



BRITISH GAS DRIVES UNIQUE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

The British Gas smart programme is unique in that it focuses on delivering the best customer experience, satisfaction and engagement. British Gas has deployed almost 1.7 million smart meters to homes across Great Britain, more than any other British energy supplier. The additional data driven by the rollout means the company could be analysing up to 48 data points per customer per day.

This smart metering deployment, incorporating the Trilliant Communications Hub and UnitySuite, has resulted in a number of benefits for customers, including reduced operational costs and carbon emissions. Through smart energy modernisation efforts, British Gas has also been able to significantly improve customer satisfaction and over 100,000 of its customers have been interviewed to hone the offering.

In fact, its net promoter score amongst its smart meter customers is consistently 40% higher than standard meter customers. Looking to the future, British Gas has plans to expand its smart metering efforts to include more innovative smart energy programmes such as prepayment meters. British Gas is trialling Smart Pay As You Go with over 9,000 customers giving them greater control of their energy and the convenience of topping up online, over the phone, by smartphone App or at a local shop. In the future, smart meters will enable access to exclusive time-of-use tariffs, which will allow customers to pay different amounts for electricity depending on the time of day or week, which British Gas has been trialling with over 4,000 customers. All for the singular

purpose of delivering a better customer experience that engages customers and increases their satisfaction.

British Gas has run many studies that show that customers are able to save on their energy bills by around 2% equating to £21.

British Gas conducted a study that shows customers were using 6% less gas, and 7% less electricity than similar homes without smart meters, simply by being more aware of their energy use.

"If this energy-efficient behaviour continues for a year, these customers will save an average of £66 off their annual energy bill," the utility adds.

British Gas is also innovative in its approach to the smart programme in that it truly leverages the high-quality, high-frequency data it gets from its smart platform to perform advanced big data analytics that turn information into insights into actions.

With big data analytics, British Gas is able to offer highly personalised actionable insights to its customers. 74% of customers using the interactive online tool believe that it has helped them to better understand their household's energy consumption.

"Just think how significant this would be, by the time smart meters are fitted in every home. The energy industry has an important responsibility to use this data to deliver real customer benefits," Peter Kennedy, Director of Growth at British Gas Residential Energy said. He continues: "At British Gas, we have a dedicated team working on this

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Project manager: Peter Kennedy, Director of Growth, British Gas Residential Energy



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data to ensure the consumer realises the benefits. This isn't necessarily a straightforward job, and having a team who have the right skill set and can apply the appropriate analysis is vital. We have built specialist platforms and tools to help us evaluate this data using the latest open source software.

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Smart meters capture readings up to every half hour, meaning an incredibly detailed picture of how people are using energy can be built up.

"We can build a true picture of daily energy usage by day, week, month and year by looking at information that is available from the types of appliances which are used the most (seen by peaks in gas or electricity use), and how our energy use patterns differ across the country.

"However, it goes without saying that this information is immensely beneficial to suppliers and the electricity grid when it comes to managing peak demand times, though where it gets particularly interesting is how it is utilised to benefit the customer."

British Gas sees personalisation as a key opportunity to engage the customer with their energy consumption. As Kennedy puts it: "We're already seeing how improved visibility around seeing day-to-

day energy use is transformative – our challenge now is to take this data and use it to create truly tailored insights for our customers"

Our interactive online tool gives British Gas customers the ability to view a personalised breakdown of their energy use. This provides access to itemising daily, weekly, monthly and annual energy use. It breaks down likely spend into items like hot water, heating, lighting and appliances; and therefore offers insights which customers can use to make savings.

Comparisons with similar homes in the area are also provided, which highlights if a customer compares favourably with others and maps their energy usage with their peers.

Kennedy continues: "Our customers review the interactive online tool for an average of five minutes each visit – we have already doubled the typical amount of time customers spend on their energy use over a year."

Kennedy believes that the only way to build customer trust in the energy industry is by increasing transparency. He believes this is possible by providing customers with the insight they need to make changes and reduce energy usage to save money on energy bills.

"I am confident that the smart meter rollout, and in turn the harnessing of smart meter data has a critical role to play in doing this. It is up to the industry to invest the expertise, time and money into becoming truly smart with how we apply big data," he concludes. ●

