

A  Case Story

CHOOSING TRANSFORMATIONAL CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Built Together with **DYNAMIT**

AN INDUSTRY-LEADING UTILITY COMPANY CHOOSES DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

NiSource, a top-50 United States gas and electric provider, made the decision to invest in their digital solutions because they believe that their customers should expect more from utility providers. Together with their digital partner Dynamit, they built the foundation for a digital experience that meets and exceeds their customers' day-to-day needs, while adding value along the way.

*And just as NiSource's customers are empowered to **expect more** from their utility provider, NiSource is empowered to **expect more** from their digital partner, building solutions that are right-sized for today and scalable for tomorrow.*

Customer expectations around digital engagement have never been higher.

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The storm is coming. It's not a matter of *"if,"* but *"when."*

In an age where the pace of digital innovation has all but replaced face-to-face engagement in the customer's mind, it's up to service providers to bridge the gap with the right solutions.

This trend impacts every industry—including gas, electric, and other utilities.

But it's about more than "what's trending." It's about a renewed focus on delivering what customers really want—and need.

Dependence on utilities such as natural gas can leave customers vulnerable in the event of an issue, outage, or other crisis—perhaps even displaced and relying on a smartphone alone. They need fast and easy online support, not a lengthy call-center wait time.

Transforming culture, processes, and technology today ensures effective delivery of unexpected value for customers tomorrow. A beautiful website, online account services, and paperless billing are just the beginning.

Whether in “blue sky mode” or “storm mode,” the utility customer service goal is clear: **Be there when customers need us most.**



MEET NiSource

THEIR BELIEF? CUSTOMERS NEED, EXPECT, AND DESERVE FULL ACCESS TO ACCOUNT SERVICES—ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.

NiSource, a company serving nearly 4 million natural gas and electric customers across seven states under NIPSCO and Columbia Gas, put a stake in the ground around customer experience.

Shifting customer perceptions through an unprecedented service experience wasn't only the right thing for NiSource to do—it was the smart thing to do.

With a renewed commitment to provide online experiences that not only meet customers' immediate needs but add unexpected value along the way, NiSource was poised for a customer experience revolution in gas and electric.

Architecting Customer Experience (CX) Transformation doesn't start with a website or app. It starts with a mindset shift.

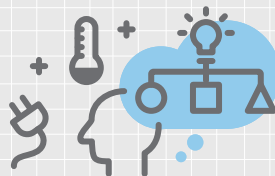
OLD CX MINDSET
RESPOND
(meet the need)



Deliver power + heat



NEW CX MINDSET
ANTICIPATE
(exceed the need)



Deliver power + heat
+ while adding value

WHEN THE STAKES ARE THIS HIGH?

MISTAKES AREN'T AN OPTION.

NiSource knew digital transformation was foundational. The company's 10-year-old website was long overdue for an upgrade in look, feel, and functionality.

But they knew the change ahead was more than a "digital facelift"—it would be a total transformation of the customer experience.

For some customers, it would mean access to web services for the very first time. For others, it would mean having a choice on how to interact with customer service. For all, it would mean an invitation to **expect more** from NiSource as a gas and electric provider.

CUSTOMER VIEW:

- ✦ Displaced by service outages or account issues
- ✦ Needing full-service support on mobile devices
- ✦ Wanting self-service messaging or text over call-in
- ✦ Deserving to be treated like a person, not a number
- ✦ Starting to **expect more** from *all* service providers, including utilities

NiSource VIEW:

- ✦ Facing foundational, daunting digital and organizational change
- ✦ Needing a powerful digital solution to support seamless customer-oriented service
- ✦ Wanting to provide an exceptional customer experience
- ✦ Reevaluating internal CX systems, processes, teams and cultural mindset
- ✦ Starting to **expect more** of themselves—and from their digital partners

CUSTOMERS EXPECTED MORE

It was time for NiSource
to do the same.



NiSource needed a
Marketing + IT partner
they could trust to help
them bring their vision
to life.

National utility service standards have traditionally kept customers at length. But NiSource decided their customers deserved better than the industry norm. The risk involved would be well worth the gain—and would position NiSource as a customer engagement leader in the industry.

Philosophically, the change went beyond digital. Customer experience transformation required getting all internal stakeholders on board, which involved finding and retaining the right people and incentivizing the right behavior.

To accomplish this, NiSource needed a digital partner they could trust to help them identify not only what a new website will **look** like but what it takes to **power** it.

IDENTIFY

LOOK



+

POWER



FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER MEANS EXPECTING MORE + DOING THE MATH

YOU NEED A DIGITAL PARTNER YOU CAN TRUST TO ROLL UP THEIR SLEEVES AND HELP YOU UNDERSTAND:

1

What your customer *really* wants

2

The technology solutions you *really* need

3

How to get the right team in place



Hi NiSource. We're Dynamit.

