



Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

2018



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INTRODUCTION

ESB Networks serves all electricity customers. We provide safe and reliable electricity to over 2 million customers in homes, businesses and communities right across Ireland and we are proud of our record of service for over 90 years. Today, our electricity network is evolving to support Ireland's transition to low carbon through electrification. Throughout this transition, we will work to make sure that our customers remain at the centre of everything we do.

We understand that an open and ongoing dialogue with our customers and stakeholders is essential. This is particularly important when the demands on the electricity system are changing. We know that delivering access to secure, affordable and sustainable energy for our customers is fundamental. But we also understand that only by listening and engaging with our customers can we truly reflect their needs and preferences in how we develop the network and services that we deliver.

At ESB Networks, we understand that different customers prefer to engage with us in different ways. We have worked hard to develop alternative and flexible communication channels, and we aim to introduce new technologies and digital options to provide quick and easy access to our services.

We appreciate that meaningful engagement begins with making sure our customers and stakeholders are informed and aware. So, we are working to become more visible and accessible. We focused initially on safety, developing our integrated Public Safety Campaign, based on the feedback and comments of our customers.

In addition to engaging directly with customers, we understand the need to work closely with representative organisations, thought leaders and regulators. We are building stronger relationships with policy makers, economic and social interest groups, academia and the wider energy industry so as to be in a better position to consider tomorrow's customers and their needs as we plan our future network. We are building on a tradition and record of customer focus and we have already taken many positive steps to develop our capability for engagement. We hope that our 2018 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will help us in ESB Networks to evolve and enhance our relationship with our many customers and stakeholders.



Paddy Hayes,
Managing Director,
ESB Networks

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2018



**Safety
Communications
Plan**



**Public consultations
on Energy Future**



**Customer Service
Improvement Plan**



**Sharing ideas
and insight with
stakeholders**



HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017

CUSTOMER SERVICE



Over **4M**
Powercheck hits



1,758,928
calls received to
contact centre



90%
Expected Satisfaction
Rating (ESTRAT)

INDUSTRY EVENTS



ESB Networks inaugural customer conference in the Mansion House with over 200 guests



Launch with stakeholders to share learnings from our new Operations Management System (OMS)



Exhibition stand at the National Ploughing Championships showcasing safety, customer service and innovation

AWARDS

Leadership in Infrastructure
Transformation Award for OMS



EPRI PDU
Technology Transfer Award



Customer Contact Association
Excellence Award 2017

NEW DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

- NEW FACEBOOK PAGE LAUNCHED
- NEW ONLINE FAULT LOGGING SERVICE
- NEW ONLINE PAY AN INVOICE SERVICE



37,561
followers



24,699
followers

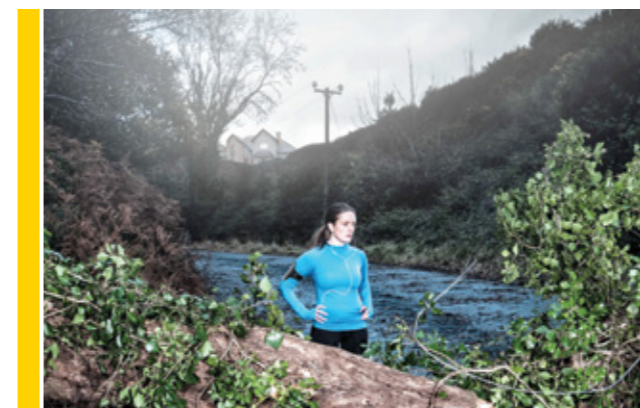


494,796
views

PUBLIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN

The safety of those who could come into contact with live networks remains a top priority for ESB Networks, particularly considering the needs of farmers and construction workers, who are at most risk of contact with live networks and children, who are most vulnerable.

