Billing Presentment and the Changing Utility Billing Landscape

Description: As UK utilities start their smart meter deployments, lessons from the US can be learnt in terms of managing customer satisfaction before, during and after smart meter roll outs.

Scope

- The bill is a utility's principal method of communicating with its customers
- Bills can often be confusing and are poorly exploited by UK utilities as a marketing channel
- Smart metering brings the subject of advanced bill presentment into focus

Highlights of this title

As the principal line of communication between a utility and its customers, utilities cannot underestimate the importance of billing. Regardless of whether a meter is smart or not, in terms of invoicing customers, clarity and accuracy are vital in keeping down cost-to-serve. Bills can also be better used in marketing campaigns.

While the accuracy of smart meters promises an end to bill estimation and associated customer complaints, smart meters will introduce a new level of complexity in residential billing. Ovum recommends that utilities plan early and proactively manage customer satisfaction before, during and after their smart meter deployments

Key reasons to purchase this title

- Find out how UK utilities can better exploit the bill
- Understand how billing presentment technologies help utilities to manage customer satisfaction before, during and after smart meter deployments

Contents: Catalyst

Ovum view

- There is a direct correlation between quality of utility billing, cost-to-serve and customer retention
- The relationship between a utility and its customers is 'light-touch' compared to other industries, emphasizing the importance of the bill
- Billing has a high impact on cost-to-serve
- Bills are a utility's principal marketing channel
- Despite the importance of billing, customer feedback is poor
- Billing is the principal cause of residential customer complaints
- Industrial and commercial customers' experience with billing is also poor

THE COMPLEXITY OF SMART METERING CREATES A CONVERGENCE OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL BILLING ISSUES

- Smart metering removes customer issues with bill estimation, which should reduce cost-to-serve
- Smart metering creates a convergence of residential and I&C issues with billing

ADDRESSING customer satisfaction BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER an Advanced Metering Infrastructure deployment is vital for managing cost-to-serve

- Additional billing complexity is a real risk to forecast returns on smart metering investments
- Lessons from the US show that utilities ignore the customer at their peril during smart meter deployments
- Managing customer satisfaction and cost-to-serve before, during and after a smart meter deployment is
synonymous with managing bill complexity
Introduce additional complexity in the bill well before smart meters are deployed
Phase the introduction of time-of-use billing once smart meters are deployed
Investing in bill presentment will minimize impact on cost-to-serve
Advanced information presentation will manage the complexity of smart metering
Bill personalization can increase return on marketing and reduce call center costs
Offering new channels for bill provision will help customers to better manage usage data

APPENDIX
Ask the analyst
Disclaimer

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Figure 2: UK residential customer complaints (electricity and gas)
Figure 3: 40% of MEUs report an average or worse experience with their electricity billing
Figure 4: Accuracy and clarity are the two areas where MEUs want their electricity providers to improve
Figure 5: Smart metering functionality introduces a far greater level of complexity to customers

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