

Hydro One continues to provide exceptional customer service during the pandemic

The utility moved almost 400 customer-service staff to a work-from-home environment

Hydro One is Ontario's largest electricity transmission and distribution provider with approximately 1.4 million residential, business, and industrial customers across the province of Ontario. The company generated 2019 annual revenues of approximately \$6.5 billion CAD and its 8,800 skilled and dedicated employees proudly energize life for people and communities across Ontario.

On March 17, Ontario declared a state-of-emergency shutdown to help contain the spread of the coronavirus. All non-essential businesses were required to close and, the following day, restrictions were placed on non-essential border crossings.

Even during the pandemic, Hydro One remained committed to delivering a high level of service to customers, and the decision to deploy nearly 400 customer-service staff from two different office locations to a work-from-home environment required a significant technology shift.

Gearing up for home

Hydro One had a work-from-home deployment strategy ready to go before the province declared the state of emergency. Hydro One worked with Inergi, a Capgemini company, to prepare the tools the customer-service team would need to do everything offsite. Based on its 15 years of partnership, Hydro One and Inergi had already developed an imaging process that allowed new technology to be set-up as quickly and seamlessly as possible for users.



Customers are counting on us now more than ever – not only to keep the lights on across the province, but to offer support during this difficult time. We play a critical role in energizing life for people and communities across Ontario and our collaboration with Capgemini meant our 400 customer-service representatives could seamlessly work from home and continue to put our customers first.”

Imran Merali

Vice President
Hydro One

The imaging process was always designed to scale quickly. When the customer-service staff needed to move their jobs to their homes, Hydro One and Inergi worked together to issue laptops to hundreds of employees very quickly.

By leveraging existing inventory and automating imaging and software distribution, a small complement of staff onsite not only imaged hundreds of laptops but also applied additional customization requested by the customer-service team over just one weekend. Hydro One provided options such as docking stations, keyboards, mice, and external monitors, and Inergi included these in the deployment. Once the laptops and peripherals were ready, employees were scheduled for staggered pick-ups at their office location.

Inergi also ensured the team had a positive user experience once they got their laptops home. Most employees had never used laptops to perform their jobs in the office and their requests for technology support were prioritized to make sure the team was ready to answer customer calls on Monday morning.

Staying connected from home

Once employees had the necessary hardware and software, Inergi set-up virtual connections and Hydro One rerouted calls to the employees' homes. It also supported additional lines to its Aspect and Cisco internal telephone networks to handle the higher traffic caused by the pandemic.

Inergi also made changes to software to ensure Hydro One complied with the Ontario government's temporary rate relief for time-of-use electricity prices. Inergi's existing energy experience ensured the changes were made in only three days.

The collaboration with Inergi meant hundreds of employees were able to work from home on the first day of the provincial lockdown and answer calls from customers.

Providing support for its customers

Hydro One has taken additional steps to support its customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The company temporarily suspended late fees for all customers and returned approximately \$5 million in security deposits to over 4,000 business customers. As well, the company introduced a Pandemic Relief Fund to provide financial assistance and payment flexibility to customers experiencing hardship.

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