Achievements in Customer and Employee Experience: 2022 honorees

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Happy CX Day! To celebrate, we're honoring this year's winners of the E Source Achievements in Customer and Employee Experience. Each year we celebrate the great work utilities are doing to create excellent experiences for their customers and provide a supportive and engaging workplace for their employees. Without further ado, here are this year's finalists!

Create life-changing customer and employee experiences in 2023

Fill out this short form to start a conversation about your needs and how we can help.

Customer experience 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

This year, we're pleased to honor NiSource and Dominion Energy for their great customer experience (CX) work.

NiSource

NiSource won the 2022 Achievement in Customer Experience with its multiyear digital CX project (**figure 1**). The Connected Customer Experience Transformation empowered nearly 4 million customers to transact with NiSource online.

Figure 1: Winner of the 2022 Achievement in Customer Experience

Jennifer Montague, senior vice president and CCO of NiSource, accepts the award during a session at the E Source Forum.



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When COVID drastically increased customer expectations for digital self-service, NiSource responded by building out an energy-conscious consumer approach supported by a holistic digital strategy. NiSource focused on elevating the customer experience through innovation, empowering its customers, and building community partnerships. According to Jennifer Montague, “The increased demand by customers for digital options has become abundantly clear. Customers are not only asking for it, they are demanding it.”

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Some of the changes NiSource implemented in this project include:

- The launch of an online stop-, start-, and move-service feature to streamline account changes, deflecting over 1 million calls from its customer care centers
- Increased awareness of and enrollment in paperless billing, encouraging customers to view their bills online anywhere, anytime
- The launch of new mobile apps for its Columbia Gas and NIPSCO companies, empowering customers to self-serve and access account and billing information whenever they need it
- The introduction of chatbots across all NiSource websites and apps in addition to live chat with agents to provide a swift line of communication for all customers
- Completion of a digital technology scan with E Source to help the utility plan next steps with future projects to optimize the customer experience

Over the past couple of years, NiSource has significantly improved its customer-facing digital properties. The project was a complete transformation of the customer experience and the website improvements moved NiSource up to ninth place in the E Source Website Benchmark.

Dominion Energy

Dominion Energy was runner-up for the 2022 Achievement in Customer Experience for its development of the Builder app, which enables builders to submit a request for service and view the status of a current request in real time. (Dominion Energy was unable to attend the award ceremony.) As Dominion Energy South Carolina and North Carolina continued to achieve a record number of residential new construction meter sets, it became apparent that the utility needed an innovative solution to make placing and managing new service orders easier and more efficient.

Dominion Energy's IT department developed the app. It features a user-friendly dashboard that displays the builder's active service requests, notes any action items for the builder to complete, and forecasts the completion date.

"The new [Builder] app has streamlined our customer service to the builders and allowed our account managers more time to provide enhanced personal service to these important business allies." —Keith Skipper, Regional Sales Manager, Dominion Energy

Dominion Energy engaged multiple residential new construction builders in the development process to review and provide feedback. Since the initial rollout in the fall of 2021, the Builder app has been well received by both the builder community and Dominion Energy employees who support the residential new construction business.

Keith Skipper, regional sales manager at Dominion Energy told us, "The new Builder app has increased the productivity of our account manager sales team by empowering builders to place orders, obtain updates, and verify the completion of orders in real time. The new app has streamlined our customer service to the builders and allowed our account managers more time to provide enhanced personal service to these important business allies."

The Builder app is a tangible example of Dominion Energy's CX vision to deliver a consistent, effortless, customer-centered experience through the investment in technology and tools to improve the builder start-service journey.

Employee experience achievements

This award celebrates innovative methods in employee engagement that result in a favorable customer experience. It highlights organizations that work hard to encourage, educate, enable, empower, and reward employees to provide exceptional customer service. We're thrilled to celebrate Con Edison and Efficiency Manitoba this year.

