

Bristol Energy Triples Loyalty for Digital Customers with Eliq



Bristol Energy Triples Loyalty for Digital Customers with Eliq

Find out how UK energy supplier Bristol Energy made a third of their customers engage digitally, becoming their most loyal customers with the lowest customer service costs of all.

72%

lower churn for app-users
vs non-app users

60%

fewer calls to customer
service for app-users

30%

of users ordered a smart
meter within the app

The Challenge

As a challenger supplier in the UK, Bristol Energy is operating in one of the most competitive energy markets, facing pressure from both consumers and regulators. Consumers demand lower prices, better customer support and more services from their supplier. 20% of UK consumers switch supplier annually¹, often as high as 30% for challenger suppliers who acquire customers via brokers and price comparison websites.

On the other hand, regulators are pushing suppliers to drive the roll-out of smart meters by convincing customers of their benefits and operating the booking and install process - a major undertaking which impacts the entire operations.

In 2019, regulators introduced a price cap for standard tariffs, which has put further pressure on suppliers, reaching its nadir during the 2021 energy crisis, when 27 suppliers (38% of suppliers) went under as wholesale energy prices rose above the price cap².

About Bristol Energy

- Competitive supplier of gas and electricity since Nov. 2015
- C. 100,000 customers across the UK, ~25% smart metered
- Launched its' app in 2019 using Eliq's white-label solution
- Owned by Bristol City Council until 2020, now run as a brand of Together Energy

BRISTOL
energy



Challenge 1: High churn rates in the market: Across the UK energy market, churn rate for challenger energy suppliers remains among the highest in the world, significantly driving up sales and marketing costs for the business.



Challenge 2: High customer service costs: Between the low prices required to win new customers in the market and the energy price cap, the route to profitability is very narrow and with customer service accounting for the biggest part of operating expenses, its' efficiency is key for winning in the market.



Challenge 3: Costly and ineffective customer marketing: As the largest customer programme, customer marketing of the smart meter rollout involves emailing, calling and visiting customers to convince them to order a smart meter. This has proven a significant challenge in the UK, with high associated costs.



The Solution: Bristol Energy partners with Eliq

In 2019, Bristol Energy launched the mobile app Be Connected for iOS and Android, using the Eliq white-label solution. For the first time, Bristol Energy customers were able to access deep energy insights from their smart meter data and self-serve their energy account in an intuitive and effective way. The app serves three main purposes:

1. To provide significant value to customers by helping them better manage their energy usage
2. To take pressure off call-centres by providing better information to customers self-service tools for their most common needs
3. To demonstrate the value of smart meters to customers who do not yet have one.

Insights



Deep energy insights

Helps customers understand their consumption using Energy Usage Categories based on energy disaggregation, benchmarking with similar homes and forecasted usage.

Insights



Notifications on anomalies and high forecasts

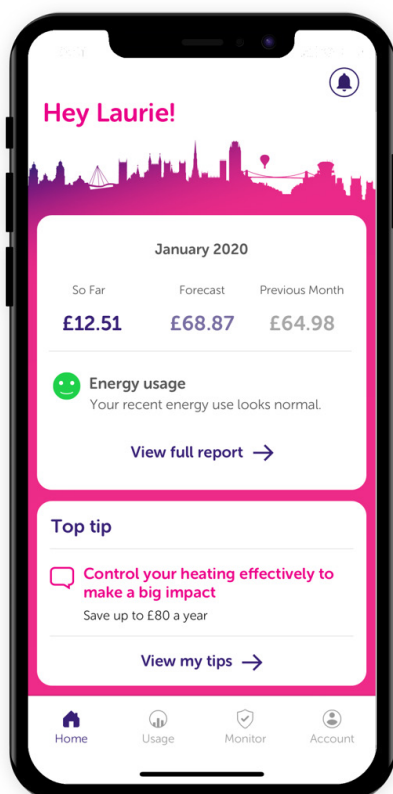
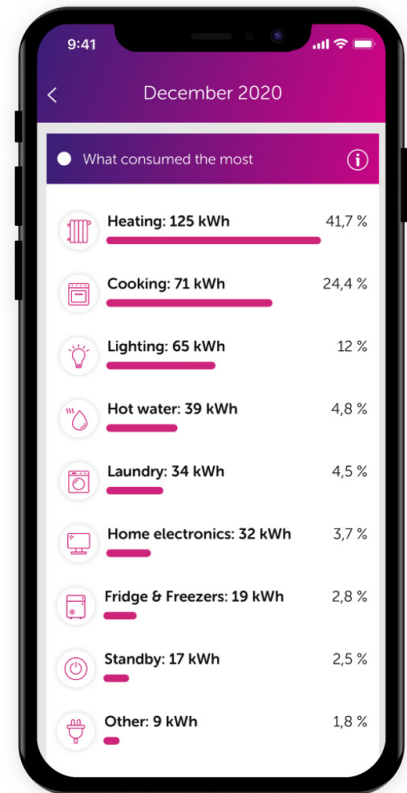
AI-based notifications are a key component for long term retention, alerting users when their attention is needed, which in return drives sustained engagement.

