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The Art of Caring

Achieving Meaningful Results from Investing in a New Customer Service Strategy

Client satisfaction is never ‘one size fits all.’

Unless you’re always striving to improve your customer service platform, your relationships will stagnate. Many companies subscribe to this simple idea, but in practice, too few of them make their customers feel truly heard.

The bottom line: your customer service strategy needs to always be evolving. Stepping up to this challenge, Enercare Connections has reinvented itself to become an industry leader in customer service that far surpasses the baseline set by the Ontario Energy Board’s standards and recent customer service rules updates. Due to this effort, in May 2019, Enercare Connections won a customer service-related award from the [Customer Service Professionals Network](#) (CSPN).

When your tagline is ‘Because we Enercare,’ these awards are proof of success. As Kevin Neild has learned, handling the company’s extensive and diverse client base in the multi-residential and commercial sectors is no small feat. Kevin is the Customer Operations and Planning VP at Enercare Connections, and with his team of

customer specialists, they can expect thousands of inquiries in a typical month. From landlords and property managers to renters and condo owners, inquiries about energy management and sub-metering can often be specific, complex and technical. No two calls are ever the same.

Your customer specialists are your best advocates

In order for the rollout of the new customer service strategy to be successful, Kevin says that careful planning, lots of support and realistic benchmarks were important, but you ultimately have to ensure your team is dedicated to the cause.

“By giving our customer specialists the tools and skills to achieve quality engagements, we empowered them in the process,” he says. “There’s a chain reaction: for your customers to feel like they’re receiving first-class service, you also have to make your employees feel the same way, if you want them to be your champions.”

Invest in your contact centre to boost productivity

“Reviewing our customer journey map, we realized that our contact centre

had room to improve,” Kevin explains. “On a practical, day-to-day basis, we needed to upgrade the technology for our customer specialists be more efficient and productive.”

One of these upgrades was the Genesys Pure Cloud contact centre. This new technology completely overhauled Enercare’s internal processes to be more customer-centric. The solution enables multi-channel responses over email, phone and live messaging to give Enercare metering services customers more flexibility.

“The customer experience at Enercare Connections has completely flipped, putting the customer front and centre,” he says. “Customers used to report frustrations with our processes that caused excessive delays and usually didn’t yield a first contact resolution. Now, the workflow is greatly improved to emphasize a simple and expedient experience, and we are achieving a first contact resolution every time.”

Enercare Connections also continues to invest in its employees, ensuring that all of its contact care professionals have the Certified Client Service Specialist (CCSS) designation from the CSPN.



Representatives of Customer Service Professionals Network (CSPN) and Enercare Connections
Photo courtesy of CSPN

“Due to accreditation training, our customer specialists are helping more people daily, solving the issue quickly and correctly the first time,” Kevin says.

Prioritize phone calls and emails equally

One particular feature of Genesys interested Enercare Connections, which enables phone calls and emails to be treated equally. Adopted in late 2018, Kevin gives the analogy of a fast food drive-thru: *“Imagine there is a massive queue of cars outside,”* he says. *“The operation is set-up to prioritize this line-up over customers who come inside and seemingly have longer wait times, despite the fact that they should be treated equally.”*

“Similarly, phone calls used to have shorter wait times than the email stream, which meant that the latter group would end up calling in anyway, in turn, creating extended phone queues,” he says. *“Now, our contact*

centre workflow runs smoother, each group receiving equal priority.”

Better survey feedback mechanism

As reported previously, Enercare Connections partnered with StellaService to implement its Stella Connect feedback platform in January 2018. *“Many companies are nervous about the feedback they’ll receive with a feedback portal, or else design them poorly,”* Kevin says. *“Stella Connect was our moment of truth: We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from customers.”*

Within 24 hours, anybody who has engaged with customer specialists receives an email requesting a rating out of 5 starts on their interaction experience. *“We proactively reach out to customers who rate us two stars or less to determine how we can improve their experience with us,”* he says. *“Customers are shocked that not*

only are they heard, but are appreciative that we have a real desire to incorporate their feedback and improve our processes.”

Emphasizing quality and creating a more inclusive work culture

“In 2019, we switched our focus and reward incentives from transaction volume to quality of service,” Kevin says. *“The shift in focus has improved the quality performance of our care specialists, our results increased to an impressive average 4.66 out of 5.”*

Kevin stresses that the customer specialists at Enercare Connections are all veteran customer service professionals as opposed to entry-level employees that are the norm in contact centres. *“On average, our customer specialists have more than five years’ experience,”* he says. *“We compensate our employees well to ensure we attract and retain the best talent in customer care.”*

Overall, Enercare Connections wants a 'customer first' attitude to be a leading priority on every department's agenda, not just customer care. Kevin describes the organization's onboarding exercise: "As a mandatory part of their training, all new hires in all departments spend time listening in on contact centre calls to not only appreciate the high level of engagement that occurs, but also the new employee's potential role in contributing to that success," he says.

"Hearing a customer specialist try and explain a technical issue makes you appreciate the amount of follow-up dialogue that needs to happen internally across multiple departments to ensure that the customer is given the correct solution," he says. "We want to empower all our employees to do what is right for our customers, and therefore this onboarding experience with new employees imprints our customer-centric work culture early in their new careers so they know our company is different and that 'we walk the talk.'"

Recognition for their customer-centric approach

The hard work has paid off for Kevin and his team. During the 22nd Annual Customer and Employee Experience Conference in May 2019, Enercare Connections was presented with a prestigious award from CSPN, due to the work of Enercare Connections to foster environments that value engagement and genuine passion for providing positive customer-centric experiences.



Kevin Neild
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You can find Kevin on [LinkedIn](#).

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