



# Customer Impact Report: Corporate Citizenship and Community Involvement

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## KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Many utilities are struggling with how to raise awareness among stakeholders regarding their corporate citizenship. While most utilities do give back to their communities, J.D. Power has found that those projects can differ in size, scope, and focus. The challenge is knowing how to promote the utility's efforts and, therefore, how to raise customer awareness of those efforts. Below are some of the key takeaways from this report:

- Corporate citizenship—e.g., a utility's involvement with environmental causes; charitable giving; community outreach and support; volunteerism; and sponsorship of community events—is a part of the customer experience, which is reflected in higher overall satisfaction among those who are aware of their utility's corporate citizenship initiatives.
- Focused efforts in terms of corporate giving, volunteerism, or involvement in certain causes tend to be a characteristic of utilities that perform well in the Corporate Citizenship Index. Efforts are better spent when they have a true focus and an objective with some substance.
- Employee volunteerism provides a significant lift in customer satisfaction. When customers are aware of volunteer programs or have seen a utility employee volunteering in the community, satisfaction ratings for the attributes that comprise the Corporate Citizenship Index increase by up to 2 points (on a 10-point scale) in the *2013 Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study*.
- When customers are aware of corporate giving or support for economic development initiatives, satisfaction also increases, but not as much as when they are aware of volunteer efforts.
- Some utilities have found that recruiting retirees, who are typically knowledgeable and effective volunteers, not only helps them further their corporate citizenship goals, but also provides opportunities in which retirees might want to participate. Another way to promote volunteerism is to offer incentives to utility employees in order to motivate them to become actively involved in community-related programs.
- Although awareness can raise satisfaction significantly, few customers are actually aware of their utility's corporate citizenship efforts. More needs to be done to inform customers about those efforts.
- Some of the highest-performing utilities in Corporate Citizenship across all four studies don't necessarily spend a lot of money on advertising their community service efforts. Instead, they gain publicity through their websites by hosting and sponsoring community events; volunteerism; and using such newer, emerging channels as social media and by lending tents bearing the utility's logo for community events. Engaging customers in this manner fosters the most effective advertising of all—word of mouth—as customers do talk about what their utilities are doing. In some cases, customers have even volunteered their time for utility initiatives.



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