

I answer the phone with a simple question every day: “Hi, how can I help you?” The responses I receive to this question are not so simple, however, and sometimes many unique and unexpected discussions ensue. In my world as a customer service manager, knowledge is power, and given today’s technology advancements, communicating this knowledge to customers via multiple channels is not only paramount but absolutely expected. I need to quickly and accurately answer questions, but I also need to proactively notify customers of key events, account status changes, and more. Most importantly, I need integrated tools that provide customers access to their data, so they can review their account details anytime, at their convenience, and communicate with me through channels of their choice.

We use National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) iVUE® utility enterprise software and service solutions for customer care and billing, accounting and business, and engineering and operations. Along with these core solutions, we also use a variety of NISC’s fully integrated solutions, like SmartHub® and Messenger that offer us enhanced customer engagement functionality.

SmartHub is a customer-facing web portal that provides customers with convenient account access and two-way communications online or through mobile devices. SmartHub is a great tool. Customers can not only view their consumption and billing history, but also manage payments, notify the utility of account and service issues, and view their AMI interval or AMR usage. SmartHub provides our customers with details they need to make smart energy savings and account management decisions. For example, SmartHub graphically displays historical temperature days against historical consumption over a rolling pre-defined period of time. This type of data presentation empowers our customers and greatly reduces our call volumes while increasing our transparency.

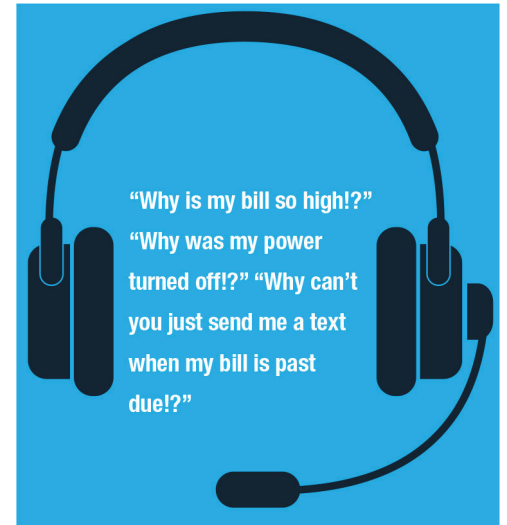
SmartHub functionality also includes Messenger. With Messenger, NISC pairs the power of SmartHub’s data presentation with the ability to analyze this data and proactively communicate with customers. Messenger is a cloud-based message delivery system. Through SmartHub, customers have the ability to choose from a variety of communication sources, including email, text, and push notifications, ensuring that we deliver the right messages through the right channels in a non-invasive way. As a manager, I can customize messages to target specific customer groups, as well. For example, I can send texts and/or emails to delinquent customers only, reminding them that their bill is past due, and providing details on all the methods they can pay their bill and when service will be interrupted for nonpayment. Customers can pay their bill anytime via SmartHub and other payment channels, like Kiosks, and MoneyGram, and even take advantage of NISC’s integrated PrePaid Metering functionality. This communication and technology not only improves our customer relationships, but also greatly reduces disconnects and relative call volumes.

These are excellent tools on their own, but the true power of NISC’s iVUE solution is integration. SmartHub and Messenger are seamlessly integrated into the NISC core solutions, which means no duplicate data entry and absolute data integrity. Customers communicate with me using these technologies, and I am assured that their information is accurately captured in iVUE.

So, when I am asked, “Why is my bill so high?” I can answer the question immediately and direct that person to SmartHub for a graphical representation of their consumption history. If I am asked, “Why is my power turned off?” I can reference our utility’s multiple notification attempts via mailed notice and text/email messaging that their bill was past due. If I am asked to send a text when the bill is past due I can provide this service by helping that customer create a Messenger profile that is customized to their specific needs.

Knowledge is power, and having the right technology helps our staff and our customers grow together.

*This sponsored advertising feature was published by the American Public Power Association.*



**For more information,  
visit [NISC.coop](http://NISC.coop) or  
contact us at:**

**[Sales@NISC.coop](mailto:Sales@NISC.coop)  
866.999.6472**