- NATIONAL CAMPAIGN ACROSS TV, RADIO AND ONLINE, WHICH HAS DELIVERED 92% AWARENESS OF OUR SAFETY MESSAGE ACROSS IRELAND
- PARTNERSHIP WITH THE IRISH FARMERS JOURNAL TO BRING SAFETY ADVICE TO READERS
- DELIVERY OF OVER 100,000 HI-VIS VESTS TO PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN UPON STARTING SCHOOL EACH YEAR AND SAFETY TALKS DELIVERED BY STAFF TO SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE
- SPONSORSHIP OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE



STORM OPHELIA

- COMMUNICATIONS WERE KEY TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF 385,000 HOMES, FARMS AND BUSINESSES WHILE POWER WAS BEING RESTORED
- POWERCHECK HAD NEARLY 1M HITS IN THE FIRST DAY
- OUR 3 CALL CENTRES RECEIVED 52,000 CUSTOMER CONTACTS EACH DAY
- SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS RECEIVED OVER 8 MILLION IMPRESSIONS



EVOLVING OUR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Customer engagement is at the heart of ESB Networks' business. We are a community focused business and our staff deliver services and engage with customers across all communities on a daily basis. We aim to look at each customer and stakeholder group in a more detailed, individual way. We hope to develop open two-way conversations, to be able to meet customers' changing expectations.

Our customers are central to the business decisions we make. We are learning that as a core infrastructure provider, we have an obligation to lead, and to articulate the challenges and opportunities of the energy transformation. By providing trusted information we are giving our customers the information they need to be able to contribute.

We are sharing the insights and benefits of our innovation trials and projects to help others understand the changes, challenges and opportunities in energy in Ireland today. We have built our strategy by identifying our stakeholders, and their respective needs and concerns. From there we can begin to determine how we address these individual concerns best.



STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Our countrywide staff of more than 3,000 people engage with stakeholders, across the length and breadth of Ireland, each and every day - engagements that are critical to our continued ability to deliver, for all electricity customers, as we support Ireland's transition to a low carbon future."

Paddy Hayes, Managing Director, ESB Networks



1. KEY ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS

A number of our key projects have a large stakeholder engagement element to them. We want to ensure that we are engaging with key stakeholders and using these learnings and insights in to how we develop our projects.



DINGLE PROJECT – community engagement

In April 2018 we launched The Dingle Project in Dingle, Co. Kerry. This project will help us to understand how evolving technologies perform on the electricity network of the future and how, as a result, the local communities can best benefit from these technologies. Involving the Dingle community on this journey is important, as it gives us the opportunity to see how communities respond to new technologies and what part they want to play in their energy future.



CONSTRUCTION WORKERS – safety communications

We have identified four main stakeholder groups that are at specific risk from electricity – the general public, children, farmers and construction workers. Each group needs tailored communications. We have built good relationships with senior leadership in the construction industry, but we believe it is equally important to speak directly to the construction workers who are out on site. To this end, we have developed a series of social media videos, launching in Q2 2018, which speak directly to workers about the dangers of overhead wires and underground cables. We have also created a new training video as part of the Safe Pass course for all construction workers.



NEW SECURITY & PLANNING STANDARDS – stakeholder workshops

A key Industry Engagement objective is to involve industry in the re-design of our planning standards. The Distribution System Security and Planning Standards (DSSPS) sets the framework we follow to plan and develop a secure and reliable distribution network in Ireland. Technological advancements and changes to the overall energy system have given rise to the need to fundamentally review the Planning Standards. Given the important role of this infrastructure in social and economic development in Ireland, we believe that it is critical for customers themselves to be involved and consulted.



NATIONAL SMART METER PROGRAMME – customer choice and information

On behalf of the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), ESB Networks will roll out the National Smart Metering Programme with a phased approach over the coming years. This new technology will replace older meters and will bring benefits to Irish consumers, the economy and the environment. The phased approach is designed to be consumer-led and enables us to learn and improve as we go.



