

# **CX Best Practice Award Winner**

**Award for CSR Selection:**

**Accenture**

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*published 10-23-2017*

## CX Best Practice Success Story – CSR Selection



### Company Description

Established in 2003, Accenture Business Services for Utilities is the world's largest business process outsourcing provider dedicated to utilities. We serve clients across five time zones, in multiple languages, and have grown from 1,500 to more than 3,000 employees in just under two years. As utilities adapt to rapid change in regulated and deregulated markets, they're increasingly outsourcing business processes in order to focus on core competencies, i.e., generating, transmitting and distributing power. To serve this industry need, Accenture Business Services for Utilities offers business process outsourcing services in four core areas: Customer Care, Finance and Administration, Human Resources, Technology Services. Accenture Business Services for Utilities is part of Accenture, one of the world's leading management consulting, technology services and outsourcing companies.

### Locations

Thorold, Ontario, Canada

Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

### Call Types

Billing, Collections, Service, Emergency and specialized queues

### Customer Types

Residential and Commercial

### CSR Headcount

116 – Fredericton

219 - Niagara

### Contact Channels

Phone, email, website, mail

### Hours of Operation

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year

## Contact Volume

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016 (to date)</b>
<b>Calls</b>	1,846,956	1,865,848	1,278,094
<b>Emails</b>	83,200	106,038	78,873
<b>Website</b>	131,704	142,556	79,514
<b>Mail/fax</b>	47,986	37,649	14,953

## Problem / Opportunity Statement

Delivering world-class customer care requires a deep understanding of the customer service lifecycle, industry knowledge and business process excellence, and having the right people with the right skills to get the job done.

Working for Accenture means being a part of a truly global team. Our employees are empowered to provide high-quality, long-term services for our clients while working with the best people worldwide. Our talented CSRs (Customer Service Representatives) are not only the voice of our company but also the heart of our culture.

Accenture Business Services for Utilities provides several service delivery offerings including Accenture's Digital Care, Social Care, Accenture's Command Center, and the direct provision of Customer Care to our clients to improve customer retention, cross-sell, uplift, and maximize the value of the customer for our clients.

Accenture uses multiple touchpoints to achieve real-time pulse checks with customers to keep our services fully aligned with expectations for service excellence. We have made numerous improvements in training, communications and sharing best practices across multiple sites and we have delivered significant improvements in Csat (Customer Satisfaction) and FCR (First Call Resolution) as a result.

Our firm leverages our resources and analytical data on FCR, Closure Time Analytics, Abandonment/Service Level, Customer Segmentation, and CSat to provide innovative and customer-driven solutions ensuring that our client's needs are met, and our customers are left satisfied.

## Best Practices Used

Accenture prides itself on our operational excellence. We run Accenture as a high-performance business. We manage our operations with rigor and discipline to increase our efficiency and enhance our competitiveness so that we can continue to achieve our ultimate goal of delivering sustainable, profitable growth over the long term.

Accenture Business Services for Utilities (ABSU) is no exception, and our clients and employees alike can attest to that. To run a high-performance business, you must first hire the right people to do the job, and Accenture utilizes hiring best practices to achieve this objective.

We host and attend approximately eight to nine job fairs throughout the fiscal year to source qualified candidates for our service delivery centers located in Thorold, Ontario and Fredericton, New Brunswick. Most of our job fairs are hosted at local employment centers, and we collaborate with our job development partners to target qualified individuals for the roles we are hiring for. These strategic partnerships are amicable, as we are provided with qualified individuals who are genuinely interested in our organization and our job developers find meaningful work for their clients.

Accenture is known for our delivery of cutting-edge solutions, and our candidate application process, system, and tools are nothing but cutting-edge. ABSU has partnered with HireFX Inc. to develop a customized employment application portal, a one-stop shop, where candidates can complete their CSR employment application on their own time and at their own pace. We have developed this application portal with pre-set qualifying questions which ensure that our hiring team spends less time reviewing unqualified applicants and more time on providing qualified candidates with the absolute best candidate experience.

Our application portal not only saves on recruiter time as a result of our pre-set qualifying questions, but also our CSR employment application is three-tiered, and each segment contributes to hiring time-savings. The first tier of the application consists of requesting important candidate information such as employment history, salary expectations, and background check concerns. The information requested on our application allows for less time to be spent on initial telephone interviews with candidates who may not meet our basic qualifications for the roles we are hiring for.

