

Outbound Messaging Strategy Ensures Member Engagement

Implementation of proactive digital communications including personalized video bill explanations, mid-cycle alerts, and new member videos improved utility member engagement and satisfaction scores.

The Challenge:

Headquartered in Conway, South Carolina, Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc. (HEC) serves nearly 91,000 members. As a longtime Apogee customer (23 years), HEC was an early pioneer in digital engagement. For example, they provide members with [online energy calculator tools](#) and a home energy audit. However, when the pandemic hit, HEC needed a new, alternative way to engage and proactively communicate important information to members to ensure member satisfaction..

Solution:

As the pandemic forced nearly everyone toward digital communications, HEC turned to Apogee for an effective and proactive outbound digital solution. In 2020, HEC began using outbound personalized video messaging and alerts including:

- **Outbound Personalized Video Bill Explanation** – Sent to members whose bill changed by +/- \$25, provides links to help manage their electric bill
- **Mid-Cycle Alerts** - current bill and a predictive estimate of the final bill
- **Email messaging** - Drive participation and awareness in services, programs or events
- **Energy Advisor online home energy audit** - Personalized savings recommendations, bill analysis, and electric bill forecast

Building on their success, in September 2022, HEC began using Apogee's member onboarding solution, the New Member Welcome Series of 3 videos - Introduction to HEC; How to read your bill/ways to pay; and HEC Programs to help you save.

Results:

Requiring little effort and resources from HEC, their ROI on outbound digital engagement is magnificent. HEC learned their members were very receptive to personalized messaging as shown in HEC's member engagement and satisfaction scores and video survey results:

- **Consistent overall customer satisfaction** through the pandemic - ACSI Scores were 84, 83, and 84 in 2020, 2021, and 2022
- **+5 point improvement** in Member Engagement Index (MEI) score from 78 in 2020 to 83 in 2022
- **1,351 new contacts** added and 48% open rate for most recent 80,000 email messages sent to members
- **1,300 Home Energy Audits completed** per month, as much as 4X higher than comparable cooperative utility average of only 300 – 600/month (from March 2022 to February 2023)
- **81% unique open rate**, significantly higher than industry average for 6,000 Welcome Series Video messages sent from September 2022 through March 2023
- Customers rate the video bill explanations:
 - **98%** – Easy to understand
 - **96%** – Useful
 - **51%** – Improved Perception of Horry Electric

Jennifer Cummings, Public Relations & Marketing Coordinator at HEC, commented,

“We feel Apogee provides Horry Electric with another way to reach members electronically with important information. The ability to welcome members to the cooperative, send personalized video bill explanations and mid-cycle alerts helps educate members and get them engaged with the cooperative. This reflects our cooperative principle of education, training and information.”

**To schedule a demonstration contact Apogee at 678-684-6801
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