

Smart Communications: Dynamic Greetings Offer Innovative Outage Reporting Option

As outage management system (OMS) technology continues to evolve, so do the services that CRC offers to its membership. Thanks to OMS integration efforts, CRC now offers a smart outage communications tool called dynamic greetings.

How Does it Work?

Dynamic greetings use OMS predictions to customize front-end greetings to play caller-specific messages versus a utility-specific message to incoming callers.

For example:

Caller A is experiencing a power outage and calls XYZ Utility to report it. She hears a message that the utility is aware of the outage and a line crew has been dispatched to fix the problem as soon as possible.

At the same time, **Caller B** is not experiencing a power outage but calls XYZ Utility to pay his bill. He will hear the normal incoming caller message of XYZ Utility.

The benefit of dynamic greetings is that Caller A is reassured immediately that XYZ Utility is aware of her outage and that a line crew is on the way to fix it, concluding the call quickly and efficiently. For Caller B, it's business as usual, and he doesn't have to listen to an incoming greeting that doesn't apply to him. Both callers had their calls handled and completed in a timely manner, providing them with great customer service and the incoming lines were made available for other callers to the utility.

Outage Greeting Customization

The content of the message that Caller A in the example above will hear depends on how much information the OMS knows about the outage. The message may include information about one or more of the following items:

- Crews are aware of the outage

- Crew status
- Estimated time of restoration
- Number of meters affected
- Cause of outage

Once Caller A hears the initial dynamic greeting, she'll hear the following message:

Please press 1 if you're calling for another reason, press 2 to report your outage, or you may simply hang up as we are aware of your outage and crews will restore power as quickly as possible.

If the utility also offers callers CRC's automated callback service to verify their power has been restored, Caller A will hear the following message after she reports her outage in the IVR:

*Would you like to receive a callback to verify your power has been restored?
Please say "yes" or "no."*

Improving Call Completion

Although CRC strives to answer every call with an agent, technology is used during times of high call volume to expedite service for callers. Dynamic greetings are significant in assisting with call completion because often at times when a utility experiences an influx of calls, some of those calls may be blocked or placed on hold until an agent can assist them. Dynamic greetings offer a better alternative, giving the caller the information they need and complete the call as quickly as possible. Dynamic greetings also save CRC members money since the call is categorized as a front-end greeting which is billed at a lower rate than if the caller actually spoke to an agent.

Since the dynamic greeting service has been offered to CRC's membership, 5% of callers choose to remain on the line to speak to a live agent. Accordingly, 95% of callers either reported their outage using the IVR or hung up after hearing the dynamic greeting.

"The dynamic greetings option is another CRC service offering designed to complement the restoration communication efforts of our membership," said Brad Fjelsta, senior vice president – operations. "We find that when most callers are assured the utility is aware of their outage, they're satisfied that help is on the way and hang up. Not only does it improve customer satisfaction, it ultimately saves resources for the utility."