Insights



AI Energy Advisor

Offers advice written by professional energy advisors, tailored by AI and consumption data to highlight the next best action.



Self-serve



Bills and account balance

Allows users to access their bills and visualise a snapshot of the current account balance, to avoid end-of-contract shock if one-off payments are needed.

Self-serve



Meter read submission

Customers without a smart meter can submit their meter read with real-time validation in the app.

Self-serve



Programme enrollment

The app allows users to directly enroll in programmes, giving data sharing consents and more, right from within the app.

Upgrades



Order a smart meter

For customers without a smart meter, a section within the app is dedicated to demonstrating the benefits of a smart meter through insights, and allows users to book a meter.

The Result

Since the launch of the new platform, Bristol Energy has seen a significant increase in digital customer engagement. Further analysis has made it possible to distinguish that the company has established a new segment of customers:

"app-users", who (a) **engage frequently,**

digitally, (b) **self-serve** and don't call customer service as often and (c) are **significantly more loyal.**

7.3x

higher engagement than
industry average

App-users are defined as customers who have activated one of the mobile apps on their account, and at the end of 2021, they make up 32% of the Bristol Energy Customer portfolio. App-users spend 6:53 minutes in the app per month across 3.5 sessions, a 7.3x uplift from the industry benchmark.

Challenge 1: App-users churn 72% less than non-app-users



By analysing churn data for app-users compared to non-app-users across the 18 months since the launch of the app, it was clear that app-users were significantly more loyal with an annualised churn rate 72% below that of the non-app-users.

“ Highly recommend the company, along with the app. Signed up for another year. To be honest even if it wasn't the cheapest I'd still be unlikely to swap. Customer service second to none, I normally hate apps, but this is champion. – Bristol Energy customer in survey ”

Challenge 2: App-users call 62% less than non-app-users



By looking at call centre data, the app-users were making 62% fewer calls per customer, representing a significantly lower cost-to-serve, much likely due to a lower need to make meter read inquiries or discuss one-off payments.

“ I need monthly statements and used to phone every month but now, using the BE app it tells me everything I need whenever I want it. ”

– Bristol Energy customer in survey

Challenge 3: 30% of non-app-users ordered a smart meter from within the app



With the smart meter rollout being the main customer programme of the business, the app proved a highly effective channel for selling customers on the benefit of smart metering, getting over 30% of app-users without a smart meter to order a meter from within the app. This represents a meaningful step towards Bristol Energy's regulatory obligations and additional cost savings, since these customers would have otherwise had to be contacted via other means. The app has further been successfully used for enrollment in two other customer programmes.

Using the Eliq white label platform, Bristol Energy has created a user-friendly app for customers to interact with energy insights savings advice tailored to their home, to reduce their energy consumption, cut costs and carbon emissions for almost a third (32%) of their customer base, and growing. With a dramatically lower churn rate and cost-to-serve, the implied customer lifetime value (CLTV) has increased tremendously and paves the way for new programmes, initiatives and services to come.

¹ <https://www.energy-uk.org.uk/publication.html?task=file.download&id=7959>

² https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/pdf-65/accenture-customer-centricity-must-have-waste-energy-pov.pdf

³ <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/check-whos-taken-over-your-energy-supply>

Would you like to learn more?

Learn what Eliq's API and white label solutions can do for your energy customer experience. Get a demo or get in touch at hello@eliq.io

Get a demo