Case Study of the No Power Complaints Processing System at Torrent Power Ltd

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Abstract

Torrent Power, the sole supplier of electricity for Ahmedabad region, is a reputed player in the Indian power sector. With activities encompassing power generation, transmission and distribution, the company is the most experienced private player in Gujarat, India. Torrent power distributes over 10 billion units of power annually to its 1.9 million customers spread over an area of 408 sq. km. in the cities of Ahmedabad, Surat and Gandhinagar. Torrent Power AEC Ltd., is responsible for distribution of power in Ahmedabad. The Ahmedabad region is divided into 4 zones – Ahmedabad city, Naranpura, Amraiwadi and Gandhinagar zone. We studied the system for processing no power complaints at the Narangpura zonal office.

Key words: complaints, Torrent Power, process management, management case

Introduction

Torrent Power, the sole supplier of electricity for Ahmedabad region, is a reputed player in the Indian power sector. With activities encompassing power generation, transmission and distribution, the company is the most experienced private player in Gujarat, India. Torrent power distributes over 10 billion units of power annually to its 1.9 million customers spread over an area of 408 sq. km. in the cities of Ahmedabad, Surat and Gandhinagar. Torrent Power AEC Ltd., is responsible for distribution of power in Ahmedabad. The Ahmedabad region is divided into 4 zones – Ahmedabad city, Naranpura, Amraiwadi and Gandhinagar zone. We studied the system for processing no power complaints at the Narangpura zonal office.

The zonal office takes care of all aspects of providing electricity service in the area under its jurisdiction. On a daily level, the office performs various functions such as processing applications for new connections/change of address/load extension requests, processing complaints such as no power/fluctuations in supply/deviation in voltage supplied/short circuits, scheduling maintenance work, clearing of electricity bills, internal HR matters, etc.

Significance of the No Power Complaint (NPC) Processing System:
The Naranpura zonal office attends over 1 lakh no power complaints annually. The number of complaints received per day varies from around 800 per day in monsoons (maximum) to 175 per day in the winters (minimum). The number of complaints received also varies from one shift to another with minimum number of complaints during the night shift. The company regards the efficiency of processing of the no order complaints as a critical factor by which customers would rate their performance. Regarding itself as primarily customer service providers, the company views prompt processing of complaints as a sort of 'after sales service' that would enable it to build a strong reputation. The time taken to attend to a complaint (beginning form registration of the complaint to the final site visit by the technician) can take anywhere between 5 to 90 minutes. The objective is to minimize this time duration in a cost effective manner, keeping in mind constraints on resources such as personnel, equipment, etc.

The key activities in the NPC processing system are as described below:
The first critical activity in the system is receiving and registering complaints over the telephone. Before the registration is complete, address verification formalities are completed and the nature of the complaint is correctly identified by the call agent. The agent then enters this data into their centralized system known as the Customer Information Software (CIS). Through his software, data is accessible at all Torrent Power offices. The complaint registered has details of the customer's service number, group number and lot number. From these numbers, the zone under whose jurisdiction the customer falls, identifies this as a call for service. A docket of the complaint is printed at this zonal office which is scrutinized by a senior technical officer. The officer is assisted by a senior 'fault man' and 8-9 teams of fault men, with each team having members trained to handle specific kinds of complaints. These teams are spread over 8 divisions that the Naranpura zone is further categorized into on the basis of geography, customer density, etc. Each fault man is equipped with a mobile phone, and is continuously tracked as he attends to one complaint after another by the senior fault man who sits in the zonal office. After the complaint is scrutinized, the fault man assesses if the complaint can be handled by the fault men. If so, the fault man closest to the site is asked to attend to the complaint. As soon as the complaint is attended to, the fault man informs the zonal office and the status of the complaint is updated accordingly. If the fault man feels that the complaint must be directed to a specific department such as the meter department (burnt/stopped), LT department, HV cell (for major failures), etc. This is responsibility is also transferred through the CIS and then it is the responsibility of the concerned department to handle the complaint. Before the status of the complaint is changed to 'cleared', an official from the concerned department calls the customer to recheck if the complaint has been satisfactorily attended to.
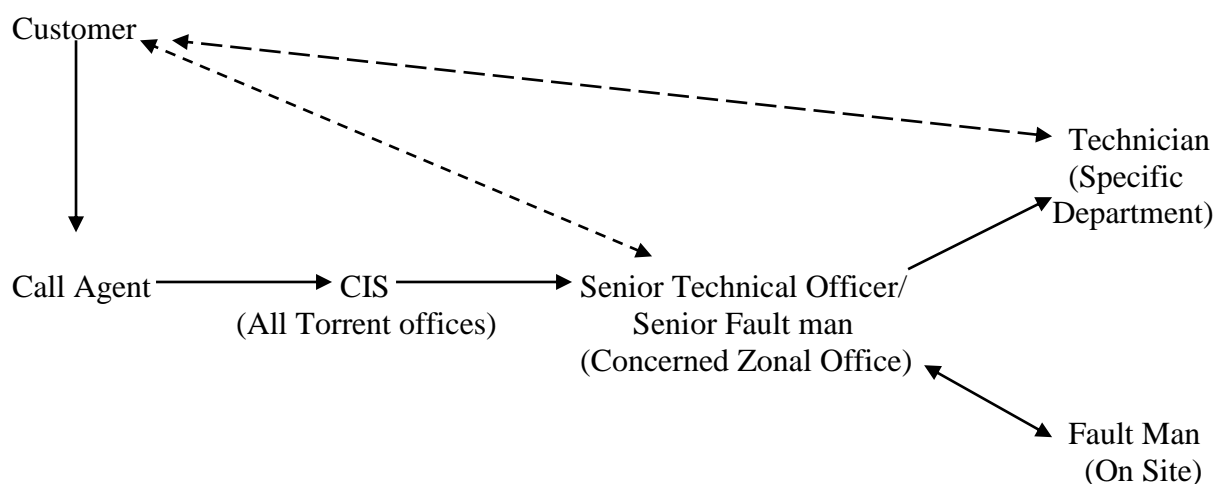
Flow of information:
The call agent is the first point of contact with the customer and is the source of information for the internal system. The information collected by the agent includes the customer's service number, the category the customer falls under, the address and the nature of the complaint as identified. From now on, at all stages of the information processing, the details

are accessible to all departments across all Torrent offices through the CIS. The information is first received by the senior technical officer at the concerned zonal office. This information is then transferred to the on site fault man if the complaint can be handled by him or it is transferred to the specific department which can deal with the complaint. The fault man or technicians from the specific department attend to the complaint and inform the zonal office as soon as the work is completed.

Roles and Responsibilities for implementation:
The call agent is responsible for verification of the customer details. The agents are also trained to identify the exact nature of the complaint through a series of relevant questions. Each type of complaint is identified in the database by a unique code number. The CIS also has details regarding planned shutdowns, area shutdowns, etc. The customer history is also available with the agents so as to assess if the power supply has been suspended due to reasons such as non payment of dues, penalties, abnormal remarks, etc. The call agent must consider all this information before registering the complaint. The senior technical officer and the fault man are responsible for receiving the complaint at the zonal office, scrutinizing it and assigning further responsibility – either to a fault man or to another specialized department. The senior fault man must also keep track of where each fault man is at all points of time. The fault man / technician from the department attends to the complaint are responsible for communicating this back at the zonal office. The status of the complaint is then up dated by the senior technical officer or an officer from the specific department. Under circumstances when it is identified that the mistake lies on the customer's side and hence the customer must pay for the service rendered, the details are forwarded to the billing department.

Chart 1: Chart showing flow of information:-

Source: Authors' compilation