

CASE STUDY:

Utility Customer Newsletters



The EEC Way: Outside Perspective, Industry Expertise

Executive Summary

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Jenny Heimerman
Supervisor, Customer Care
Owatonna Public Utilities

Murphy’s Law often seems to rule a utility communicator’s life: Whatever could go wrong will, usually at the worst possible time. Like the crises that hit when the team is shorthanded and deadlines are imminent.

That’s one reason why utility communicators contract with Egan Energy Communications (EEC), a [national utility copywriting service](#). Having a dedicated external resource writing their customer newsletter copy gives utility communicators confidence their newsletters will be produced on time and on budget, even if everything else inside the utility is going hay-wire.



Challenge

The electric and gas businesses are going through a lot of strategic changes right now, but one thing seems to hold constant: **the amount of projects facing communicators always seems to exceed their available capacity.**

Many utility communicators are feeling stretched these days, pulled between meetings, social media posts and taking care of daily crises that erupt inside and outside a utility. There's not nearly enough time to write. And when a communicator's schedule does free up, say on a Friday afternoon, it's rarely conducive to writing quality copy. Producing quality writing takes time and focus. Too many report having too little of both.

"John has been great to work with," said one utility client. "He can do just about anything I ask and it's freed up time for me to focus on other, more pressing, aspects of my job."

A second client, Jenny Heimerman of Owatonna Public Utilities, commented: "John was brave enough to help

us go where not many utilities have gone before. We decided to do a series in our monthly newsletter about the equipment a utility uses and maintains yearly, along with the average cost of the equipment. John created pieces that were not only informative, but something to which customers could relate. John was helpful, timely and supportive throughout the entire project!"

A third client said this: "John is a terrific, low-cost resource. I chose to go with a professional writer with years of experience in the utility business because I was tired of having to explain how a utility operates every six months to the new junior copywriter at our advertising agency."

Shifts in technology, regulation and customer preferences continue to reshape the electric and gas business. These changes increase the importance of providing customers with authoritative, authentic information in a manner that is easily understandable.

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Solution

Utilities contract with EEC because John Egan has an outsider's perspective coupled with deep insider's experience **that comes from being a utility communicator.** He knows the issues and he can frame them in ways that are understandable to a lay audience. John has written customer newsletters for utilities across the country, including a Florida public power utility that was short of writers and [long on accomplishments](#); a New York investor-owned utility trying to convince homeowners to [switch from fuel oil to natural gas](#); and, a Nebraska utility organization that wanted to get the word out that its electricity was getting [cleaner and greener](#).

Conclusion

Utilities that have surveyed their customers often find, to their surprise, that a high percentage read the newsletter always or most of the time. Used wisely, the customer newsletter can be one of the most impactful utility communications vehicles.

