

## 2008 North American Best Business Customer Portal for Large & Distributed Enterprises Customer Value Award

# New Edge Networks

### Introduction

A highly functional customer-facing portal is a necessity for any communication services provider (CSP). Offering a single, web-based point of access to multiple service-related functions and information resources, the portal provides benefits for customer and provider alike. Customers value the control a portal affords: the ability to conduct business under their own terms, to communicate directly with technicians and to access critical data. Service Providers, meanwhile, consider the portal both a customer satisfaction driver and a cost-saver, as once-manual processes are automated.

For businesses with large and highly distributed networking environments (for example, convenience stores, retail chains, gas stations, or fast-food outlets), installing and managing the network presents significant challenges. The sheer number of sites, their remote locations and diverse access types, the lack of knowledgeable on-site IT personnel, and the critical business functions supported at each site, such as credit card processing, all add up to a unique and urgent need for robust e-servicing tools.

Several North American CSPs target this user set with their self-service portals, which deploy similar functionality – for example, allowing bulk uploads of site data for order entry, validate the access type, enter trouble tickets and view network status. However, New Edge Networks “MyEdge” portal stands out for its ease of use and array of innovative features and tools that anticipate customer needs.

### Award Validation

New Edge Networks has deployed a robust customer portal that offers enterprise customers one-stop access to an integrated portfolio of ordering, billing, trouble-ticketing, network performance and collaboration tools. The MyEdge portal is part of New Edge Networks’ strategic approach to continually improving the customer experience. Called “7 Voices of the Customer,” the strategy uses 6 Sigma methodology to define and refine its service delivery in key areas, including providing “a portal that delights.”

New Edge Networks' portal includes the following basic capabilities:

- Administrative functions, including single sign-on for all service types and functions, plus role-based permissions and password management
- Access via a link to billing functions, including bill view and bill pay
- Order status management
- Installation monitoring, including real-time status tracking
- Trouble-ticketing functions, including ticket creation and status
- Network monitoring, status updates and reports
- A mapping feature powered by Google Maps that provides both high-level network visibility and the ability to click into each location for detailed site data
- Network performance management, including CPE configuration and network performance trend reports

In addition, the portal demonstrates "best-in-class" characteristics that maximize efficiency and minimize time and effort for both customer and service provider. These characteristics include:

- Close to the technicians – The New Edge portal allows customers to access the same data and notes visible to New Edge service technicians. This enhances communication between customer and technician, reducing the risk of error or misunderstanding – which in turn can lead to duplicated effort, frustration, and more time to complete the job. Instead, New Edge customers have a direct connection to the technicians, via the portal and Live Chat functions.
- View Installation/Repair schedules – When an installation involves hundreds or thousands of sites, the customer requires robust and flexible tracking and scheduling tools. New Edge Networks offers customers the ability to monitor installation and repair status in near-real time for all sites that are in the pipeline. This feature was cited by customers as essential for complex installations.
- CPE management tools – With routers and other Customer Premises Equipment (CPE) resident at thousands of sites nationwide, those responsible for managing a distributed network are also responsible for the accompanying equipment. New Edge uniquely includes CPE tracking and management tools in its portal to help customers manage CPE. In addition to providing CPE configuration views, the portal offers two features that were named by customers as extremely helpful: CPE Return Tracking and CPE Change History. The Return Tracking feature helps the customer avoid hefty monthly

- charges for forgotten and unused CPE. The CPE Change History function tracks recurring equipment problems that might help a customer or New Edge technician isolate a trouble, especially after a configuration change.
- Direct pathway to partners – New Edge Networks allows business customers to communicate requests to local access providers directly from the portal, thus reducing time to repair. This flowthrough capability minimizes “swivel chair” processes used by some Communications Service Providers, in which the CSP receives data and transmits it to a third party without adding significant value – but negatively impacting cycle times and error rates.
  - Live Chat Transcripts: New Edge Networks encourages Live Chat interactions between customers and the technical support team, to ensure that critical data is shared in a timely manner. Further, to ensure appropriate follow-up to Live Chat sessions, New Edge captures and emails transcripts of Live Chat sessions to customers. While email is an awkward mechanism for storing and searching for particular data, the practice ensures that both New Edge and the customer agree on decisions, and the transparency and confidence suggested by the practice engenders trust.

### **Conclusion**

New Edge Networks has identified its portal as a strategic initiative, and continually solicits and acts on feedback from customers and partners to improve the customer experience. New Edge clearly knows its target market, and has incorporated features that address the unique needs of large and highly distributed enterprises.

The MyEdge portal is an outstanding communications and collaboration tool that offers significant value to customers by allowing them greater control over their distributed networks and their New Edge Networks accounts. The portal facilitates business functions and interactions, allowing customers to engage in a partnership relationship with New Edge Networks.

### **Award Description**

The Customer Value Award in the area of Business Customer Portal for Large and Distributed Enterprises is presented to the company that has best demonstrated the ability to serve its customer base with more innovative eservicing strategies than competing vendors. This Award recognizes the company’s successful delivery of an integrated suite of electronic self-service tools that particularly address the challenges of managing a large number of remote sites, and the degree to which those strategies have met customers’ stated needs and requirements. Such

strategies are expected to significantly improve customer interaction and contribute to customer satisfaction.

### Research Methodology

In order to select the Award recipient, analysts quantify several market factors for each market participant according to predetermined criteria. Enterprise portals for seven leading North American communications service providers were demonstrated and interviews were conducted with key architects of the portals. In addition, interviews were conducted with all customers whose names were provided by CSPs.

### Measurement Criteria

In addition to the methodology described above, there are specific criteria used to determine the final Award rankings in this category. The recipient of this Award has excelled based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Inclusion of portal as part of a broader corporate customer experience strategy
- Specific functions provided via the portal, from a list of 32 functions
- Implementation of new or unique features to serve a distributed enterprise
- CSPs own processes for obtaining feedback and initiating improvements
- Evidence of a strategic plan for continual improvement to the portal

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