



MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

Rely on us.

TO: Commissioners Brown, Carlson, Barofsky, McRae, and Schlossberg,
FROM: Julie McGaughey, Chief Customer Officer; Greg Kelleher, Customer Operations
Manager
DATE: February 18, 2022
SUBJECT: Hold Times (Speed of Answer) Follow Up
OBJECTIVE: Information Only

Issue/ Background

In October we reported to the Board on delays in answering calls and emails. A combination of increased customer calls and emails coupled with several events reducing staff availability resulted in longer times for customers to reach EWEB Customer Service Analysts (CSAs). For this discussion, we refer to the time it takes EWEB to answer a call or email once it has entered the queue as “speed of answer”.

EWEB’s standards for average speed of answer are < 90 seconds for calls and under two business days for email. Phone and email traffic normally varies significantly throughout the day and week, and since mid-June EWEB has often failed to meet these standards. We have been working to improve by addressing staffing and training, improving self-service options, and investigating call and email drivers. This memo is an update on those efforts.

Discussion

From June through September, EWEB experienced a sharp increase in calls, longer calls on average, and an increase in escalations from upset customers. The drivers that continue to impact call volume, length, and complexity are:

- Customer self-service portal, autopay enrollments, and technical support,
- Estimated meter reads and true-up bills, and
- Move-ins and move-outs, with seasonal surges of student requests.

The call center is now fully staffed, and there has been significant improvement in average speed of answer, with the average over the past four months at about eight minutes. See Attachment A: Call Center Data - 13-Month Overview. Staff have reached the target for response time to emails and are currently responding to most emails on the same business day. Recent statistics for calls do not yet reflect normal average speed of answer because the new CSAs have been in training and mentoring with other staff during the past two months, and January was an unusually high month for staff absences due to Covid and quarantines. We expect to be back to normal again within the next few weeks.

Average talk time and after call work are expected to remain higher than previous years due to the complexity of calls associated with portal support and estimated meter reads.

Specific Actions Taken to Improve Speed of Answer:

- Nine new Customer Service Analysts (CSAs) were onboarded and began training in late November. Within the past few weeks, they have begun taking calls on their own. Three additional Spanish-speaking CSAs have been selected and are scheduled to begin training in March.
- Adjusting staffing based on call volume, including leveraging overtime judiciously as needed.
- Continuing to advance work from home options for staff. Call center staff are testing a new technology package, and we are planning for 50% or more of call center staff to have the option to work from home by year end. This is expected to improve staff flexibility and resiliency during adverse events, and potentially reduce absenteeism.
- Restructured the Customer Service department to operate with one supervisor, two newly created Customer Service Team Leader positions, and two new Senior CSA positions (rather than two supervisors and three leads). All Senior and Team Leader positions have been filled. The new structure is designed to more effectively manage call center productivity, efficiency, scheduling, quality control, and customer escalations.
- EWEB has made some adjustments to the Customer Service job family and continues to review duties and pay.
- Reinstated CSA standards for availability and productivity that were relaxed during the portal rollout and flood of challenging calls.
- Reviewing operating hours to provide optimum availability to our customers.
- Maximizing staff flexibility, including using non-CSA staff to help with phone calls and emails during busy times. Reviewing routing and processes for handling calls that are more difficult, so that customers get the right service on the first contact.
- Added several new meter readers to decrease estimated reads and associated calls. Work continues on hiring additional staff and restructuring routes to accommodate an in-progress AMI installation.
- EWEB continues to develop plans to include move-in/move-out forms in the customer portal to reduce the number of customers who need to call EWEB to initiate this activity.

Requested Board Action

Information Only – No action is requested at this time.

Attachment

A. Call Center Data – 13-Month Overview

13-Month Overview

Date

1/1/2021

2/18/2022

196K

All Calls

690

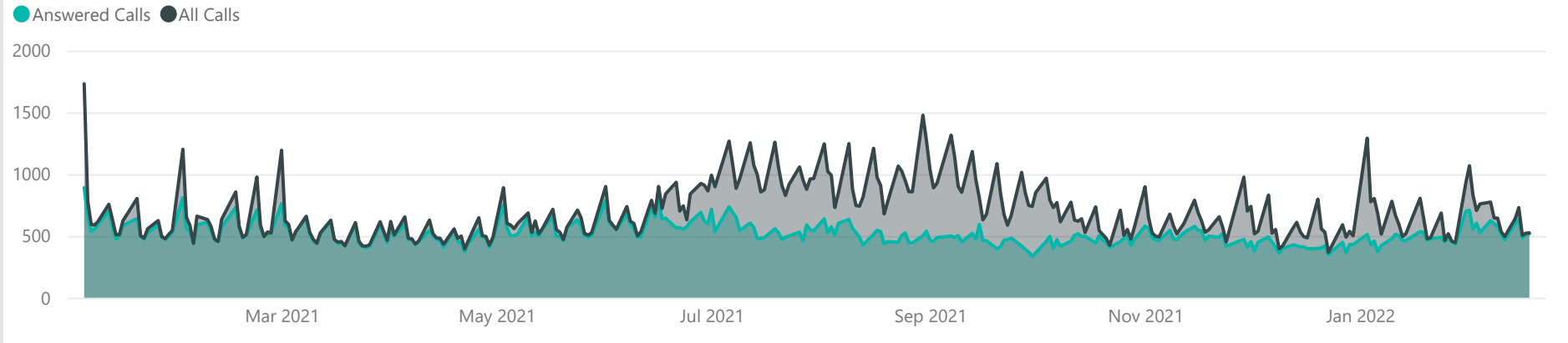
Avg Calls/Day

146K

Answered Calls

516

Avg Answered
Calls/Day



7.4

Avg Speed to
Answer (Minutes)

5.9

Avg Talk Time
(Minutes)

3.7

Avg ACW (Minutes)

2.7

Avg Time to
Abandon (Minutes)

Legend: Avg Talk Time (teal), Avg Speed to Answer (black), Avg ACW (red), Avg Time to Abandon (olive)

