

## The Monthly Bill: Get the most out of your utility's investment

As a utility content marketing company, we are often called on to create communications plans for electric distributors looking to increase participation in their programs, increase their customer satisfaction or handle a crisis, among other reasons. One of our first questions is always “How are you communicating today?”

Utility communicators, usually a staff of one, are some of the busiest people in the industry, and often there's not enough time to juggle all the communication tools at their disposal. The shotgun approach — scattering your time and resources across many tools — often leaves several channels unpolished and stale. Rather, we believe it pays to focus on a few channels and do a great job on each.

So, how do you pick your channel? Where do you focus?

There are many different ways to answer this question, because everyone's situation is different. But today, I'd like to make a case for starting with the one channel every utility has: the customer bill.

If your utility is not consistently communicating through the customer bill, every single month, I would urge you to consider making this your next strategic communication goal.

The biggest advantage to using the bill is simple: you are already paying to deliver this product to your customer. The postage you pay to ship customers their bill typically stays the same when you include a newsletter in the envelope — even a four-page newsletter, which could feature stories of your customers while promoting your services and products.

If a monthly newsletter seems too far out of reach, consider your options for the bill itself. When was the last time you revisited your bill's layout, language and messaging? If your billing vendors will allow you to customize the back of your statement, and change that information monthly, this is a great area to promote your new pre-pay program or water heater rebate.

Your customers may never check your website, but they will absolutely read their electric bill. Make the most out of this point of contact to further your utility's mission.

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