

POWERCLERK CASE STUDY

NYSERDA program administrators enhance customer experience by using latest PowerClerk® features

The New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA) reduced application turnaround time and improved communication with customers by taking full advantage of the latest features available in PowerClerk.

NYSERDA SOLAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- More than \$133 million in incentives for PV, small wind and domestic solar hot water
- On average, 96 applications processed per month
- To date, over 4,500 applications processed and nearly 50 MW of PV funded through the program

CHALLENGES

- Improve program efficiency
- Reduce application processing time
- Provide customers better insight into application status

KEY BENEFITS

- Four full-time staff run the program, keeping pace even as applications increase
- Applications are now submitted and tracked electronically, reducing printing and mailing costs
- Better communications, online status updates and faster processing times have increased applicant satisfaction

Programs in Transition

An early player in the area of renewable energy incentives, NYSERDA has offered financial incentives for solar electric and small wind systems since 2003. Originally managed by the research and development department, NYSERDA transitioned all program operations to a dedicated team in 2010—just as their first solar hot water incentive program was implemented.

Taking Full Advantage of PowerClerk

“When we became responsible for the program, we looked for ways to improve it,” said Associate Project Manager Marci Brunner. “I discovered there were a number of features available in PowerClerk that we could take better advantage of after discussing our needs with Clean Power Research.”

Previously, NYSERDA had used PowerClerk primarily for storing application and system information, then reporting on that information. “There were a lot of phone calls from people asking if we had received their application, or when their incentive would be paid,” said Brunner.

“PowerClerk has gone way beyond my expectations. I’m very happy with it, and it’s saved us huge amounts of time.” Marci Brunner, Associate Project Manager



“We use PowerClerk as a tool for communications between ourselves and the installers. Every single email to applicants is sent through PowerClerk now,” said Brunner. “In addition, we only accept electronic documents, so we’ve eliminated all of our printing, mailing, labeling and postage, not only in our department, but in the contracts department as well.”



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“Installers told us they wanted to be able to upload paperwork electronically. When we realized PowerClerk could already do that, people were just thrilled. We’ve gotten wonderful feedback from participants.” Marci Brunner, Associate Project Manager, NYSERDA

Positive Customer Response

Before PowerClerk, monthly conference calls with participants were primarily spent responding to individual inquiries about the status of applications. Now that NYSERDA is making use of the latest PowerClerk features, those meetings have become more focused and productive. Today, applicants to NYSERDA’s incentive programs can log into PowerClerk directly to submit and track their applications electronically.

“When we change statuses, installers know right away that the application has been received, and they feel secure that the funding has been set aside,” commented Brunner. NYSERDA also worked with the PowerClerk team to create communication templates for their programs and to link the financial information used by their contracting department.

According to Brunner, “Installers told us they wanted to be able to upload paperwork electronically. When we realized PowerClerk could already do that, people were just thrilled. We’ve gotten wonderful feedback from participants.”

Beyond Expectations

Application processing time has also been reduced substantially. “It used take between six and eight months,” said Ms. Brunner. “Now our process is down to four to six weeks.” She attributes that in part to PowerClerk and in part to other program changes, such as doing design reviews internally instead of having them done by an outside firm.

“PowerClerk has gone way beyond my expectations. I’m very happy with it, and it’s saved us huge amounts of time. We only have four people. If we were still doing things the way they were done before, we would need a lot more people and we wouldn’t have the quick turnaround that we have now.”

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