NEW EV AND E-HEAT READY LV DESIGN STANDARDS – facilitating the electrification of heat & transport

We understand the importance of developing our customer communications to make sure new services are easily accessible to customers. As customers adopt new technologies, we need to make it easy for them to connect and use them. ESB Networks is introducing new planning standards and customer service policies for those who buy electric vehicles (EVs), air source heat pumps (ASHPs) and domestic photovoltaic (PV).

FAIR AND COST REFLECTIVE TARIFFS AND CHARGES

As the ways that our customers use electricity change, including the electrification of heat and transport, micro generation and the introduction of smart meters, we need to ensure that this is reflected in the way that we charge our customers. This project will ensure that our pricing structures are protecting and balancing the interests of all of our customers. We understand the importance of customers and representative groups having a voice in these changes, which will ultimately be determined by the CRU.



2. ENGAGING WITH INDUSTRY

To develop trust and awareness, we are creating new ways to listen to and engage with our stakeholders. We are beginning to host and participate in industry events. By hosting our own events, we can bring stakeholders from different communities and industries together. This gives us an opportunity to share ideas and to listen and learn.

Our leadership team are pursuing new opportunities to share their experience and insight with the interested voices of today and of the future. Among the events that we will host in 2018 are:

- **DINGLE PROJECT LAUNCH**
– in order to engage with the local community in Dingle about our new project (see page 12 for more details on the Dingle Project) we have reached out to local residents, businesses and community groups. We want to understand their expectations of a low carbon future and how ESB Networks can play a part in that.
- **CHAMBERS IRELAND BREAKFAST BRIEFINGS**
– Chambers Ireland is the country's largest business organisation, with a network of Chambers in every major town and region in Ireland. Throughout 2017 & 2018 we are partnering with them to run Breakfast Briefings around the country. These events give us an opportunity to meet with local business owners and interest groups, and to discuss what we are doing or can do to support economic growth locally.

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

As well as hosting our own events, we will participate in a number of industry events. This allows us engage with our peers, and to meet with specific interest groups, including construction and farming.

- National Power Summit – 30th January, Croke Park
- SEAI Energy Show – 18th & 19th April, RDS
- Ireland's Power – 24th April, Red Cow Inn
- National Ploughing Championships, 18th – 20th September, Tullamore
- Construction Industry Federation National Conference – 2nd October, Croke Park
- Building Standards and Regulations Summit, 29th May 2018, Croke Park



INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

WORKING GROUPS AND EXPERT PANELS

We have a duty to help shape and deliver a low carbon future for Ireland. Increasingly, we expect our staff to share their insight and perspectives, by contributing to task forces and leadership panels in Ireland and abroad. Working groups we participate in and lead include:

- **Eurelectric** – DSO and Market Facilitation Committee, Working Group Technology, Working Group Business Models and Customers, of the European electricity industry association.
- **EPRI (Electric Power Research Institute)** – Power Delivery Unit of the significant US based utility research institute.
- **EAI (Electricity Association of Ireland)** – Networks Committee of Ireland's national electricity association
- **Cigre** – various technical working groups, task forces and committees of the major international power systems engineering association.
- **ACER / ENTSO-E European Stakeholder Committees**

WORKING WITH POLICY MAKERS

We seek to work closely with public authorities and government departments. By discussing trends and expectations, we can deliver the right energy infrastructure to support Irish social and economic development:

- **Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)**
- **Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment**
- **Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government**
- **Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport**
- **Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)**
- **National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI)**
- **Industrial Development Authority (IDA)**



3. CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS - RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

Our customers want to communicate with us and interact with our services in different ways and at times that suit them. So, to make sure customers have quick and easy access to our services, we will continue to introduce new technologies and digital channels to improve the customer experience.

- **POWERCHECK APP**
– over a short space of time, our Powercheck app has become a key source of information for customers. We are committed to delivering a new and improved version of the app for 2019.
- **REVISED CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS PROCESS**
– we have a dedicated resource in place to deal with complaints quickly, helpfully and sympathetically. We are revising our process for managing customer complaints in 2018, to ensure that the customers' needs are a priority.