We're here to help you blend the best of digital strategy + software consulting and development into one.

NiSource's new website went through multiple iterations with other digital agencies. But without a clear target, even those eager to come to the table couldn't finish the job.

Then NiSource met Dynamit, a partner with the vision, creativity and technical chops to enable today's requirements + empower tomorrow's solutions.

As a uniquely blended digital agency + software consultancy, Dynamit had tackled projects like this before. They earned trust by helping NiSource teams understand the best ways to partner.

With **digital partners** to help align strategy and team activities to business goals and **software consulting and development partners** to help design, architect, and build together, **NiSource was enabled to serve their customers beyond typical day-to-day needs.**

Dynamit helped NiSource reconcile requirements against the vision, champion and socialize that vision internally, and align the mindset and methods of NiSource Marketing, IT, and Customer Experience teams as well as several other contracting firms.

It took a new level of bravery and drive—something NiSource wanted and needed.

NiSource was empowered to expect more from an agency partner

I was pleased by the Dynamit leadership team's motivation to be a partner, not just another vendor. Not every company is willing to roll up sleeves at a senior level to work with you. They were exactly who we needed as a partner at that pivotal point.

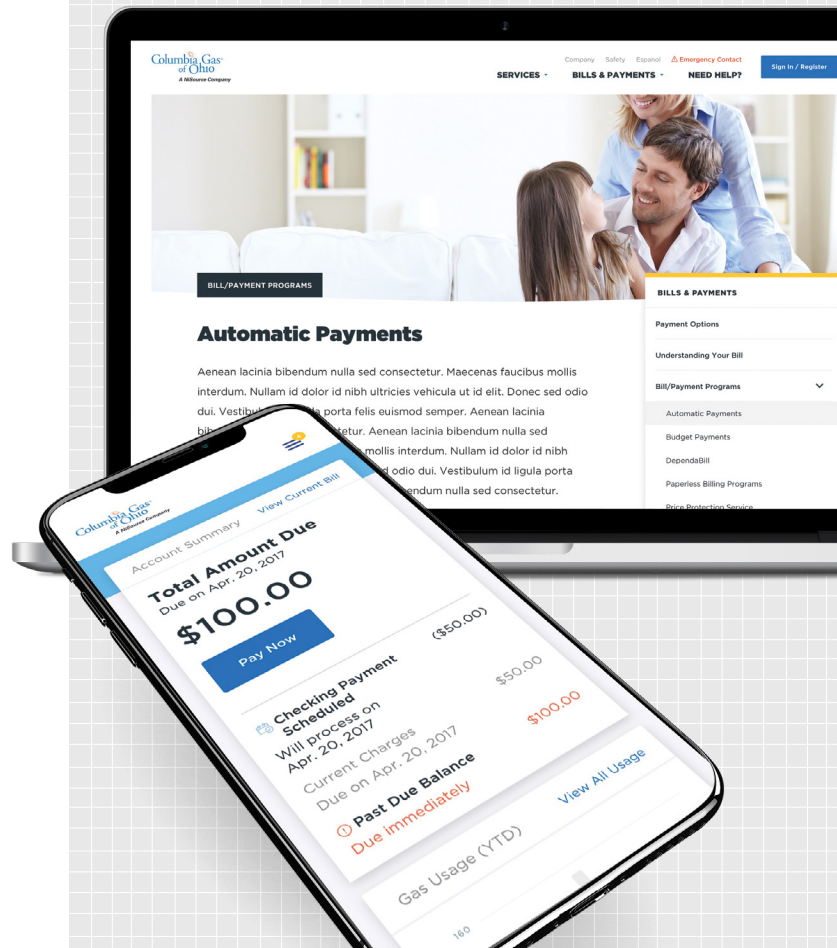
—Royce A. Workman, MBA
Director of Customer Experience, NiSource

AWARD-WINNING CX REVOLUTION IN UTILITIES

THE GOAL: Combine 21 Local Distribution Company desktop and mobile sites into a seamless experience that exceeds customer expectations through:

- 1 A publicly available information site
- 2 Customer portal providing full-service account management and payment capabilities

It was a comprehensive, integrated solution, enhancing NiSource's ability to serve customers anytime, anywhere—before, during and after an issue, outage or crisis.



