Achievements in Customer and Employee Experience: 2025 honorees

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Each year E Source celebrates utilities that are creating excellent experiences for their customers and providing a supportive and engaging workplace for their employees with the E Source Customer and Employee Experience Awards. We also recognize and celebrate the work smaller utilities do to provide quality experiences to their customers and award our top-scoring utility website in the E Source 2025 Website Benchmark.

We're thrilled to share this year's honorees along with a look at the presentations given earlier this month while at E Source Forum.

The E Source 2025 utility awards winners

Attendees celebrated winners of the 2025 Utility Ad Awards, Website Benchmark, and Customer and Employee Experience Awards celebrating during the awards ceremony at E Source Forum 2025.



Customer experience achievements

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

Utility Ad Award Winners 2025

We also recognized the winners of the E Source Utility Ad Awards at Forum. View the winning campaigns and advertisements in Utility Ad Awards Contest winners 2025.

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

We typically include two subcategories for CX—Residential Customer Experience and Business Customer Experience. In 2025, we combined the residential and business CX submissions and awarded

achievements in CX overall. We celebrated Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) and PG&E for their achievements in overall CX.

TPU also won the Small Utility Excellence Award. This award honors the achievements of smaller utilities, where smaller teams and budgets can present big challenges for customer and employee experience initiatives.

TPU

TPU is the winner of the 2025 Achievement in Customer Experience for its Empowering Moves program. In 2023, the utility partnered with the City of Tacoma's Environmental Services department to support vulnerable customers facing economic instability after COVID-19.

The program's goal was to enroll 10,000 limited-income households in utility assistance programs by the end of 2024. This was a 675% increase over existing participation. The boots-on-the-ground initiative by the utility's Customer Solutions Team focused on equity, compassion, accessibility, and innovation to meet customers where they lived and regardless of their situation or circumstances.

Winner of the 2025 Achievement in Customer Experience

Shana Williams, customer services division manager, and Kristi Williams, utility education and outreach coordinator, accepted the award at Forum.



The team at TPU knew reducing the barriers to participation was essential to get assistance into the

hands of customers who needed it most and meet program goals. The utility's strategy included:

- Participating in 359 community outreach events at food pantries, farmers markets, schools, and libraries
- Conducting on-site enrollment at low-income apartment complexes, which removed transportation and document access barriers
- Placing QR code stickers on cornbread boxes during food distributions
- Running the Empowering Moves marketing campaign, featuring transit ads, vehicle wraps, school newsletters, and social media, with targeting informed by the City's Equity Index
- Autoenrolling qualified customers already in income-based housing or Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to simplify the application process
- Building partnerships with Puget Sound Energy and other service providers to support cross-utility navigation
- Collaborating with a free smartphone provider to reduce digital access barriers
- Purchasing a community service van to bring mobile enrollment directly into underserved neighborhoods
- Developing culturally adapted and multilingual materials, created in partnership with trusted community members

By embedding themselves into the community and focusing on their CX North Star, the team removed systemic access barriers that typically prevent vulnerable customers from receiving the support they need.

Winner of the 2025 Small Utility Excellence Award

Shana Williams, customer services division manager, and Kristi Williams, utility education and outreach coordinator, accepted the award at Forum.



The customer-centered initiative helped TPU reposition itself from “utility provider” to “community partner.” The Customer Solutions Team had to reimagine processes and embrace innovation, which helped transform organizational culture and deepen community trust. The program prompted cross-departmental training, data-driven planning, and a new vision for what equitable utility service looks like.

The utility exceeded its program enrollment goal, enrolling 10,159 households by the end of 2024. The initiative prevented thousands of utility customer power shutoffs and made sure TPU customers could prioritize other essential monthly costs like food, rent, and childcare.

One of our judges noted:

> Pulling this off required a culture that is adaptable and customer-centered. A 6X increase in social assistance enrollments is awesome and creativity about “what a utility can do” is much needed in this area.

PG&E

The runner-up for the 2025 Achievement in Customer Experience is PG&E for its SmartComms (with SmartETOR) customer outage notification experience. The utility formed the Outage Journey Team with subject matter experts from the customer, electric operations, and IT organizations.

In 2023, the utility identified key customer pain points in the electric outage and restoration notification process. PG&E aimed to modernize communication technology and refine internal business and system processes for planned and unplanned outages.

SMARTComms is a centralized, comprehensive notification delivery platform for the systems involved in outage communications. It increases outage notification delivery, accuracy, timeliness, consistency, and transparency. It includes notification monitoring and a metrics dashboard.

The utility integrated SmartETOR with SmartComms—a machine learning algorithm that automatically calculates an estimated time of restoration (ETOR) after the utility detects an unplanned outage. This replaced a static lookup table with only substation level of information.

Using data to measure the initiative's success, since 2023 the utility has seen a:

- 26% increase in the customer transaction score (CTS) for unplanned outages
- 14% increase in the CTS for planned outages

For key unplanned outage CTS drivers from January 2024 through April 2025, the utility saw a:

- 13% increase in the timeliness of notifications
- 9% increase in receipt of the ETOR
- 11% increase in the accuracy of ETOR
- 19% increase in receipt of the restoration notification

For key planned outage CTS drivers from May 2023 through April 2025, PG&E saw a:

- 11% increase in accurate restoration time estimates
- 35% increase in adequate number of reminders
- 9% increase in adequate shutdown estimates
- 3% increase for adequate advance notices

An E Source judge noted:

> I love the continued commitment to improving the outage experience, even in challenging circumstances. This utility has done a phenomenal job of revisiting the data, revisiting the customer experience, and revisiting what's possible to improve this critical customer journey. Well done!

