

# PHONE CONSULTATIONS: ON THE JOB WITHOUT BEING ONSITE

Learn how a large Midwestern utility expanded services to a wider customer base for its energy efficiency programs without overextending its resources.



## Client challenge

Customer satisfaction – it's a value and goal that applies to most, if not all, service providers. But, what sets our utility client apart from let's say your average cable company, is its mission to deliver satisfaction beyond the 'status quo' of great service. Satisfaction means helping customers understand energy usage and manage it, so they can save costs independently.

Clearly, no utility company wants customers to open their energy bills and have jaws drop. But merely 'less' isn't quite the objective either. Our utility client aims for all of its customers, especially businesses, to stretch their energy dollar as far as possible with the right tools and resources. The caveat, however, is that energy use for these customers is just as complex and multifaceted as their business. It's not a push of the button – simply adjusting heating or cooling throughout the building.

In fact, most businesses assume their core energy costs come from gas heating equipment. While in actuality, it is their electric consumption taking up a good chunk of their monthly bill. On average, electric energy makes up 75% of businesses' utility costs.

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Once customers learn just which equipment contributes the most to their energy bill, the next challenge becomes figuring out how they can make their facilities more efficient. Is it a quick fix or replacement? How much will it cost? Is it worth it both in time and money?

The utility covers a lot of territory in a large Midwestern state. With ranging customers and a widespread reach, it's a challenge to meet the demand of onsite energy assessments and even contact support. That's where Franklin Energy lends its expertise.



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## The Franklin Energy Approach

Franklin Energy and the utility client worked together to develop a strategy that would support customers looking to understand and reduce energy costs. The solution: phone consultations (customized over-the-phone audits paired with expert energy analysis).

Just what do these highly customized phone consultations entail? First, a Franklin Energy energy advisor accesses energy data and bills for the utility customer. These program-trained energy advisors have direct access to the utility's databases, billing system and administrative access to all energy management tools.

When customers present concerns about their energy bill, they are immediately referred to the program's contact center. From there, it's problem solving time. The energy advisor gathers stats on the equipment, building square footage and hours of operation. Then, he/she analyzes these nuggets to create an energy analysis report for the customer to review.

The energy advisor also provides a benchmark, ranking results with similar businesses. Typically, this sheds positive light. Many businesses discover they use less energy than

the average, which gives them a sense of relief and improved satisfaction. After all information is shared, the energy advisor will discuss conservation and efficiency opportunities.

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So how does Franklin Energy collect and analyze data so quickly? This program is successful because of the energy advisors that can use the utility's energy management tools effectively, paired with data analysis and a team of energy efficiency experts and engineers. The support team is just as versed in the technology, as the client's program. The team receives regular trainings and tutorials on how to maximize the energy management tools available.

## Client Success

Since Franklin Energy expanded its support to phone consultations for the utility, program implementation costs have gone down, actual onsite assessments have decreased and become more manageable, and customer satisfaction scores continue to rise. Not only has cost effectiveness improved, but customer incentives are nearly double.



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Mini stories from each perspective:



## FROM Franklin Energy

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"One customer was referred to us after inquiring about a high bill. I reviewed the business' energy usage and offered my observations on the spot. The customer was interested in understanding his electric usage. This was the perfect opportunity for a tutorial on how to use the online monitoring tool. He was happy to be equipped with self-monitoring tools. He checks his business' interval data regularly to track staff habits and electric equipment opportunities to reduce energy consumption."

—Energy Advisor



## FROM The Client

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"As the utility supplier, we realize the importance of providing energy expertise to our customers. Providing access to Franklin Energy's reliable energy efficiency experts goes beyond increasing customer satisfaction. It helps the customer better understand how their business uses energy and how they can use it more efficiently. We want our customers to thrive economically and managing energy usage is an important piece of that puzzle. Franklin Energy understands this need and strategically executes our program for business customers. By combining this knowledge with free energy management tools and incentives for making energy saving upgrades, our customers can cut energy costs and boost their bottom lines. Franklin Energy's customer service approach, efficiency expertise and dedication to continual improvement have made them an essential partner on this program."

—Director



## FROM The Customer

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"I wanted to lower my business's energy consumption, and ultimately, our energy bills. So I called the utility company. I was transferred to an energy advisor who determined my greatest energy efficiency opportunities over the phone, which included upgrading our lighting technologies and adding more controls. From there, I was referred to the Focus on Energy Small Business Program for a free lighting assessment and valuable incentives. Looking back, the process was very simple and positive. I saved nearly 43% on the installation cost through the program, everything was carried out by a trained professional and I saw a return on investment after just seven months. So far I'm saving around 25-percent on my energy bill."

—Auto Parts Owner

If you'd like to learn how Franklin Energy can help your utility design an innovative and effective conservation program, contact us to set up a meeting.

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