



UTILITY DSM SOLUTIONS



Building a Marketplace That Delivers Real Impact for Utility Customers

Overview

Keeping pace with customers' ever-changing expectations via digital engagement remains critical in effective program delivery. In 2019, TechniArt (now a part of Resource Innovations) began supporting Snohomish PUD (the PUD) with their utility marketplace. This involved launching a dynamic marketplace designed to evolve, accommodate new products and equipment, and service unique customer segments. By broadening its range of offerings and services, the PUD amplified the effectiveness of its marketplace, leveraging a flexible e-commerce and engagement strategy.

Opportunity

Investing in an e-commerce marketplace enables utilities to stay relevant in an increasingly digital world, while simultaneously delivering value to customers and shareholders alike. Utilities can empower customers to make informed choices that align with their sustainability goals and drive adoption by offering a curated selection of energy-efficient products, equipment, and services. Additionally, the data generated from customer interactions can yield valuable insights, enabling utilities to refine their offerings and customize marketing strategies for maximum impact.

Solution

The PUD used its marketplace not only to trial new approaches to program delivery but also to provide established methods to serve its customers and help them save money on their monthly bills. The evolution of the PUD's marketplace unfolded in three phases: site launch, the introduction of marketplace v2.0, and the implementation of automated customer validation and eligibility checks.

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Marketplace Initiatives:

Smart thermostats, EV chargers, heat pump water heaters (HPWH), efficient product bundles, segmented customer offers

Efficient product bundles distributed:

35,000 in 12 months

Limited-time offer sales:

~400 HPWHs. Three 30-day promotions over three years.

ABOUT RESOURCE INNOVATIONS

Resource Innovations (RI) is an energy transformation firm. Women-led, purpose built, and focused on impact, we're constantly expanding our portfolio of solutions to guide utilities through increasingly complex, connected challenges. For communities across North America, we're leading the charge to power change.

Phase 1—Site Launch

In October 2019, the PUD unveiled its marketplace to customers, offering five categories of products (LED lighting, water-saving devices, smart thermostats, advanced power strips, and bundles). The site played a crucial role in enabling the PUD to adapt during the unforeseen impacts of the pandemic. They distributed a free energy-efficient bundle to all customers through the marketplace, reaching over 35,000 customers in 12 months.

The marketplace's high-level roadmap included the capability to introduce new offers and services. The PUD experimented with various limited-time offers and pilots, such as:

- An order site for free bundles to small business customers specifically geared towards offices, restaurants, and retail
- Dedicated promotions for smart thermostats
- A pilot limited-time offer for heat pump water heaters and level 2 EVSE chargers
- A dedicated site for income-qualified customers to order free bundles

Phase 2—Marketplace v2.0

In May 2022, a rebranded, integrated marketplace was launched to address evolving business and program requirements. The updated marketplace:

- Adopted the new Snohomish PUD branding
- Consolidated residential and SMB marketplaces into one ecosystem
- Provided more educational resources and a pathway for engagement specifically designed for residential customers

Phase 3—Automation

In March 2023, the marketplace implemented an automated system for customer validation and eligibility checks. Resource Innovations' iEnergy software serves as the PUD's system of record. By interfacing with iEnergy through API calls, the software verifies customer authenticity and eligibility and adjusts the applicable incentives accordingly.

As Snohomish PUD continues evolving its marketplace strategy, the next focus is dynamic rebates. Leveraging the capabilities of iEnergy software, the PUD aims to identify customers and offer precise rebates tailored to specific energy-saving measures.

Results

Snohomish PUD's implementation of the marketplace yielded significant outcomes across various metrics, showcasing its effectiveness in meeting customer needs.

The marketplace successfully engaged customers, as evidenced by the distribution of over 35,000 complimentary energy-efficient bundles within the first 12 months of its launch.

The introduction of new products and services through the marketplace led to increased adoption of energy-efficient technologies among customers.

- 12% of Snohomish PUD residential customers have placed an order through its Marketplace
- 35,042 Efficient Bundles fulfilled
- 4,100 smart thermostats purchased
- 2,700 electric vehicle chargers purchased
- 3,760 IE Bundles distributed
- 1,530 Small Business Bundles distributed

Integration of educational resources and streamlined pathways for engagement contributed to a more user-friendly experience for customers.

Overall, the results demonstrate the marketplace's effectiveness in meeting customer expectations and driving organizational goals related to energy efficiency, customer engagement, and program effectiveness. The phased approach to marketplace development and deployment enabled Snohomish PUD to adapt to changing circumstances, enhance customer experiences, and achieve tangible outcomes in promoting energy conservation and cost savings.

Contact

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