

SHARING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT PRACTICE



The Customer Engagement Handbook has been developed as part of the Electricity Network Transformation Roadmap, in collaboration with energy network businesses and CSIRO social science experts and with input from consumer representatives.

The Handbook has been prepared during a period of developing engagement practices and should be viewed as the beginning of a process, not the end.

The Handbook recognises that engagement practice and expertise will evolve over time and there is important ongoing work that should take place between all participants in the energy system to share experience and expertise.

The benefits of ongoing collaboration could include:

- » sharing insights from the considerable expertise that has developed within energy network businesses and customer advocates and further developing capacity,
- » fostering more efficient and effective engagement practices,
- » supporting the sustainability of engagement through corporate culture, organisational capability and increasing engagement based on trust.

Further discussion on how to approach engagement


A number of detailed questions and observations arose during the development of the handbook, which could only be addressed partially in that process. These questions that should be progressed over time as experience and engagement practice evolves include;

1. Are there specific engagement methods that customers, advocates and businesses have found most useful for specific sorts of engagement goals or questions?
 - How can engagement issues be made more relevant for participants?
 - How can engagement outcomes best be conveyed and delivered?
 - Are there specific metrics and KPIs for engagement evaluation that customers and networks have found more/less useful?
2. Are there specific tips on timing, frequency and duration of engagement processes that customer advocates and other stakeholders can suggest, that network businesses can share?
3. Are there specific guidelines that can be developed on engagement expenditure?
 - How much should be spent on engagement activities of different sorts?
 - When (and how much) is it reasonable to pay participants to be involved in engagement activities?
4. Can we better co-ordinate our understanding of engagement issues?
 - Can external stakeholders comment on network businesses' case studies to provide an external assessment?
 - Can we develop consistent language and terminology around customer engagement across jurisdictions and businesses?



Ideas for the future


The development of the Handbook identified an appetite to progress constructive and ongoing collaboration between the energy networks sector and key stakeholders. Opportunities to take the conversation further can be considered with input from network businesses, key stakeholders and customer advocates to ensure customer engagement practices are implemented effectively and improved over time.



Consultation on the Handbook indicated strong support for more collaboration and coordinated engagement feedback and discussion that would involve all participants in the system and could develop skills and capacity for all involved

A regular Energy Customer Engagement Forum?

An annual or twice-yearly national forum involving networks and key stakeholders (potentially including third party and retail representatives) could be used for sharing engagement practice learnings (both successes and opportunities for improvement), and could foster collective learning on best practices.



Feedback on the Consultation draft indicated the need for further work on metrics, evaluation and incentives for engagement.

Industry-wide engagement tracking and evaluation?

There is the potential to develop a coordinated annual evaluation of broad engagement practices using several instruments that may be scaled up over time. This could include an annual inventory of engagement methods and longitudinal evaluation of engagement practice, to allow the industry to track progress and changes in engagement outcomes over time and across the industry.

Feedback on the consultation draft indicated that there was a desire to see CSIRO's behavioural expertise reflected in the Handbook and informing the Electricity Network Transformation Roadmap

Behavioural economics and the Electricity Network Transformation Roadmap

There is more work to be done on work on customer behaviour by social science and behavioural economics experts to be considered under the Electricity Network Transformation Roadmap, which may inform future work in this space.

All participants recognised the Handbook reflects a point in time when engagement practices are still developing. There was strong support for other case studies to be able to be showcased over time.

Web-based collaboration platforms?

A dedicated Energy Customer Engagement portal could be developed, to enable ongoing sharing of customer engagement practice. While the website could develop organically, its key contents could include:

- » a repository for case studies and more specific experience and insights from all participants into what works and what doesn't;
- » a location for templates, tips and tools that advocates, stakeholders and businesses have used/identified as valuable.