PROJECT OUTLOOK

Goals, key activities + trackable tactics

INCREASE VOLUME, TRANSACTIONS + CONVERSIONS

- ✦ Unique Customer Sign-Ins
- ✦ Validated New Account Sign-Ups
- ✦ Paperless Billing Enrollment
- ✦ Budget Plan Enrollment
- ✦ Alerts Enrollment
- ✦ Autopay Enrollment
- ✦ Total Bank Payments Made
- ✦ Online Bill Pay

IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT METRICS + ACTIVITY

- ✦ Compare New Users vs. Returning Users
- ✦ Track Customer Visits vs. Sign-Ins
- ✦ Measure Average Session Duration
- ✦ Tally "Help" Page Views and Lower Bounce Rate
- ✦ Study When and Where Users Visit
- ✦ Record Top Pages Viewed

NiSource and Dynamit worked as a team to gain quantitative and qualitative insights to build comprehensive digital + software development solutions.



They balanced customer interviews, surveys, and social listening to earn feedback from more than 300 customers in seven states.

They developed journey maps, customer personas, and prototypes to ensure deep understanding of customer wants and needs as part of a detailed Dynamit Experience Blueprint.



They ensured effectiveness through user testing and proved they were listening to feedback through strategic refinement along the way.

We completed five cycles of usability testing to keep customers core to the end product. My hope is the 100+ customers who donated their time are now using the site and experiencing their feedback in action.

—Stephen K. Gill,
User Experience Channel Manager, NiSource

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX) ALIGNMENT

THE PEOPLE

If NiSource wanted to serve customers better than ever before, they could no longer do what they'd always done. Adopting a customer-first mindset required a cultural shift with complex internal alignment and buy-in.

With more than 200 internal users accessing the website for customer service, marketing and other maintenance purposes, it was clear that more streamlined governance and training was necessary.

THE PROCESS

Exceeding customer expectations requires both online and offline touchpoints to work together seamlessly. From a customer service standpoint, this meant creating multiple entry points—not just by phone, but chat, text, email and more—and faster reaction times to customer requests.

Continuing to deliver on commitments was only the baseline. NiSource committed to not only solving customer issues—but offering value along the way.

THE TECH

Combining 21 Local Distribution Company desktop and mobile sites into a seamless experience that exceeded customer expectations was no small task. NiSource needed to increase messaging speed capabilities and faithfully focus on accessibility for every customer.

NiSource's expert admin teams partnered with Dynamit to implement a better user interface, update site content, and improve online security.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

EARLY WINS, ONGOING SUCCESS STORY

Just months after site deployment, NiSource reported significant increases in online user activity and vastly improved engagement metrics. Deployment continued in new markets, and customer success stories continue with each iteration.



MORE ACCESS

Customers have been empowered to take control of their NiSource relationship by taking advantage of a new website that offers account access anytime, anywhere. ***As a result, unique customer sign-ins to the website portal have increased by 91%.***



MORE CONVENIENCE

Customers have been given a fast and easy way to opt-in to electronic billing over paper statements, saving time, money and trees. ***As a result, Paperless Billing Enrollment has increased by 104%.***



MORE ENGAGEMENT

Customers have created new NiSource customer accounts to access statements, pay bills, and get answers to pressing questions online. ***As a result, validated new account sign-ups have increased by 134-261%.***

**Including accounts carried over from previous sites.*



MORE SATISFACTION

Customers who had previously experienced a glitchy, unreliable online bill pay interface are now enjoying a secure, dependable way to pay online. ***As a result, NiSource has decreased payment failures by 96-98%.***

MORE OF EVERYTHING GOOD. EXPECT MORE.

CHOOSE TRANSFORMATION

(BEFORE TRANSFORMATION CHOOSES YOU).

Digital transformation doesn't happen by default, but by decision. It's when the fear of change is overridden by the fear of remaining status quo. It's when industry standard no longer defines who you really want to be to your customers.

It means being not only responsive, but ready to anticipate needs when disaster strikes. It's a commitment to exceeding customer expectations, making them feel valued in both blue sky and storm modes by aligning people, processes, and technology along the way. It's a new way of thinking for a new day—believing for and expecting more.

NiSource chose transformation, and learned to expect more from Dynamit, their Marketing + IT partner.

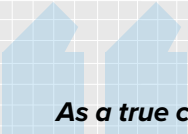
It's time for you to do the same.



It took a deep-seeded commitment within ourselves, our company—and our partners to drive the change needed to truly achieve digital transformation.

Hanna Balla,

*Emerging Customer Experience Strategy
Product Manager, NiSource*



As a true client partner, we must hold ourselves to the same standards we would expect.

Chris Flinders,

Practice Group Director, Dynamit





**2019 COMMUNICATOR
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

Digital - Website Redesign



**AVA DIGITAL AWARD
2019 GOLD WINNER**

Columbia Gas of Maryland



**2019 CHARTWELL BEST
PRACTICES BRONZE**

Billing & Payment Programs Award

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