

## Case Study

# AGL Using Digital to Differentiate

### Australian Energy Leader (AGL) Delivers a Differentiated and High Value Digital Customer Experience



As Australia's leading diversified energy utility, **Australia Gas & Light Company** (AGL Energy) provides 3.5 million customers with gas and electricity, and is the largest privately owned, operator and developer of renewable generation assets.

### Business situation

Deregulation in the energy sector in 2001 paved the way for a number of new energy utilities to enter the market. AGL was now trading in a more dynamic and competitive marketplace. This new economy benefited customers by greater choice of retailers and more flexible cost saving options. High customer turnover followed and demands for more efficient modes of energy production increased, as customers looked to retailers to provide green energy offerings and more sustainable cost effective solutions.

Concurrent to this, Smart Meter technology was being developed and was subsequently mandated to be rolled out to every household and business in the State of Victoria. Smart Meter technology reports energy usage back to the grid at half-hour intervals providing the potential for usage to be tracked and monitored for efficiency and cost saving purposes.

For leading retailers like AGL, even though this new climate meant that customer churn was at an all-time high, it also presented opportunities unprecedented in the industry. In a highly competitive market AGL knew that it needed to compete not on price alone. Therefore, to ensure it retained its leading position, AGL sought to differentiate itself from competitors to

reduce customer turnover and to implement new strategies to retain their already strong customer base.

### Energy efficiency via a personalized online experience.

The key to achieving this was to develop more value added relationships with customers and ensure that customer engagement was strong. Avanade and Accenture were chosen as the preferred providers to help AGL implement a solution to differentiate its customer service offering. The solution needed to provide engaging services to customers by the creation of a data-rich, personalized, online customer experience. It was also important to provide tools to make easily available the data captured by Smart Meters to enable customers to make informed decisions about their energy usage.

The project involved a number of solutions. The first was to build a common platform that could meet both internal and customer-facing needs. This involved consolidating 50 independently managed business websites into one consolidated platform. Avanade helped identify the functions and the requirements for each site to ensure all needs would be met. Using Sitecore technology allowed AGL to leverage its existing investment in Microsoft technologies, and take advantage of a feature rich platform complete with customizable elements to make the solution fit for purpose.

The solution also included using Windows Azure cloud technology to run the Sitecore-based solution, again to maximize AGL's existing investment in Microsoft technologies. Cloud technology facilitates efficiencies and scalability ensuring the stability of the platform supporting high activity at peak times.

Existing self-service technology was migrated to the Sitecore in Azure platform, so customers can easily pay their bills, view their account activity or plan for a house move.

Responsive web design, with layouts optimized for mobile means that AGL customers can access the site from anywhere and perform these and other activities whether they are using a laptop, tablet or smart phone. The identity services that are available in Azure enables customers to log in to their account with a single click using their Facebook or other social media credentials.

A key feature that Avanade and Accenture included in the solution was the ability to pull in Smart Meter data to provide personalized, real-time energy usage data to customers. This would enable them to better understand their energy consumption, helping them lower their costs and maximize energy efficiency.

This feature was accommodated by building an SAP platform that could read, create structure and pull meaning from the data capture that was useful to customers.

***"Adopting Agile seems to be the only practical approach to managing the rapidly changing, evolutionary nature of Digital" igel age, A Digital ead***

Speed to market was a critical factor in the success of the overall project. By employing Agile Project Management methodology, Avanade ensured that the solution could be rolled out quickly. Through a series of frequent releases, the AGL team was able to have a strong understanding of how the project was progressing. This allowed for changes and modifications early on and transparency ensured the right expectations from all stakeholders.

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## Results realized

### New platform delivers 47% click throughs to energy plans and a 29% increase in mobile conversions

The highly streamlined solution delivered by Avanade and Accenture has meant significant gains for AGL.

The new platform offers customers personalized usage reports and 24-month energy management plans enabling them to choose how to manage their energy consumption. As a result of these new features home page visitors are 47% more likely to go directly to AGL's energy plans page to consider AGL as their energy provider.

With their site optimized for mobile, AGL is seeing a 29% increase in mobile conversions with an increase in mobile visitors overall. The new "pay your bill"

quick link is the site's second most used link, suggesting customers value the opportunity to easily pay their bill online. The site is more accessible overall, loading up to 40% more quickly, supporting a smooth user experience plus effective search engine optimization.

## Award winning solution

The solution, a responsive, innovative Sitecore in Azure cloud solution, won Sitecore's *Site of the Year 2013* award in the two categories: Best Customer/User Experience and Best Azure Site. Accenture & AGL won *SAP Customer Excellence Award* for the My AGL IQ Energy Management Portal, which pulls data from the Smart Meter and packages it in a meaningful way for customers.

By delivering personalized, actionable energy information to its customers, AGL has boosted customer engagement, retaining existing customers and attracting new ones. Mobile access has opened new doors to on-the-go, busy customers who value the chance to connect via smart phone.

By developing an integrated platform with strong design and scalable cloud technology, the new AGL website is nimble and responsive, and can quickly accommodate changing requirements and market demands. In a crowded, competitive energy market, Avanade and Accenture have helped AGL differentiate itself by a real-time, on-the-go ability to deliver meaningful data and help customers choose wisely, when and how they use energy.



#### About Avanade

Avanade provides business technology solutions and managed services that connect insight, innovation and expertise in Microsoft® technologies to help customers realize results. Our people have helped thousands of organizations in all industries improve business agility, employee productivity and customer loyalty. Additional information can be found at [www.avanade.com](http://www.avanade.com).

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#### North America

Seattle  
Phone +1 206 239 5600  
[America@avanade.com](mailto:America@avanade.com)

#### South America

Sao Paulo  
Phone +55 (11) 5188 3000  
[latinamerica@avanade.com](mailto:latinamerica@avanade.com)

#### Africa

Pretoria  
Phone +27 12 622 4400  
[SouthAfrica@avanade.com](mailto:SouthAfrica@avanade.com)

#### Asia- Pacific

Singapore  
Phone +65 6592 2133  
[AsiaPac@avanade.com](mailto:AsiaPac@avanade.com)

#### Europe

London  
Phone +44 0 20 7025 1000  
[Europe@avanade.com](mailto:Europe@avanade.com)