| Is pro-active in communicating changes and issues which may affect your electricity service | 81% | 82% |
| Provides good value for money | 74% | 75% |
| Customer-focused and treats customers as if they're valued | 82% | 83% |
| Deals professionally with customers' problems | 87% | 88% |
| Spends money prudently | 82% | 82% |
| Provides information and tools to help manage electricity consumption | 81% | 80% |
| The cost of electricity is reasonable when compared to other utilities | 69% | 68% |

Base: total respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database with an opinion

| Economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| | Residential |
| Closed business (for self-employed) | 4% |
| Reduced hours per week | 10% |
| Reduced salary/pay cut | 6% |
| Lay-off | 6% |
| Lost job | 5% |
| Moved to a work from home environment | 26% |
| Leave of absence | 3% |
| Increased hours or shifts per week | 6% |
| None of the above | 53% |

Base: total RESIDENTIAL respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database

| Economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic | |
|---|------------|
| | Commercial |
| Closed the business | 20% |
| Laid off employees | 29% |
| Experienced a significant decline in revenue (sales) | 44% |
| Business continued during the pandemic | 50% |
| Employees worked from home where practical | 38% |
| Increased employee hours or shifts | 13% |
| Reduced employee hours or shifts | 38% |
| Experienced a significant increase in revenue (sales) | 13% |
| None of the above | 4% |

Base: total COMMERCIAL respondents from the 2021 UtilityPULSE Database

Method

The findings in this report are based on telephone interviews conducted for Simul Corp. / UtilityPULSE by Logit Group between October 13 - 21, 2021, with 402 respondents who pay or look after the electricity bills from a list of residential and small and medium-sized business customers supplied by Westario Power.

The sample of phone numbers chosen was drawn randomly to ensure each business or residential phone number on the list had an equal chance of being included in the poll.

The sample was stratified so that 85% of the interviews were conducted with residential customers and 15% with commercial customers.

In sampling theory, in 19 cases out of 20 (95% of polls in other words), the results based on a random sample of 402 residential and commercial customers will differ by no more than ± 4.90 percentage points where opinion is evenly split.

This means you can be 95% certain that the survey results do not vary by more than 4.90 percentage points in either direction from results that would have been obtained by interviewing all Westario Power residential and small and

medium-sized commercial customers if the ratio of residential to commercial customers is 85%:15%.

The margin of error for the sub-samples is larger. To see the error margin for subgroups, use the calculator at <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>.

Interviewers reached 2,847 households and businesses from the customer list supplied by Westario Power. The 402 who completed the interview represent a 14% response rate.

The findings for the Simul/UtilityPULSE National Benchmark of Electric Utility Customers are based on telephone interviews conducted with adults throughout the country who are responsible for paying electric utility bills. The ratio of 85% residential customers and 15% small and medium-sized business customers in the National study reflects the ratios used in the local community surveys. The margin of error in the National poll is ± 3.10 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error in the Ontario poll is ± 3.10 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For the National study, and the Ontario study, the sample of phone numbers chosen was drawn by recognized probability sampling methods to ensure each region of the

country/province was represented in proportion to its population and by a method that gave all residential telephone numbers, both listed and unlisted, an equal chance of being included in the poll.

The data were weighted in each region of the country to match the regional shares of the population.

The margin of error refers only to sampling error; other non-random forms of error may be present. Even in true random samples, precision can be compromised by other factors, such as the wording of questions or the order in which questions were asked.

Random samples of any size have some degree of precision. A larger sample is not always better than a smaller sample. The important rule in sampling is not how many respondents are selected but how they are selected. A reliable sample selects poll respondents randomly or in a manner which ensures that everyone in the population being surveyed has an equal chance of being selected.

How can a sample of only several hundred truly reflect the opinions of thousands or millions of electricity customers within a few percentage points?

Measures of sample reliability are derived from the science of statistics. At the root of statistical reliability is probability,

the odds of obtaining a particular outcome by chance alone. For example, the chances of having a coin come up heads in a single toss are 50%. A head is one of only two possible outcomes.

The chance of getting two heads in two coin tosses is less because two heads are only one of four possible outcomes: a head/head, head/tail, tail/head, and tail/tail.

But as the number of coin tosses increases, it becomes increasingly more likely to get outcomes that are either close to or exactly half heads and half tails because there are more ways to get such outcomes. Sample survey reliability works the same way but on a much larger scale.

As in coin tosses, the most likely sample outcome is the true percentage of whatever we are measuring across the total customer base or population surveyed. Next, most likely are outcomes very close to this true percentage. A statement of the potential margin of error or sample precision reflects this.

Some pages in the computer tables also show the standard deviation (S.D.) and the standard error of the estimate (S.E.) for the findings. The standard deviation embraces the range where 68% (or approximately two-thirds) of the respondents would fall if the distribution of answers were a normal bell-shaped curve. The spread of responses is a way of showing

how much the result deviates from the "standard mean" or average. In the Westario Power data on corporate image, Simul converted the answers to a point scale with 4 meaning agree strongly, 3 meaning agree somewhat, and so on (see in the computer tables).

For example, the mean score is 3.62 for providing consistent, reliable electricity. The average is 3.17 for provides information and tools to help customers manage electricity consumption.

For reliable electricity, the standard deviation is 0.68 . For provides information and tools to help customers manage electricity consumption, the Standard Deviation (S.D.) is 0.82. These findings mean there is a wider range of opinion – meaning less consensus – about help to manage electricity consumption vs Westario Power energy supplies are reliable.

Beneath the S.D.. in the tables is the standard error of the estimate. The S.E. is a measure of confidence or reliability, roughly equivalent to the error margin cited for sample sizes. The S.E. measures how far off the sample's results are from the standard deviation. The smaller the S.E., the greater the reliability of the data.

In other words, a low S.E. indicates the answers given by respondents in a certain group (such as residential bill payers or women) do not differ much from the probable spread of the answers "predicted" in sampling and probability theory.

In certain instances, all of the sub-datasets from the entire UtilityPULSE database for 2021 were concatenated in order to use the average of all the control samples for comparison.

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UtilityPULSE, through polls and surveys, provides executives and managers with customer feedback that assists in making strategic and operational decisions. You know lots of companies that can gather data and then give a report. We believe that by specializing in the utility sector with our polls and surveys, you get a stronger analysis of data and answers to critical questions that help you formulate key strategies to assist your leaders in creating a better place to work and a better place to do business with.

UtilityPULSE is uniquely positioned to help your utility get feedback from Customers through its Annual Electric Utility Customer Satisfaction Survey or customized research designed for you. In addition, we understand what it takes to create an organization where employees are engaged and enthusiastic about customers and their work.

We're the only research company with 23 continuous years of producing an independent Ontario and National benchmark.

Anyone can collect and present data – we believe understanding the industry before doing so is crucial.

Contact us when experience, expertise, and high standards are essential for your next customer engagement activity. We promise to listen to your needs and design and delivery a customer engagement activity or survey which meets your needs.

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