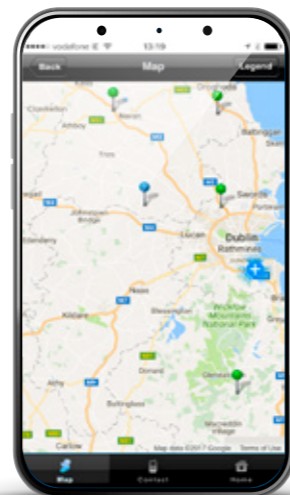
NEW CONNECTIONS PROCESS

Analysis of our Customer Satisfaction Survey highlights that getting new connections can prove frustrating for builders and developers. Through survey feedback and focus groups we understand that this can be improved by enhanced communications and feedback on the status of their new connection.

In 2017 and into 2018 we are running a pilot in two divisional areas, Cork and Arklow, to address these concerns. Some of the improvements we are introducing include proactively calling customers with updates, and providing weekly design reports and payment reports. Based on the learnings of these pilots, we can understand whether to roll out this approach across all divisions.

RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

- **TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION PROJECT**
– we are planning for the uptake of new energy technologies, such as electric cars, solar panels and heat pumps. Their relative popularity, where and how they are used, needs to be considered so that we can invest in and build our network accordingly. Customers' opinions and attitudes towards these new technologies will determine how best to develop these plans. To develop an understanding of this, we partnered with UCD in 2018 to conduct 1,200 public and focus group surveys of early adopters of these technologies and non-adopters.
- **CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUPS**
– in 2013 we launched our first "Customer Service Improvement Plan (2013-2017)". In 2018 we intend to improve on this plan. We are undertaking a series of customer research focus groups, and conducting in-depth senior stakeholder interviews. By listening, we will get a better understanding of what our customers expect and want. We are also holding focus groups throughout the year to ensure that we understand what our front line staff perceive as excellent customer service, what they are hearing from our customers and what barriers or obstacles there may be.



4. 2021-2025 DEVELOPMENT PLANS

In 2018 and 2019 ESB Networks is preparing 2021 - 2025 ('PR5') investment plans, for approval by CRU. Irish households, communities and enterprises should have a voice in these plans. The system and services ESB Networks delivers on behalf of Irish electricity customers will be fundamental to the economy and to how we reach our 2030 energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets.

As the energy system is decarbonised, digitised and more 'distributed' our customers will have the opportunity to shape our development plans, reflecting:

- **changing energy needs and expectations in Ireland**
- **the role of these plans through to 2030 Renewables and Climate targets**
- **increasing levels of electrification**
- **the fundamental and enduring role of energy in all of our lives and livelihoods**

PHASE 1 - EXPERT INSIGHTS

Initially, we are gathering insights and guidance from those who represent strategic national interests – including research bodies, suppliers, generation and renewables associations, and social and economic interests. This includes those who built our society, those who are fuelling sustainable growth today, and those who represent the interests of younger Irish people, whose behaviour and needs in the future will be supported by the investments we make today.

PHASE 2 - REACHING OUT

We will also hold public workshops, addressing key energy themes – Reliability and Resilience, Growth and New Connections, Community Energy and Renewables, and Heat and Transport. As our infrastructure is a national one, we believe that these should be held regionally. We are partnering with the Regional Assemblies, to build on and share in their insight on regional social and economic interests. We also hope to hear from independent voices to ensure that we get a full understanding of the needs of local communities and businesses.

PHASE 3 - FEEDING BACK

In 2019 ESB Networks will return to the venue of each workshop and deliver a second workshop, laying out development options for PR5. Along with providing options which address customers' priorities in different ways, we hope to show the impact on customers electricity bills. By understanding their preferences, considering both service, and the impact on their bills, we hope that customers can help us form the basis of our PR5 submissions.



NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



