



Green Star Energy Case Study

Green Star Energy harnesses efficiencies and business benefits using IVR, self-service payment solution from Encoded

Launched in 2013, Green Star Energy provides a fresh approach to energy. It supplies electricity, gas and renewable energy to homes throughout the UK and, being independent, is continually watching the market to keep prices competitive. The company is particularly proud of its green energy tariff which is 100% renewable and affordable.

Green Star Energy is the residential trading name of Hudson Energy Supply UK that supplies commercial energy to UK business. Hudson Energy Supply UK is a subsidiary of Just Energy Group Inc, a publicly traded company consisting of eight brands and serving almost 2 million customers across North America. With the backing of such a large and well-established organisation, Green Star Energy enjoys the additional benefits of stability and a wealth of market experience.

We're Greener
by Nature





Small supplier, big plans

Compared with other long-standing energy giants in the UK marketplace, Green Star Energy is small, a real bonus in a highly regulated and competitive industry where agility and flexibility are critical to delivering excellent products and service.

According to Joanne Thornton, Managing Director of Green Star Energy and Operations and Sales Director of the commercial division Hudson Energy Supply UK, "We are a small supplier with big plans. Our mission is clear – great service, easy to understand products and savings on our customers' bills. Pivotal to supporting our strategy is a friendly, knowledgeable customer service team backed up with clever technology that can accommodate our fast-growing, dynamic business."

Operating from headquarters in Milton Keynes, and Cork, Ireland, Green Star Energy's 60-strong customer service team is open for business from 8am until 6pm, Monday to Friday. Typically, agents handle more than 1,000 inbound calls per day covering anything from meter reads and meter read requests to enquiries about payment options and customer account administration such as changing payment details. On a monthly basis, agents also approach about 25% of the customer base for an up-to-date meter reading to facilitate direct billing.

Gavin Morden, Customer Experience Manager, Green Star Energy added, "On top of our monthly 30,000 agent calls, a further 13,000 plus 3,000 calls relating to meter readings and payments respectively are handled by sophisticated Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology provided by Encoded. Encoded's automated card payment solution has supported our business from day one, having been selected from a shortlist of four vendors for its ease of use, speedy implementation and cost-efficiency."



Faster payments with security built-in

When a customer wishes to make a payment or if they are already talking to the payment collections department, they are directly transferred through to the Encoded automated payment system. This allows them to carry out debit or credit card transactions quickly and leaves agents free to concentrate on more complex or urgent enquiries.

Most importantly, the fully automated solution dramatically enhances security by eradicating the need for agents to record confidential information manually. Encoded is a Level 1 Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) accredited supplier which means customers can be assured that their private data is protected at all times.

Despite the rise in self-service and automated payments, Green Star Energy appreciates that some customers still want to speak live to an agent and respects their choice by constantly looking for secure ways to facilitate payments over the telephone.



To deal with the calls currently handled by IVR we estimate we would need to increase the existing number of agents by around 20%.

Joanne Thornton

Managing Director of Green Star Energy and Operations and Sales Director of the commercial division Hudson Energy Supply UK



Greater efficiencies all round

Today, typically 20% of Green Star Energy's customers use IVR to make their payments and the company hopes to increase this number over time with the help of Encoded.

Joanne Thornton sums up the benefits of using Encoded, "Introducing automated IVR from Encoded has enabled us to create a highly efficient and secure card payment environment that empowers customers, boosts their confidence and generates a healthy business outlook for Green Star Energy. Encoded has enabled us to build a truly round-the-clock operation without the need to increase our customer service headcount. To deal with the calls currently handled by IVR we estimate we would need to increase the existing number of agents by around 20%".

Gavin Morden continued, "At the same time, the solution has given us the flexibility to offer customer choice, an extremely important part of Green Star Energy's fresh approach to service. Encoded's strong integration capabilities link it seamlessly to our CRM system meaning our agents always have the right information at their fingertips to deliver a swift, highly personalised and vastly superior customer experience."

Looking forward to a successful future

Green Star Energy can rely on Encoded's responsiveness and collaboration to strengthen the company's existing implementation and take advantage of new innovations going forward.

Next on the horizon is listening to the customer to improve the IVR payments experience and encourage other customers to self-serve. Recently, agents conducted a survey of around 100 customers to establish why some of them had come through to an agent rather than use the automated IVR solution.

Already, the results of the research have identified a couple of opportunities for improvement including the time allowed for entering a reading and changing the wording of certain IVR menu options to add clarity to the payment process. With continual emphasis on customer choice, Green Star Energy is also considering new, more secure options for those wishing to deal directly with agents and give their payments over the telephone. It is currently working with Encoded to further improve the integration functionality with the company's Juniper CRM system.

Joanne Thornton concluded, "We intend to make Encoded an intrinsic part of our overall customer efficiency programme.

This initiative is our number one opportunity to make a huge difference to our customers, however they wish to interact with us, and will maximise our own commercial prospects as we move into the next exciting period of our business journey."





About Green Star Energy

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For more information, please visit www.mygreenstarenergy.com

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About Encoded

Encoded is a UK company founded in 2001 to offer affordable, pay-as-you-go IVR and payment solutions to small and large businesses. Hundreds of contact centres now rely on Encoded secure automated payments for their PCI DSS compliance requirements.

Today the company's software supports many of the UK's leading brands including Virgin Holidays, Mercedes-Benz Finance and Hartlepool Water.

Solutions include:

- Virtual Terminal Payments
- IVR Phone Payments
- Agent Assisted Card Payments
- Web Payments
- Automated Recurring Payments

For more information please visit
www.encoded.co.uk

