



AUTOMATED WEB SOLUTION IMPROVES PRODUCTIVITY AND SUSTAINS GROWTH

AVISTA CORPORATION

/// CASE STUDY



Avista wanted to modernize its Web solution to improve the customer experience, as well as implement new interactive tools for monitoring usage, viewing billing and payment history, and conserving energy. EDS, an HP company, provided the front- and back-office integration to support these new functions.

CLIENT PROFILE

www.avistautilities.com

Founded in 1889, Avista engages in energy production, transmission and distribution, as well as other energy-related activities.

Avista Utilities provides service to 352,000 electric and 311,000 natural gas customers in Washington, Idaho and Oregon.

Industry: Energy

Headquarters:

Spokane, Washington

2007 Consolidated Net Income:

\$38 million

Employees: 2,117

Business Needs Addressed:

Growth

Productivity

Utility wanted a modern Web presence to improve service, manage growth

Avista has had a long history of innovation and commitment to renewable resources. In fact, it is one of the greenest utilities in the nation. With hydro-generation as its anchor low-cost resource, Avista's energy portfolio also includes thermal generation, biomass, wind and other renewables.

Conserving energy also saves resources, and Avista's energy conservation efforts span more than three decades. With Avista's customer base growing 2 to 3 percent each year, the company saw an opportunity to use technology to enhance its customer service experience. What it envisioned was a new Web application that would improve productivity, sustain growth and provide customers with automated functionality like interactive tools to help them understand their energy consumption. EDS partnered with Avista to provide the IT expertise to help bring Avista's vision to fruition.

EDS tied customer relationships into Avista's operations and systems

EDS played a critical role in connecting Avista's revamped Web site, which was designed by a third-party provider, to Avista's back-office applications. An EDS-designed and deployed middleware solution allows the Web application to interface with the company's legacy systems, enabling interoperability between systems and the integration of self-service functionality for customers.

Today, the Web application allows customers to open and close accounts, make payments, update account information and address billing inquiries. What's more, the solution provides innovative forecasting and modeling tools that give customers a complete view of their energy consumption, from usage history to changing behaviors and trends. In addition to offering a rich informational resource, the Web application provides an interactive tool for generating personalized energy snapshots. This third-party provided application lets customers define factors such as household size, square footage and lifestyle habits to project energy consumption for different scenarios.

Services featured

- Composite Application and Portal Services
- Integration and SOA Services

"Customers find the new Web site much easier to navigate and are using the online energy management tools to gain visibility into usage, billing and payment history, and ways to conserve energy."

Janna Leaf
Systems Business Analyst
Avista Utilities

The solution also arms company leaders with greater organizationwide visibility into marketing, customer service and IT operations. As a result, managers are able to synchronize the timing of marketing campaigns with technology spend and customer service initiatives for maximum impact.

In addition, the front- and back-connected Web solution lays the groundwork for future enhancements, including the seamless integration of cutting-edge new technologies with minimal investment and training.

Avista enhanced productivity and service with automated Web solution

In its first six months, Avista's new Web site attracted 70,000 customers a month with more than 40 percent making payments online. The Web site also processes nearly 6,000 other automated transactions every month, freeing call center staff to focus on value-added tasks.

Customers now enjoy one-click access to automated self-service capabilities and diagnostic tools that are integrated into their personal profiles, making energy management quick and effortless.

The interactive solution has transformed Avista's relationships with customers by engaging them to take an active role in energy consumption. This is evident in the 15 percent of Web visitors who now use the energy management tools to reveal new ways to reduce their carbon footprint and conserve energy.

As Avista continues to grow, it can now transition call volumes to the Web site, thus ensuring a high-quality, holistic customer service experience.

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