How BGE used E Source expertise to encourage employees to engage in improving the customer experience

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The challenge BGE faced

Like many utilities, BGE is on a journey to improve its customers' experiences. As an operating company of Exelon Corp., BGE started investing seriously in improving customer experience (CX) in 2016, as part of an Exelon-wide initiative.

Luba Abrams, CX manager at BGE, quickly realized that ensuring consistent delivery of a positive and memorable CX would require a customer-centric culture that supported the utility's CX strategies. Abrams knew that the workforce is the cornerstone of an organization's culture, so efforts to shift to a customer-centric focus must involve all levels of employees.

To tackle a challenge like this, Abrams knew she was going to need help.

What BGE did about it

Using BGE's subscription to the E Source Customer Experience Strategy Service, Abrams soon discovered the 6 Es of cultivating engaged employees—our research-backed framework for increasing employees' emotional connection and commitment to an organization's strategy. This framework provides a six-step approach for enlisting and enrolling employees in CX efforts; Abrams kept the 6 Es in mind as she embarked on a mission to include, involve, and inspire employees so that BGE could improve its customer satisfaction.

Empathize

The first step in our framework is empathize. During the empathize phase, we ask, "How might we develop a deep understanding of employees' attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and constraints related to

becoming more customer-centric?" To that end, Abrams focused on increasing employee awareness of the company's CX strategy and goals by referencing the E Source Employee-Listening Session Facilitator's Guide and Agenda, as well as gathering advice from E Source experts, to inform a series of engaging CX discussions.

In 2018, Abrams conducted 26 CX discussions with 715 employees. As of September 2019, she had reached an additional 426 employees through 15 more events. Through these sessions, BGE was able to cultivate an ongoing dialogue with employees about why CX is important and how each employee has a role in improving it. The empathize step is important in beginning the shift from "doing CX improvements *to* employees" to "doing CX improvements *with* employees."

Encourage

Abrams also built a cross-functional network of CX champions to continue the work of encouraging various departments to engage in customer-centric ways of working. She used E Source's guidance to clarify these important roles and to keep the champions engaged. These employees are now conducting their own CX discussions, embodying the principles of the second phase in the 6 Es framework—encourage. This phase explains how to involve employees directly in improving CX.

Embrace

The sixth phase—embrace—encourages utilities to recognize and reward the shifts in customer-centric mindsets, attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes that they want to see. Abrams saw an opportunity to revamp and revitalize BGE's customer service rewards and recognition program to increase engagement. She aligned the program with the CX strategy implemented at other Exelon utilities and, with advice from E Source, relaunched the program with BGE's 2018 WOW! Awards event. This company-wide celebration included recognition for great CX, photos with executives, and giveaways to increase awareness and excitement.

What BGE achieved

BGE has been thrilled with the results of its increased focus on encouraging employees to engage in CX improvements. First, employees loved the WOW! Awards event, which was rated "very good" or "excellent" by 90% of attendees.

Proving the saying that employee experience drives customer experience, BGE has also seen improvements in its customer satisfaction since embarking on these efforts. From 2017 to 2018, BGE moved from sixth to third place among large eastern utilities in the J.D. Power Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study. In January 2019, the utility ranked first among large eastern utilities for commercial electric and gas and residential gas satisfaction in the J.D. Power awards, and it ranked second among those same utilities in residential electric customer satisfaction. BGE also ranked seventh nationally out of 84 brands in satisfaction for residential gas customers.

How E Source helped

Throughout BGE's journey to better encourage employees to engage in CX improvements, Abrams relied on E Source research, expertise, and support.

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“There are so many opportunities,” observed Abrams, “but E Source helped me prioritize by working with me to determine which ones are most important from the standpoint of engagement and customer satisfaction, within the constraints of our business and the industry.”

Through BGE’s membership in the E Source Customer Experience Strategy Service, Abrams was also able to share successes and challenges with other utilities via peer sharing calls, to make connections outside the utility industry through E Source’s network, and to vet new concepts and approaches with E Source’s CX analysts.

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Be like BGE

To put the power of E Source’s customer experience research, expertise, and knowledge to work for your utility, contact us to learn more about our Customer Experience Strategy Service and E Source Solution service.

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