Social media roundup: Q3 trends from the top-performing utility posts

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Give us feedback about this article

If you work in utility social media, corporate communications, marketing, or channel management, we want to hear from you. Tell it to us straight in the comments below.

Utilities should be tracking social media metrics to understand:

- How often people interact with their content
- How interested people are in their content
- How familiar their audience is with utility products, programs, and services

To stay on top of trends, we monitor over 150 utility social media accounts across the US and Canada and publish a monthly report for members of certain E Source subscriptions. We also publicly highlight some social successes in a quarterly blog post.

We use engagement metrics to determine the top-performing posts. This is a great way to tell whether your audience cares about what your utility posts on social media and what they want to see more of.

Here are some trends from the past three months and an audience-centric strategy from ComEd.

Top trends from July, August, and September

Celebration and appreciation have been trending in recent months. Utilities celebrated National Lineworker Appreciation Day and provided regular updates on power restoration efforts, expressing gratitude for community partners who stepped up and provided support after a hurricane.

National Lineworker Appreciation Day

Utilities celebrated National Lineworker Appreciation Day on social, recognizing the commitment and hard work of their lineworkers. Of the eight most broadly used hashtags by utilities in August, #LineworkerAppreciationDay generated the highest engagement rate by followers, and #ThankALineWorker was the most popular.

Providing restoration updates

Power outages are disruptive and inconvenient. Regular updates on restoration efforts—including the cause of the outage, estimated restoration time, and progress reports—provide transparency and help customers manage their expectations.

Appreciating community partners

It sure does take a village! Appreciation has been abundant for community partners lately with the challenges caused by hurricanes. Many utilities expressed gratitude for the help received from local partners to restore power after the storms.

The top-performing social media posts from Q3

July, August, and September were busy months on social media for utilities. Below are the top-performing utility social media posts from Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, and YouTube for the quarter.

Top-performing social media posts by platform

TikTok

Hydro-Québec. The short video announced that Hydro-Québec was hiring with information on the open jobs. Creating social media posts to announce employee achievements helps the community understand utility workers' high skill levels and dedication.

The post received:

- 21,977 likes
- 1,635 comments
- 7,764 shares

> @hydroquebec On recrute au service à la clientèle jusqu'au 22 septembre! Le lien pour postuler est dans la bio! #recrutement #emploi #hydroquebec son original - Hydro-Québec

X

CenterPoint Energy. The utility shared that it had restored power to 1 million customers by the end of the day, setting expectations of an additional 750,000 by the end of the week. Updates on restoration

efforts were provided to keep customers informed and safe.

The post received:

- 723 likes
- 508 retweets
- 1,311 replies

> We reached our goal of restoring 1 million customers by end of the day today. We expect to have an additional 400,000 customers restored by the end of the day on Friday, July 12 and an additional 350,000 customers restored by the end of the day on Sunday, July 14. Read our latest… pic.twitter.com/MFTdIFx0pU
>
> — CenterPoint Energy (@CenterPoint) July 11, 2024

Instagram

BC Hydro. The utility ran a contest to win a Yeti Tundra 35 cooler. To enter, customers must have followed BC Hydro on Instagram, liked the contest post, and tagged a friend in the comments. Offering giveaways and contests is a great way to engage with customers, provide education, get new exposure, and start conversations in the comments.

The post received:

- 5,080 likes
- 16,268 comments

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by BC Hydro (@bchydro)

Youtube

Xcel Energy. The video promoted educating kids about energy-saving habits—such as turning off lights, adjusting the thermostat, and valuing water conservation—to save money and reduce the grid's load. By encouraging customers to reduce their energy usage, they can learn how to save money and lessen the burden on the grid.

The post received:

- 2,318,048 views

Facebook

Center Point Energy. The utility reported progress in restoring power after outages caused by

Hurricane Beryl. They reminded residents to allow access to crews to ensure a smooth restoration process.

The post received:

- 22,058 reactions
- 3,868 comments
- 2,237 shares

A peek into how ComEd connects with its audience

We recently spoke with representatives from ComEd about its goals, content plan, and channel strategies. We also asked the team about how they connect with customers and what advice they have to share with other utilities.

ComEd's social media goals and strategies

ComEd's primary goals include:

- Increasing sign-ups for its home energy savings program
- Improving brand reputation by raising awareness about corporate community impact and sustainability initiatives

The utility tailors its social media content to target specific subsets of its 9,000,000 customers to distribute information equitably.

ComEd uses platforms like X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Nextdoor for outbound communications, with each channel serving a unique purpose:

- X for alerts and news
- Facebook for fun and informative content
- Instagram for visually dynamic posts and education
- LinkedIn for B2B marketing and potential future employees
- Nextdoor to get quick ideas out

Customer engagement is a priority

ComEd actively engages with customers on social media and responds to inquiries primarily on X and Facebook. The utility uses a detailed process flow document to ensure consistent and high-quality interactions along with tools like Sprinklr to manage customer inquiries so no customer issues fall through the cracks.

The social media team believes in the power of lighthearted content to attract and retain followers, which in turn helps deliver important business communications.

Challenges and successes

Explore more social media trends and be our next case study

Members of the E Source Corporate Communications Service can dive into all the metrics in our latest reports:

- Providing restoration updates and thanking lineworkers
- A look into how ComEd connects with its audience
- Participating in National Preparedness Month and guiding customers through outages

Members can also contact us to be featured in one of our upcoming reports.

Not a member but interested in exploring more? Contact us today.

ComEd faces several challenges in its social media strategy, including:

- Balancing advertising with organic and paid content
- Highlighting the value of content to utility leadership
- Determining staffing needs

Despite these challenges, the utility has achieved success. It has emphasized internal communications through its Powering Lives Blog and helped customers enroll in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

ComEd's social media team continuously adapts its strategies to meet the evolving needs of its audience and support the utility's broader business objectives.

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