Con Edison

Con Edison won the 2022 Achievement in Employee Experience for its 2030 Customer Experience Vision (**figure 2**). A major part of the utility's efforts included developing its customer data analytics program, which featured an enterprise data analytics platform (EDAP). The EDAP synchronizes data from 14 different source systems to streamline Con Edison employee projects and customer service. The goals of the program were to:

- Improve customer satisfaction
- Increase operational efficiency in customer operations
- Empower the Con Edison workforce via self-service
- Develop industry-leading capabilities such as cloud computing and data analytics

Figure 2: Winner of the 2022 Achievement in Employee Experience

Mark Van Name, project specialist at Con Edison, accepts the award during a session at the E Source Forum.



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Several aspects of the customer data analytics program were innovative and unique. Here are a few examples.

Holistic customer view. The customer data analytics program on Con Edison's EDAP brings together data from previously disparate source systems (14 to date, and growing rapidly) to form a holistic, consistent view of the customer for Con Edison employees.

Modern technologies. The first of its scale at Con Edison, EDAP runs on cloud architecture—namely Microsoft Azure—and the data engineering solution Databricks. EDAP meets all of the utility industry's stringent cybersecurity requirements. The platform also uses innovative predictive analytics and machine learning, the first of its kind at Con Edison.

"This honor has really energized us to continue designing data and analytics products that are centered around the people that need them and not just build products for the sake of new technology or innovation." —Mark Van Name, Project Specialist, Con Edison

Daily updated metrics. The customer data analytics program delivers data and metrics that are refreshed daily. The result is that the utility can trust the data to drive individual and team performance as well as approaches to solving customer challenges.

Change management and training. To encourage adoption by the organization, the team penned a detailed change management strategy, including a "train-the-trainer" approach for power users within

each department to train their colleagues, breeding departmental ownership. Change management has been the cornerstone of helping Con Edison employees learn modern technologies.

Con Edison's customer professionals no longer spend as much time on manual report building and calculations, speeding time to resolution of customer problems and freeing their time to be spent on higher-value activities with each customer. Feedback from end users has been overwhelmingly positive. According to a senior specialist in customer assistance:

> As a data specialist, I spend most of my time structuring data together. Next-gen CX analytics makes this process much easier and seamless. Rather than spending time constructing the book, I can focus on the story the data has to tell.

Efficiency Manitoba

Our 2022 Achievement in Employee Experience runner-up, Efficiency Manitoba, rolled out its company-wide virtual work policy in June of 2021, coincident with a move to a new office space (**figure 3**). The virtual work policy included three categories of work arrangements.

Figure 3: Runner-up of the 2022 Achievement in Employee Experience

Dori Chudobiak, vice president of Corporate Performance and Engagement at Efficiency Manitoba, accepts the award during a session at the E Source Forum.



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Primarily office. The employee works the majority of their time in the office with occasional virtual work (up to three days of virtual work biweekly). Primarily office employees have an assigned workstation at Efficiency Manitoba's office.

Blended work. The employee works a blended arrangement of in-office and virtual, with in-office time equaling at least five of nine days biweekly (four days or less virtual work biweekly). Blended work employees have an assigned workstation at Efficiency Manitoba's office.

Efficiency Manitoba's employee engagement survey, conducted in November 2021, confirmed that 98% of its employees agree or strongly agree that the virtual work policy is reasonable and clear.

Primarily virtual. Subject to position-specific, performance, team, and operational requirements, the employee works the majority of their time virtually, with in-office time based on operational requirements.

Beyond providing critical information necessary in the design process to appropriately and cost-effectively size and configure the space, the timing of Efficiency Manitoba's policy rollout alleviated the uncertainty employees felt during the COVID pandemic. Employees wondered what the future of work at Efficiency Manitoba would look like.

The policy has contributed to an extraordinary retention rate of 99% for the most recent quarter. Based on the number of new employees applying for a primarily virtual working arrangement upon hire, the

organization has also seen evidence of the policy playing a role in recruitment efforts.

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