



Western Power Generation is Western Australia's biggest power distributor, with annual revenue of \$1.6 billion.

Western Power owns and operates five large power stations and 26 smaller regional stations across Australia's largest state, servicing 794,000 commercial and residential customers spread over a huge geographical area.

The company has assets of \$3.7 billion and employs more than 3000 people.

With such a critical community responsibility and such a huge customer base, Western Power needs to be able to provide real-time information to customers and field workers in the event of an emergency, such as a power outage. Moreover, the company needs to be sure that those that require that information are actually getting it, and be able to show that it is fulfilling its corporate and community responsibilities to keep all interested parties up to speed in the most timely and efficient manner.

Mark Illingworth is superintendent of Western Power's network operations control centre, putting him in charge of the operations of the southwest interconnected system distribution network, which covers an area of 780,000 square kilometers, with Perth at its western edge.

He explains to **MessageNet** how critical the control centre is to the smooth operation of Western Power's service delivery.

"A vital aspect of the operation here is our crisis management system. Our customers include telecommunications companies, water supply corporations, sewage pump stations and teaching hospitals. It is critical that we have an efficient method of sending timely information to these stakeholders, as well as to our own field staff and local depots, about any outages, planned or otherwise. In a crisis, more than 250 people need to be notified immediately. We then provide updates at least four hourly for the duration of the incident."

Before coming to **MessageNet**, Western Power had been relying on a rather clumsy pager notification system to advise internal stakeholders, while external stakeholders were notified by telephone.

"With so many people to notify in a short space of time, this system was very inefficient," says Mr. Illingworth.

"Often, the telephone messages didn't get through to the right people in time, and we had no real record of when calls were made to show we were meeting our obligations.

"The old system had a lot of potential 'holes' and was causing a lot of heartache."

After reviewing several options, Western Power chose the **MessageNet** SMS service to replace its inefficient and time-consuming messaging system.

Mr. Illingworth says: "We chose **MessageNet** because it provides excellent functionality for a very attractive price. We have 250 contacts in seven different groups, and it is not uncommon for us to send 1000 a day. **MessageNet's** ability to send high volumes of messages across both mobile and paging networks was also appealing."

He explains also that **MessageNet's** statistical reporting and proof of delivery are also of great value to the network operations control centre.

"**MessageNet** has been great in anticipating our requirements, and recently contacted us to advise us of a more attractive pricing structure because of our high usage volumes."

Western Power has implemented a LAN-based version of **MessageNet's** SMS product, which is accessible throughout its entire network.

"It is now a simple matter of composing the message on the PC desktop, entering it once and having it automatically sent to all the relevant stakeholders," Mr. Illingworth explains.
"The database is easy to maintain and all messages are logged and time stamped."

Company Profile

Western Power is WA's premier energy provider, supplying power to 794,000 domestic, commercial and government installations across the state. It has 3000 staff and annual revenue of \$1.6 billion.

The Challenge

Western Power's network operations control centre needed an efficient and reliable system for communicating time-sensitive information in crisis situations to 250 people every four hours.

The Solution

MessageNet implemented a LAN-based version of our **MessageNet** SMS product, giving Western Power the ability to send to mobile phones and to pagers from the same system; thus ensuring that Western Power is able to get the message to the right person, at the right time — every time.

Benefits

- Statistical reporting
- Streamlined business procedures
- Timely, high-volume messaging
- Cost efficient

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