

Dealing with Media

Presenter: Neil Durbin

Ohio Gas Association Technical Seminar

March 17, 2023

Note: Our topic is “DEALING with MEDIA.”

NOT “HANDLING the MEDIA.”

Reporters seek responses to their questions to inform their readers and viewers.

They neither need -- nor want -- to be “handled.”

Focus on building an ongoing relationship with local reporters and editors -- and establishing a reputation for providing them with credible, reliable and timely information.

Establishing and **EARNING** that reputation as a reliable source of accurate and timely information for reporters provides your company the opportunity to generate accurate and fair coverage in responding to potential crisis situations, emphasizing customer safety and explaining major service and billing issues.

Accessibility plays a critical role in building effective, credible working relationships with reporters. Media Relations is a 24-hour-a-day, 365 days-per-year-job.

The first step in building a relationship with a new reporter or media outlet is providing ***complete*** contact information, including mobile and home telephone numbers. *A source who cannot be reached, or who does not return calls before deadline, is not useful or reliable for reporters.*

**I never want to read in the
newspapers or hear on radio and
television reports that a
spokesman for my company
“could not be reached for
comment.”**

“Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy!”

-- Joseph Pulitzer

Always provide accurate information. Never guess or speculate.

If you do not know the answer to a reporter's question, say so. Then, note that you will research the answer and relay the requested information as soon as possible. **Consistently following up in these situations is important to building a relationship of mutual trust and credibility with your media customers.**

Generally avoid “no comment” as an answer. However, in rare cases, such as legal issues, common sense and corporate lawyers would tell you the appropriate response would be: “We cannot comment on pending litigation.”

On to the War Stories!

**Crisis and Emergency Situation
Communications Case Study:
2010 West 83rd Street
House Explosion**

*Cause of West 83rd Street Home Explosion
Under Investigation*

Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 26, 2010



The Rest of the Story:

William Calderwood, 'Mayor of 83rd Street,'
Charged with Burglary, Aggravated Arson
in Home Explosion.

Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 12, 2010



Customer Safety Campaign: Fighting the Not-So-Silent Killer



**CARBON
MONOXIDE
SAFETY**

Sometimes Media Relations can move beyond Crisis Communications to transform a tragic incident into a public safety educational campaign to prevent future tragedies.

Case Study: The 1995 Sprecher Avenue Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Case

Warning Signs of the Not-So-Silent Killer

- An unexpected build-up of water vapor on windows and walls. A blocked flue prevents water vapor, along with carbon *di*-oxide, the primary combustion products from fuel-burning appliances, from venting out of the structure. As a result, excess water vapor builds up on windows and walls. ***Water was streaming down the windows of the Sprecher Avenue home.***
- The second CO warning sign is a buildup of soot, a product of incomplete combustion. ***The soot build-up was so thick inside the Sprecher Avenue home, that it looked as if the ceiling had been painted black.***
- The third warning sign is a buildup of aldehydes, another, more pungent byproduct of incomplete combustion. The unmistakable odor smells like car or bus exhaust. ***The odor of aldehydes was obvious upon entering the Sprecher Avenue home.***

The most effective way to prevent any CO issues is an annual appliance inspection by a qualified professional contractor.

You can use a CO detector as a second line of defense, placing one in the sleeping area of your home. But, *NEVER use a CO detector as a substitute for an annual appliance.*

Customer Service and Billing Education Via Media Relations

**Energy Choice Case Study:
Pioneering Customer Choice
Pilot Program and
Systemwide Expansion
1997-2001**

East Ohio Gas was a pioneer of customer choice within the United States' natural Gas utility industry. Energy Choice, piloted in our Canton Division 1997, enables customers to purchase natural gas commodities from participating third-party suppliers, while remaining company customers for the delivery of that gas to their homes and businesses.

Using a combination of press releases, print and broadcast advertising, newspaper editorial board briefings and radio and television public affair program interviews, the campaign drove customer adoption of Energy Choice in sufficient numbers to enable systemwide adoption for the winter of 2000-2001.

JOHN Q CUSTOMER
CUSTOMER ADDRESS
ANYCITY, OH 44000

Account Number Date Prepared Next Meter Reading
00000000000000 May 13, 2020 06/24 - 06/29/2020



Cycle 18

Credits and Charges Since Your Last Bill

Balance from Last Bill
Payment on May 12, 2020 - Thank You

Balance

Current Charges

Dominion Energy Ohio Distribution Charges

Basic Service Charge

Usage-Based Charges

7.2 MCF @ \$.6444 4.64

Tax Savings Credit 5.41 CR

Gross Receipts Tax (4.6044%) 1.39

Total Dominion Energy Ohio Charges \$31.67

For questions about Dominion Energy Ohio charges, call us at
1-800-362-7557.

Gas Supplier Charges

Gas Cost 7.2 Mcf @ \$3.39 \$24.41

Sales Tax 1.67

Total GAS SUPPLIER \$26.08

Total Current Charges \$57.75

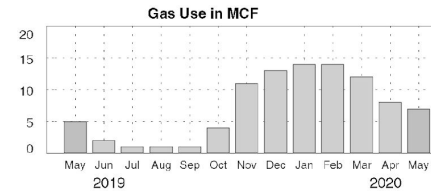
Total Account Balance \$57.75

Rate Schedule: Energy Choice Transportation Service - Residential



Monthly Usage Comparison

Average Daily Temperature 2019 2020
For This Billing Period 60°F 57°F



Avg Monthly Use: 7.2 MCF
Total Annual Use: 86.9 MCF

Billing Period and Meter Readings

Date	Read Type	Reading	Difference
Meter Number	0000000		
May 27, 2020	Actual	481.1	
Apr 27, 2020	Estimate	473.9	7.2

MCF Used in 30 Days 7.2

Account Balance of \$57.75 to be sent to bank on Jun 8, 2020 to Avoid Late Payment Charge of 1.5% per month.

Doing business online with Dominion Energy Ohio has never been easier

Visit "Manage Your Account" at www.DominionEnergy.com to make a payment, sign up for eBill and Automatic Bank Draft, view your billing and payment history, enter a meter reading, check your account information, and much more. Register or sign in to manage your Dominion Energy Ohio account(s), at your convenience, 365 days a year on our secure website.

ENERGYSHARE: Help people without heat by donating to EnergyShare. To donate, add exactly \$1, \$2, \$6, \$12, \$18 or \$36 to your payment or mail a separate check payable to EnergyShare, Salvation Army, P.O. Box 5847, Cleveland, OH 44101.

Account Number 00000000000000

**Account Balance of \$57.75 will be sent to bank for
automatic payment on June 8, 2020**

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JOHN Q CUSTOMER
CUSTOMER ADDRESS
ANYCITY, OH 44000

AMR & PIR Riders Change

Effective for bills rendered on or after 5/6/2020, the Automated Meter Reading (AMR) Cost Recovery Charge decreased from \$0.25 to \$0.02 per month and the Pipeline Infrastructure Replacement (PIR) Cost Recovery Charge increased from \$11.74 to \$13.45 per month. With the rider changes, the Basic Service Charge increased by \$1.48 to a total of \$31.05 per month. The PUCO approved the changes; Case Nos. 19-1945-GA-RDR and 19-1944-GA-RDR.

DOMINION ENERGY OHIO
PO BOX 26785
RICHMOND VA 23261-6785

Questions?

For a PDF copy of this
presentation, please contact Neil
Durbin directly by email at:
neiljdurbin58@gmail.com
or by telephone at (330) 701-6577.