



## Customer Impact Report: Key and Managed Account Customer Satisfaction 2014



July 2014

L. Dennis Smith

Director

Energy Practice

A Global Marketing Information Company  
[jdpower.com](http://jdpower.com)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

In this report, an analysis of managed account customers surveyed for the 2014 gas and electric business studies shows that many of the same key takeaways are consistent with those of the 2013 *Key Account Management and Interaction Customer Impact Report*. There is still no industry-wide standard for designating key and managed accounts; nonetheless, satisfaction tends to be higher among customers with more personalized service, with proactive contact being a primary driver of satisfaction among business customers large enough to have an account manager assigned to them.

There are fundamentals to properly serving the largest and most valued customers: ensure they are communicated with at a frequency with which they are comfortable and via their preferred channel (phone call, text message, email, etc.); establish solid relationships with them; and proactively inform them of the utility's affairs, including potential price hikes or other difficult issues. As with all customers, managed account customers have particular needs that must be met and expectations of basic services their utility will provide, such as a fair price, reliable service, easy-to-understand billing, and their utility's involvement in the community.

Those expectations, however, require a different approach, as large-business customers have vastly different requirements than most of the customer base.

Listed below are new takeaways from the *Key and Managed Account Customer Satisfaction 2014* report:

- In the *2014 Electric Utility Business Customer Satisfaction Study*, 13% of survey respondents indicate having an account manager assigned to their business for in-person service. Another 12% indicate having an assigned customer service representative to whom customers are routed when they call the utility with a service need, which means that approximately one-fourth of electric utility business customers receive some level of personalized service.
- Satisfaction is higher among customers with an in-person account manager than among those with an in-house CSR, with satisfaction among the latter group improving only marginally over time. Typically, high-performing utilities provide a business-specific call center; however, personalized service would be preferable for many customers. It may be that many

utilities with lower satisfaction among customers with an assigned in-house CSR are not executing well on the expectations of those customers, while other customers may be getting an in-house rep when they prefer an in-person account manager. Some of the high performers use the business call center as a support function for key account managers.

- Email is an important communications channel. Large-business customers with an in-person manager view their account manager as their most-preferred communications channel, but email is also highly preferred among this segment as a means of receiving information from the utility. Many utilities now use email to make proactive contacts, but at the customer's convenience.
- Utilities identified as high performers among managed account customers in the 2014 gas and electric utility business customer studies tend to have a strong energy-efficiency program in place.
- The highest-performing gas and electric utilities also excel in the Corporate Citizenship Index, in which they outpace the industry in several attributes and diagnostics:
  - their customers have more direct contact with utility executives
  - managed account customers are more aware of energy-efficiency or conservation programs
  - they receive notably higher ratings from customers in the customer perception that the utility supports economic development in the community.



# **J.D. POWER & ASSOCIATES**

**McGRAW HILL FINANCIAL**