

Southern California Edison Proactively Notifies Customer of Outages and Curtailment Events

Recognizing the need to communicate with large groups of customers quickly during critical events, Southern California Edison looked to Varolii.



In 2000, California's energy crisis not only triggered outages and massive disruption to Southern California Edison's (SCE) customers, it prompted SCE to identify the need for more reliable customer communications. The utility knew that it needed to implement fast and reliable automated communications to reach 30,000 of its high-need customers – whose lives depend on electric-powered critical-care devices, such as life support systems and oxygen machines. After relying on several internal and external autodialer services and call center staff to notify their customers of impending outages, SCE sought a more efficient process.

Seeing the success a neighboring utility had with Varolii Profiles™ for Demand Response, SCE took immediate steps to automate their outbound notifications to help them manage communications during outages and peak usage.

Reducing the Load - Across the Enterprise

Proving an invaluable communications tool, SCE evaluated other areas in which Varolii could increase productivity and streamline processes. SCE expanded its use of Varolii to include demand response programs for its medium to large business customers. With these programs, qualifying customers receive a special rate for agreeing to curtail their energy usage during peak demand.

With Varolii, SCE now notifies customers between five minutes and 24 hours in advance when curtailment is necessary, contacting each individual customer via their preferred contact method (phone, email, text message, or wireless device). Because timing is so important, Varolii communications are instrumental to the success of SCE's demand response programs, according to Mark Wallenrod, Manager of Pricing and Tariff Operations.

“With Varolii, we've been able to accommodate customer requests for multi-channel communications so they don't have to sit at their desk all day waiting for a curtailment notification, helping us maintain very high customer satisfaction rates,” said Wallenrod. “In addition, with Varolii we've been able to cut the time it takes to send notifications from hours to under 15 minutes, and we have a single, integrated system eliminating the need to have multiple operators activating multiple communications systems.”



CLIENT

Southern California Edison (SCE)

CHALLENGE

Contacting large numbers of customers during critical events, SCE needed a quick way to communicate with customers during critical events.

SOLUTION

Varolii allows SCE to contact critical care and demand response customers quickly via their preferred contact method.

BENEFITS

- Collapsed notification time from hours to just 15 minutes
- Reduced dependency on agent resource
- Single, integrated system eliminated the need for multiple systems
- Streamlined multiple processes, from critical care notifications to demand response programs

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- Mark Wallenrod

Manager of Pricing and Tariff Operations, Southern California Edison

Taking Steps to Avert a Future Crisis

In preparation for 2005/2006, when energy experts predicted another West Coast energy crisis, SCE rolled out a pilot demand response program designed to lower demand for energy during emergencies. Called the Critical Peak Pricing program (CPP), it allows consumer and small business customers to take advantage of lower rates in exchange for curtailing energy use when circumstances warrant. The pilot program has attracted approximately 700 small business and 400 consumer accounts.

SCE used Varolii Profiles for similar curtailment programs in the organization. When customers sign up SCE customer service representatives capture their communications preferences, enabling them to receive curtailment notifications via the full range of communication devices.

Working closely with SCE, Varolii reconfigured Profiles to meet the diverse needs of the consumer market. Wallenrod concluded, “Building more power plants in Southern California is not an option in the very near term, so peak energy-saving curtailment programs – combined with instant, proactive customer notifications from Varolii – is the next best thing we can offer as a utility to keep the lights on and the machines humming.”

ABOUT VAROLII

Varolii® provides on-demand communication software and services that enable organizations to more effectively reach and interact with their customers and employees, getting the best result from every interaction.

www.Varolii.com

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