Achievements in Customer and Employee Experience: 2023 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 honorees!

Customer experience achievements

Create life-changing customer and employee experiences in 2024

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

This award celebrates utility excellence in customer experience (CX) 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 split CX into two subcategories—Residential Customer Experience and Business Customer Experience—and celebrated Con Edison, ComEd, Puget Sound Energy, and Evergy.

After our honorees accepted their awards, we held panel discussion and fielded questions from the audience (**figure 1**).

Figure 1: Winners of the 2023 Achievement in Customer Experience

A few of the winners answered questions from the audience during a session at the E Source Forum.



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Residential CX: Con Edison

Our winner of the 2023 Achievement in Residential Customer Experience is Con Edison for its "Credit Card in the Field" project (**figure 2**). This three-phase project aimed to enhance payment options for customers, improve convenience, and increase customer satisfaction (CSAT). The project team consisted of professionals across a variety of departments and used various third-party platforms for integration.

Figure 2: Winner of the 2023 Achievement in Customer Experience

Raymond Joseph, billing and payments manager at Con Edison, accepts the award during a session at the E Source Forum.



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Some of Con Edison's project goals were to:

- Develop a new, fully secure API architecture
- Create a safe, easy, and customer-friendly experience
- Automate the process to take only seconds to complete transactions
- Create a new web portal tracking system with payment details for customer service reps

The project successfully achieved its goals, allowing field collectors to accept card payments on-site, improving CX and increasing efficiency and worker safety. The overall cost came in under budget, and the use of credit card devices for transactions has grown steadily. The project's success laid the foundation for exploring additional digital payment options (such as PayPal and Venmo) in the future.

One of our judges noted:

> Such a simple concept, yet so difficult for the utility industry. This entry has many great advantages for the customer and the company—much easier to track and keep customer records up to date. I can see how this has been helpful to the utility's most vulnerable customers.

Residential CX: ComEd

The runner-up for the 2023 Achievement in Residential Customer Experience is ComEd for its Community Energy Assistance Ambassador (CEAA) program (**figure 3**). The CEAA program aimed to create awareness of payment assistance options, support customers in completing assistance applications, and partner with community advocates.

Figure 3: Runner-up of the 2023 Achievement in Customer Experience

Linda Rhodes, senior manager of customer assistance at ComEd, accepts the award during a session at the E Source Forum.



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Realizing that hiring individuals who live and work in vulnerable communities was the most effective way to create relationships within the community, ComEd created the CEAA program in 2020 to effectively collaborate with ambassadors and various community-based agencies. ComEd conducted over 50 outreach events and engaged more than 8,200 customers.

Some of the CEAA program's achievements and results include:

- *Increased awareness and enrollment.* The CEAA program successfully raised awareness and enrollment in energy assistance programs, including the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP), and the Supplemental

Arrearage Reduction Program (SARP).

- *Media presence.* Two iHeart radio interviews and strategic social media efforts resulted in over 60,000 social media interactions, amplifying program visibility.
- *Tangible impact.* Over 1,483 customers applied for assistance, leading to approximately $133,993 in LIHEAP funding.
- *Meaningful partnerships.* Collaborations with renowned organizations such as City Colleges of Chicago, YMCA, and more enhanced the program's reach and effectiveness.

An E Source judge noted:

> Their philosophy that everyone needs a bit of kindness—that this isn't a charity or coming from a place of pity—that's exactly how it should be.

Business CX: Puget Sound Energy (PSE)

PSE earned the 2023 Achievement in Business Customer Experience for its Clean Buildings Accelerator, a program that's helping building owners meet Washington's Clean Buildings Performance Standard (**figure 4**). With an estimated 7,000 buildings needing to comply starting in 2026, PSE recognized the need to give business customers a no-cost way to understand and adhere to the law's requirements.

Figure 4: Winner of the 2023 Achievement in Business Customer Experience

The PSE team accepts the award during a session at the E Source Forum.



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Developed in collaboration with Stillwater Energy, the Accelerator offers four months of virtual training through monthly, cohort-style workshops that break down discreet elements of the complex law and present it using a hands-on approach. The workshops are supported by one-on-one coaching calls to answer unique, building-related questions and free virtual energy scans that highlight energy-saving opportunities in up to three buildings. Additionally, PSE provides a year's worth of quarterly strategic and technical training to further help customers reach their energy goals.

Through the Accelerator, PSE has guided more than 70 participants and counting (representing hundreds of buildings) on their compliance journey, fostering appreciation and value among customers.