Employee experience achievements

This award celebrates innovative methods in employee engagement that result in an increase in employee satisfaction. It highlights organizations that work hard to encourage, enable, educate, empower, and reward employees.

We're excited to celebrate Newfoundland Power and PG&E this year.

Newfoundland Power

Newfoundland Power is the winner of the 2025 Achievement in Employee Experience for its Contact Corner initiative. The utility used employee feedback, employee engagement survey results, and analysis of customer satisfaction data to identify an opportunity to improve how IT communicates essential information to customer service representatives (CSRs). Leadership also used this opportunity to better support CSR performance and overall experience.

In April 2024, the Customer Relations department introduced Contact Corner, a daily team meeting involving the entire contact center staff, often led by the CSRs. The utility holds the meetings on weekday mornings. The sessions run for 15 minutes from Monday to Thursday and for one hour on Fridays.

Contact Corner provides a consistent, structured, virtual forum for ongoing training, prompt updates, and peer interaction. It fosters team engagement, knowledge-sharing, and camaraderie for a team of CSRs spread across the utility's service territory in eight area offices.

Newfoundland Power adjusted its contact center's operating hours for inbound customer calls and web chats to make time for the meetings. The new operating hours are 8:15 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. on Friday.

Winner of the 2025 Achievement in Employee Experience

Eoin Mulcahy, manager of the Newfoundland Power Contact Centre, accepted the award at Forum.



The utility measured the benefits of the Contact Corner initiative via feedback from internal surveys and direct input from CSRs. Some cited benefits include:

- Improved access to information
- Consistent training delivery
- Increased opportunities for team interaction and employee engagement

CSRs consistently tell leadership that they appreciate the opportunity to connect with their peers every morning. The daily sessions also serve as a platform for meaningful recognition, allowing leadership and peers to acknowledge team achievements and individual contributions in real-time.

CSRs approve and cite the benefits of Contact Corner, and Newfoundland Power has also seen year-over-year improvements in key performance indicators, including:

- More than 6,000 hours of CSR training completed
- More than 350 sessions delivered
- 8 percentage point increase in CSR service level
- 15 percentage point reduction in issues at the contact center on customer satisfaction survey
- 3 percentage point increase in first-call resolution
- $25,000 in labor savings from avoided multiple training sessions
- Zero reported customer concerns

One of our judges said:

> I appreciate the intentionality and strategic approach that this utility is taking with daily standups. Providing opportunities for more than just information dissemination, these standups sound like they give CSRs the opportunity to connect with one another, have meaningful dialogue, and be equipped and enabled to be more successful in their jobs.

PG&E

PG&E is the runner-up for the 2025 Achievement in Employee Experience for its new policy for handling abusive callers and malicious calls in the contact center. In partnership with human resources, the union, legal, and contact center leadership, the utility created a new process that allows CSRs to disconnect from verbally abusive calls. It also improved the procedure for handling calls where a caller threatens an employee or themselves.

CSRs can press a Malicious Call Trace button on their computer to alert contact center leadership of the threatening call, including bomb threats. The leadership team uses Sharepoint List and Power Automate to make sure they follow all steps in the process, including checking on the employee and offering the employee assistance program, if needed. Employees praised Sharepoint List and Power Automate for the efficiency and data collection capabilities.

The utility documents when employees press the Malicious Call Trace button for customers who threaten the employee, themselves, or the public. This allows the utility to follow up after the call disconnects. Documenting these calls in Sharepoint List and Power Automate helps identify gaps in the process and allows leadership to address them in real-time. The tool also captures all the data to identify trends.

Representatives from the union, human resources, legal, and contact center leadership developed documented call guidance that defines what the utility considers an abusive call. The call guidance also includes details about how a CSR can warn the caller before disconnecting and use disconnection as a last resort.

While some stakeholders had concerns about the number of disconnected calls, the data shows that CSRs are following the process successfully. After rolling out the initiative and reviewing data from the past 12 months, it showed an average of two to three disconnections per month. The utility adds phone numbers for repeated abusive calls to a specialty line for nuisance callers, directing them to a senior service representative.

After launching the new policy, PG&E received positive feedback from employees. This initiative improved employee morale and highlights the Joy at Work culture PG&E aims to foster.

An E Source judge said:

> As this is a real and intense issue in some cases, providing this option sends a strong supportive signal to employees. Even with low use, it can be very high value if needed.

Website Benchmark Award of Excellence

We also presented an award at Forum based on our annual Website Benchmark, an independent study that scores utility websites on accessibility, findability, functionality, content, and appearance. For our 2025 study, we looked at the public-facing side of utility websites.

Participate in the 2026 Website Benchmark

The 2026 Website Benchmark will evaluate secure-side utility website features. To sign up to participate in next year's study, visit our Website Benchmark page.

CPS Energy received the Website Benchmark Award of Excellence for 2025.

CPS Energy was the highest-ranked utility website overall in our study. While the utility rated highly across all the features and criteria we reviewed, one standout feature was its "Energy Efficiency" pages. Its "Energy Efficiency" web page rated among the top 10 in our evaluation for the following reasons:

- The web page was findable, with a shorter time to find and fewer pages to find than average
- It includes energy-savings tips and displays programs in an easy-to-understand format
- It includes online program enrollment option for customers and allows customers to check the status of their rebates
- It has an energy cost calculator where residential customers can estimate their monthly energy use

To view the full list of the 2025 Website Benchmark scores, read Utility websites in US and Canada expanding language options, E Source study finds.

Winner of the 2025 Website Benchmark Award of Excellence

Federico Escobedo, online marketing manager, and Aby Tino Thomas, lead digital engineer, accept the award at Forum.



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