# Now accepting entries for the E Source Achievements in Customer and Employee Experience awards

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As we kick off the 2022 E Source Achievements in Customer and Employee Experience awards, we wanted to look back and celebrate last year's winners. Hopefully, these top projects from 2021 will ignite a spark for your own customer experience (CX) and employee experience (EX) efforts. We're accepting entries through June 10 and want you to share your great work in making your utility more customer- or employee-centric.

### Ready to enter your achievements?

Learn more about our Achievements in Customer and Employee Experience awards and submit your achievements today!

Enter your CX and EX achievements

## CX achievements

This award celebrates utility excellence in customer experience management, highlighting tactics and programs that enhance customers' experiences across key journeys such as:

- Billing
- Payment
- Web or mobile experience
- Start or stop service
- New construction
- Community interaction and services
- Outage management

- Communications

In 2021 we honored Con Edison and Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) for their great CX work.

## Con Edison

Our winner of the 2021 Achievement in Customer Experience, Con Edison took a customer-first approach to launch its virtual assistant, Watt. The bot can answer simple questions and help customers complete transactions, saving customers (and Con Edison's contact center) time and effort. Launching Watt involved a cross-departmental team of experts as well as customer feedback to create Watt's personality and name. Con Edison used surveys to get customers and employees to vote on Watt's name and provided the following goals for its personality:

> We wanted customers to feel like they were chatting with a friend who's helping them through a process that might seem intimidating. Watt needed to come across as approachable, clear, sympathetic, and most of all helpful, without sounding wooden or robotic.

Some of the things Watt helps customers do on the Con Edison website include:

- Viewing and paying their bill
- Enrolling in a payment agreement
- Making a payment for another customer
- Requesting a payment extension
- Requesting to chat with a live agent

And customers who need enhanced support can smoothly transfer to a live agent who can pick up the conversation without asking for redundant information from the customer. Future upgrades for Watt include integration with the interactive voice response system IVR, as well as Spanish language support.

## Tacoma Public Utilities

TPU is the runner-up for Achievement in Customer Experience because of its work with small and midsize businesses (SMBs) during COVID. At the end of 2020, TPU received $750,000 of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to help its SMB customers through the pandemic. But the utility had just six weeks to disperse the funding. To do so, TPU needed to get creative in its customer outreach. The utility used a variety of channels to engage and connect with its SMB community, including:

- An email campaign, which sent multiple emails to all business accounts with valid email addresses
- Social media communications through Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram
- Partnership with local business groups including City of Tacoma Economic Development, Tacoma County Chamber, Central Latinx, City of Tacoma Business Districts, Tacoma Urban League, and the Asia Pacific Cultural Center
- Targeted outbound calling to businesses by the utility's Business Solutions Office and account executives

- Canvasing business to business

At a time when SMBs were particularly hard hit, TPU was able to engage with this customer group and distribute grants to 700 businesses. Account executives at TPU found the experience rewarding as well. Overall sentiment among TPU's SMB customers also improved, resulting in higher customer feedback scores for customer satisfaction, being easy to do business with, having friendly and courteous employees, and having knowledgeable and well-trained employees.

TPU's senior account executive Jennifer Ramos-Collins discussed the utility's work during the E Source Forum 2021 session "What COVID taught us about the needs of small and midsize businesses."

## Hear Ramos-Collins describe TPU's CX efforts



# EX achievements

This award celebrates innovative methods in employee engagement that result in a favorable customer experience. It highlights utilities that are working hard to encourage, enable, educate, empower, and reward employees to provide exceptional customer service. In 2021 we honored BGE and FortisBC.

## BGE

Our winner of the 2021 Achievement in Employee Experience, BGE had been hosting its WOW! Customer Experience Awards for years to recognize employees' efforts to provide customers with a great experience. Because of COVID, 2020 posed a challenge for the awards and BGE had to shift to host a great event in a virtual world. The nomination and voting process moved online as well, creating an easier and more efficient way of recognizing employees. The event itself had over 300 attendees and BGE noted:

> Despite the circumstances, we were committed to providing a meaningful ceremony to honor employees. Not only was our award program innovative and original, with visually appealing collateral and highly engaging video footage, but the execution was also flawless.

Executives presented the awards and used videos to highlight honorees. The event also provided a space to network and connect with employees—something that COVID made more difficult on a day-to-day basis. Award winners and event committee members received gifts to further recognize their work.

Overall, BGE saw a record number of nominees for its WOW! Customer Experience Awards. And the awards "improved the morale and culture within the company during a year fraught with struggle and distance." Its 475 award winners represented all areas of the organization—from finance to the contact center. Employee feedback on the event was overwhelmingly positive.

## FortisBC

FortisBC was our runner-up for Achievement in Employee Experience for its work to keep its contact center employees engaged while working remotely during the pandemic. FortisBC took several approaches to make sure employees were appreciated and connected:

- *Employee care packages.* These included webcams to make it easier to stay connected, a custom desk organizer, hand sanitizer, tips for setting up a home office, healthy snacks, a gift card to a local grocery store, and a note for each employee from their manager.
- *An updated contact center marquee, dubbed the Buzz Board.* Previously an informative tool to provide real-time metrics of contact center performance and calls waiting to be answered, FortisBC redesigned the marquee to be much more fun and employee-focused, including updates like upcoming birthdays and pet pictures. It also included mental health resources and reminders to move and take breaks during the day as well as monthly customer satisfaction and first-call resolution metrics.
- *A social platform to recognize employee performance and foster encouragement from colleagues.* Employees receiving Kudos earn points that they can redeem for gift cards or FortisBC-branded merchandise. Based on employee feedback, the utility also granted employees the ability to use

points for charitable giving.

- *A virtual customer service awards ceremony.* Before the pandemic, FortisBC held an annual Customer Service Awards (CSA) ceremony where employees could get dressed up, eat some food, hear from presenters, and have fun. With the onset of COVID, FortisBC had to shift to an online celebration, adding more awards and categories to honor employees. The utility mailed party packages to employees, with noisemakers, confetti, popcorn, and CSA-themed snacks so they could participate more fully in the ceremony.

## Honoring utilities' achievements in customer and employee experience

Watch BGE's manager of CX, Luba Abrams, speak about the WOW! Customer Experience Awards (3:00) and Con Edison project specialist, Greg DeBellas, dive into the launch of Watt the chatbot (16:50) during our E Source Forum session honoring our 2021 winners.



If you’re inspired by our 2021 winners, now is your chance to submit your own great work! We’re accepting entries through June 10, and we’d love to hear from you. Enter today! We’ll honor our 2022 winners at the E Source Forum 2022.

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