

Personalised customer communications puts E.ON ahead of the competition



"HP Exstream has now enabled us to respond to our research findings and reach out to our new customers in a more efficient and personalised way than ever before." Louise Pearson, fulfilment delivery manager, E.ON

Objective:

E.ON, the world's largest investor-owned energy company, wanted to respond to customer's needs and a competitive market by incorporating marketing messages and campaign management to create customised customer communications.

Approach:

- Using HP Exstream, E.ON now produces a one-piece, full-colour fulfilment communication with individually tailored messages that respond to exactly what the customer requested.

IT improvements:

- Reduce external co-ordination and therefore fewer margins for error, by bringing document development and production in-house.
- Save training and labour costs with ability to migrate complex mainframe document applications to UNIX without extensive programming.
- Reduce complexity and time utilising HP Exstream's object-oriented environment, providing reuse of content so changes can be automatically replicated across all documents.

Business benefits:

- Document production lead times have been reduced from up to ten weeks to just a matter of days allowing E.ON to react to customer requests and get key messages to market faster.
- Consolidated 40 different inserts into a single print stream with mail sorting capabilities, resulting in just under £500,000 (\$739,000) annually in postage cost savings.
- Improved document effectiveness utilising flow charts, diagrams and images while combining all utility charges for each customer into one statement for greater clarity.
- Reduction in call times and contact centre savings due to clearer communications.
- Reduced the amount of paper used, with environmentally-friendly results.

E.ON is the world's largest investor-owned energy company. It is a leading UK energy supplier, with over nine million electricity and gas accounts.

In an increasingly crowded market, E.ON needed to differentiate itself from the competition if it was to gain a competitive advantage and attract new customers. Incorporating marketing and promotional messages into its routine customer communications was the way ahead.

The company held focus groups with 80 consumer customers from all service process segments including mobile phone companies and mortgage providers to learn what kind of fulfilment document they liked most. Two options were offered - the traditional black and white letter (including a leaflet/pamphlet) or a four-colour, all encompassing, glossy leaflet. The survey found that consumers preferred the information in a single document instead of separate communication pieces, and they preferred an A3 document folded to A4.

Trusted technology

HP Exstream answered the call in 2001 to migrate complex mainframe document applications to UNIX without extensive programming, saving E.ON training and labour costs. E.ON also had an Information Systems (IS) staff with a predominately mainframe background, which meant they had to work through the issue of retraining. The technology solution had to be easy to understand and implement. HP Exstream significantly reduced development time, allowing E.ON to get to market faster with critical customer communications. E.ON selected HP Exstream to create the "OneBill" programme, which combines all utility charges for each customer into one statement for greater clarity.

In response to the research findings, E.ON once again looked to HP Exstream, which had successfully met its earlier technology challenges. "IS staff found HP Exstream easy to use, and its capability for targeted messaging ensured every customer document was personalised and relevant," recalls

Customer solution at a glance

Primary software

- HP Exstream

Louise Pearson, fulfilment delivery manager for E.ON. "We knew that we wanted a product that would allow us greater flexibility with marketing messages and campaign management in the future. So, when it came to meeting our latest business requirements of targeting new customers more effectively, HP Exstream was the right solution in place."

More effective communication

Using Exstream, and working with writing and design consultants, AndOrlf, on the creative design, E.ON redesigned the fulfilment it sends to new customers and has created a customised, full-colour communication.

The new order fulfilment form walks E.ON customers through the whole transfer process, utilising flow charts, diagrams and images to explain exactly what they will receive, when they will receive it and what the process is. The documents are personalised using Exstream's rule-driven targeted messaging, thereby increasing efficiency and providing a flexible platform for future marketing initiatives.

This clear communication helps manage customer expectations and, as a result, customers are asking fewer questions, calling E.ON's contact centre less as they understand more. This results in saved money and reduced call times for E.ON and its customers.

Measurable results

Traditionally, new E.ON customers have received a black and white letter with a coloured leaflet insert. The communication was generic, so customers would sometimes receive information on products and services that they already had or that were not relevant. Exstream has not only enabled E.ON to create more targeted, customised communications that use the customer's name throughout the document and detail individual pricing and payment structure, but it has also helped reduce the amount of paper used, with environmentally-friendly results.

Previously, there were approximately 40 different inserts that had to be split into separate print streams and many different postal runs. Now E.ON has one single print stream which can be mail sorted instead of going standard tariff, saving the company just under £500,000 (\$739,000) a year in postage costs. Instead of sending a traditional letter and insert, E.ON now produces a one-piece, full-colour communication with individually tailored messages that respond to exactly what the customer requested.



Using HP Exstream, E.ON created customised, full-colour order fulfilment forms for new customers that save money and reduce call times.

"This is unique and E.ON is very pleased to be the first utility company to produce fulfilment in this format," added Pearson.

E.ON can now react to customer requests and get key messages to market faster because document production lead times reduced from up to ten weeks to just a matter of days, because materials are now all prepared in-house, there is reduced external co-ordination and therefore less margin for error, as E.ON agents no longer have to direct external suppliers.

Pearson explains: "HP Exstream is very object-oriented, providing reuse of content so we don't have to invest vast amounts of time when it comes to making changes. We can change a content component in one place and it is automatically replicated in every application where it appears."

A key driver, in initially selecting Exstream was its modularity that gave us the flexibility to easily implement new ideas in the future," said Pearson. "HP Exstream has now enabled us to respond to our research findings and reach out to our new customers in a more efficient and personalised way than ever before."

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4AA1-4189EEW, February 2009

