



Retail Electricity Provider Attains Greater Web Presence and Customer Efficiency with SMBology's Assistance

SMBology's client is a retail electricity provider (REP) that resells electricity to both resident and commercial customers throughout the state of Texas.

SMBology's client was in need of an increased Web presence along with a way for residential customers to sign up for electrical service online that supported all aspects of the firm's registration process.

SMBology designed the firm's website from the ground up as well as developed a Web application that provided easy enrollment for the firm's customers. This web application also directly linked all enrollments to the firm's billing system, creating a seamless process. Analytical tools were also created to track customer site usage.

Results

- ▣ Reduced customer service rep time from 10 minutes to zero
- ▣ Decreased errors in enrollment due to process automation
- ▣ Gained knowledge of end-user behavior through website metrics
- ▣ Over 500 new customers enrolling online per day

Technologies Used

- ▣ SQL Server 2005
- ▣ ASP.NET 2.0
- ▣ Windows Server 2003
- ▣ C#
- ▣ Secure Online Payments (iPay)
- ▣ Online Risk Analysis (Equifax)
- ▣ SSL (Verisign)

Company Overview

SMBology's client is a retail electricity provider (REP) serving the Texas market. As a REP, it is neither the producer of power, nor the owner of the transmission lines which electricity flows across. Instead, the company resells electricity to both residential and commercial customers and provides customer service related to all issues except transmission (power outages, etc). Founded in 2004, SMBology's client was recently named in *Inc.* magazine's list of fastest growing companies, coming in with over \$227 million in revenue in 2009.

Business Challenge

The retail electricity provider was a fledgling company with numerous needs. First, the company was in need of an increased Web presence. In addition, the firm wanted a way to automate signups for its residential enrollments as well as wanted these enrollments to transfer directly into the billing system, allowing seamless and automated signups.

To allow residential customers to register for electrical service, the company required a Web application to be developed in order to support all aspects of the signup process including:

- ▣ Pre-qualifying customers by location
- ▣ Presenting offers for display
- ▣ Providing tools for potential customers to see cost savings
- ▣ Gathering customer's personal information
- ▣ Performing a credit check
- ▣ Making online payments
- ▣ Providing order confirmation information
- ▣ Interacting with external customer database

SMBology Solution

SMBology designed the website's look and feel from the ground up. More importantly, the SMBology team developed a Web application allowing the retail electricity provider to manage the website's content without assistance from a developer. This customized content management system (CMS) allows non-technical users to easily update the site. The CMS supports the addition of new static content and also allows the firm to quickly add new offers, change the way these offers appear on the site, assign new promotional codes, and update rate information on the site.

A Web application was also created in order to automate the company's entire residential enrollment process. This application presents options to customers in an easy-to-read manner and walks them through the registration process step-by-step. The Web application allows SMBology's client to process significantly more enrollments, as it automatically performs tasks that were previously done by hand. In addition to saving time, the company's

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web application solution has also attracted additional customers due to its ease of use.

In parallel to the enrollment Web application, SMBology built and continues to build extensive analytical tools to track customer usage of the company's site. For example, customer flow is tracked at various key points throughout the signup process. Management can then run reports that show the number of visitors to the site vs. the number converted into customers. Key parts of the signup process are tracked as well, allowing the reports to display reasons why a customer aborted signup—ex: they did not like the offers presented, a deposit was required, service was not available in their area, they did not like the terms of service, etc.

Results

SMBology successfully implemented a new Web presence for its client that met all of the company's needs. In addition, the automated enrollment process reduced customer service representative time to enroll a customer from approximately 10 minutes to zero, as the customer now does this task independently. Enrollment errors were reduced as enrollments were programmed to be automatically entered into the company's billing system rather than being manually transcribed. Metrics were also gained in regards to the firm's signup process. Moreover, the company website currently handles the automatic enrollment of over 500 new customers daily.

SMBology, Inc. is a growth-oriented IT firm offering strategic consulting, user experience design, and custom application development. Clients benefit from our focus on easy-to-use technology, a deep understanding of the human user, and keen business acumen. This focus, paired with our deep technical expertise and broad service offering, enables us to take your company further than you ever imagined.