The second tier of our application involves an interactive and automated telephone interview. In this section, the candidate is asked to answer a series of questions which test for active and engaged listening skills. The candidate is also requested to answer four questions wherein they must provide voice recordings of their answers. When our hiring team reviews the voice clips, which are attached to candidate's applicant profile, they can easily identify whether a job incumbent demonstrates strong communication skills, professionalism, bilingual fluency, and key indicators of high AHT (average handle time). Our customer care roles require the utmost professionalism and being able to assess this trait in the very early stages of our recruiting process allows our hiring team to focus their time on well-rounded and qualified individuals.

Finally, the third tier of our application involves personality and behavioral profiling which is powered by Thomas Profile International. Thomas Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) provides insight into how people behave at work, and this allows us greater certainty when identifying and selecting the right candidates. Through Thomas Profiling we have a stronger understanding of a candidate's job fit which is a key contributor to employee satisfaction in the long term. Our training and coaching staff are also provided with our CSRs' Thomas Profiles; this allows for adaptability in learning and coaching plans, which ensures that we are communicating with our employees in a way that best suits them.

Employee engagement and satisfaction are at the forefront of our minds and is taken into consideration in all that we do. One of the key drivers of employee satisfaction is our employee referral program. Our employees are informed of our hiring needs, and we encourage them to refer their family and friends to apply for open Accenture roles. Our employees know our culture better than anyone else, and they are experts when it comes to providing a realistic picture of the job. As such, our employee referral program is mutually beneficial – the business is provided with skilled candidates, and our employees are left feeling satisfied. Furthermore, our employee referral program compensates our employee's well when a referral is hired on permanently, referral bonus payouts can range from \$500-\$6,000.

Once we have sourced and prequalified our candidates we invite them to come into our service delivery site to complete an Assessment Day. This approach has proven to be a best hiring practice as it allows our firm to complete up to sixteen face-to-face behavioral styled interviews and candidate multimedia testing in a four-hour window of time. This allows us to maximize our resources for the most efficient outcome. Candidates are scheduled to come in for an interview

and meet with two team managers, and our interviewing focuses on competency-based questions, which have been proven to indicate future performance. Additionally, our multimedia testing provides a realistic preview of our CSR roles through utilities related contact center simulations. Our testing is also designed to measure key qualifications such as active listening skills, basic mathematics ability, computer literacy, and customer service expertise.

Upon successful completion of our CSR Assessment Day our hiring personnel and management team meet for a candidate debrief. During this debrief we analyze all candidates based on our basic qualifications and preferred specifications for the role and as a team we select the most qualified individuals to move forward with to hire.

All candidates are advised of our hiring decision, regardless of whether they are successful or not, and feedback is provided to all job applicants from the screening to final interview stages. Our hiring team will then personally contact each of our successful applicants to provide them with our Offer Package details verbally. Upon acceptance of the job offer, our hiring team will then extend our Accenture Offer Package to our candidates electronically. This process allows candidates to review their offer package over five business days and it highlights Accenture's passion for reducing our ecological footprint. This process is also favorable for our candidates as it avoids the need for copying, scanning, and/or faxing confidential offer documents. Lastly, this allows our business to initiate payroll and human resource paperwork well in advance of an employee's start date which reduces the risk of payroll discrepancies and contributes to employee satisfaction as a result.

### **FCR/Csat Outcome**

Accenture delivers high-performance results, and this strongly correlates with our continuous efforts to improve our business processes; innovation and collaboration are key ingredients in the Accenture Way. We invest in our people and keeping up to date and being a leader when it comes to best hiring practices allows for our business to operate with excellence. We apply best hiring practices with key measurables in mind, including but not limited to: job fit, professionalism, technical ability, and customer service expertise.

Our FCR has improved by 10% over the past five years and is sitting at a rate of 76%, and our CSat ratings have increased by an impressive 15% in the last four years and in 2016 we received a 77% CSat rating. We are also proud to note that in 2016 our CSR satisfaction rate has been

measured at 87% and the average tenure of a CSR is 9 years. These statistics speak wonders about our organization and are proof that our hiring practices, training, coaching, and performance management promote employee satisfaction and directly correlate to our overall Csat and FCR ratings.