Some of PSE's results include the following:

- Building owners achieve energy savings between 2% and 7% per building
- PSE's successful model has been adopted by other utilities in Washington State, expanding its impact and helping more building owners navigate compliance
- PSE has conducted 11 cohorts to date, with another starting in November 2023 and even more planned for 2024
- Nearly half of Accelerator participants continue into other PSE efficiency programs for additional energy savings and guidance
- The program's effectiveness and innovation have positioned PSE as a top-five finalist for the EEI' Edison Award and winner of *Public Utilities Fortnightly*' William Hammer Top Innovator Award

The Accelerator's open sharing of program models, practices, and lessons with other utilities and the Washington Department of Commerce fosters collaboration, improves the regional workforce, and enhances compliance.

One judge said:

> This looks like a great approach to help customers navigate a complex situation. Well done. The participation rates definitely suggest this is working for customers, as well as for the utility.

Business CX: Evergy

The runner-up for the 2023 Achievement in Business Customer Experience is Evergy (**figure 5**). Evergy has taken a proactive role in facilitating the transition of various businesses to electric fleets through its innovative Fleet Advisory tool. The tool empowers decision-makers by guiding them through crucial decisions related to switching to EVs.

Figure 5: Runner-up of the 2023 Achievement in Business Customer Experience

Julie Dietrich, manager of fleet electrification at Evergy, accepts the award during a session at the E Source Forum.



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Tool users provide initial contact details, fostering early collaboration between Evergy and customers. The Fleet Advisory tool compiles key fleet information, presenting it across various tabs, including:

- Fuel costs
- Electricity
- Incentives
- Vehicles
- Emissions

This data not only helps businesses estimate the total cost of ownership and emissions reductions, but it also assists with grant applications.

To date, over 150 area businesses have engaged with Evergy's fleet electrification team, showcasing the tool's effectiveness in capturing interest and driving the adoption of EVs in various sectors.

One of the E Source judges noted:

> What a great idea to target organizations considering EV fleets. This entry covers a multitude of customer types as well. It will definitely help the customer at the beginning of their journey, too.

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, enable, educate, empower, and reward employees to provide exceptional customer service. We're thrilled to celebrate ENMAX Corp. and Hydro One this year.

ENMAX

ENMAX is the 2023 Achievement in Employee Experience winner for its dedication to supporting employees throughout the transformative challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (**figure 6**). Recognizing the need for an evolving and adaptable workplace, ENMAX's initiative focused on strengthening the well-being, engagement, and overall experience of team members. The initiative centered around four areas:

- Wellness training and awareness
- Work flexibility
- Rewards and recognition
- Employee feedback

Figure 6: Winner of the 2023 Achievement in Employee Experience

Dwayne Calder, director of customer care at ENMAX, accepts the award during a session at the E Source Forum.



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ENMAX incorporated comprehensive programs like mental health training, diversity and inclusion training, work-from-home flexibility, recognition platforms, and avenues for employee suggestions.

Partnering with third-party resources for expert guidance, ENMAX cultivated a healthier and more inclusive work environment. Results have been positive, showcasing a decrease in short-term disability, mental health claims, and recordable injuries. Employee engagement surged by 12%, CSAT improved, and the company earned recognition as a top employer in Alberta.

One of our judges said:

> Wow! The amount of compassion evinced by ENMAX's effort is truly heartwarming. I see evidence of the E Source 6 Es framework at play here: Empathize, Encourage, Enable, and Embrace.

Hydro One

The runner-up for the 2023 Achievement in Employee Experience is Hydro One (the utility was unable to attend the awards ceremony). The customer care team at Hydro One hosted its first-ever employee job fair, showcasing growth and career development opportunities, both within the department and companywide. The fair was a game-changing employee experience that inspired employees to "level up"

and explore opportunities available to them at Hydro One.

The event included the following key components:

- *Collaboration with over 20 different departments.* The different departments had a chance to interact with over 300 highly experienced and trained staff to help them explore new opportunities.
- *A stellar event.* Engaging activities planned for the fair included a barista bar, photo booth, raffles, and distribution of Hydro One swag.
- *Job fair passports.* Hydro One designed and distributed job fair "passports" to encourage and reward a productive exchange between participants and representatives. Participants collected stamps by visiting booths, qualifying them for additional engaging activities and prizes.

The feedback from the Hydro One team has been incredibly positive and employees appreciated the time taken to engage with them on potential career opportunities.

An E Source judge said:

> What an amazing way to build up employee morale and commitment to the utility. It also helped them understand other teams better, which is wonderful too!

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