



PARTNER STORY

# Digitizing Manual Staff Processes

The Village of Glenview is a mid-sized community with a publicly owned water utility in Chicago's northern suburbs, serving a residential population of 46,740 people. In 2015, Glenview began installing automated metering infrastructure (AMI) throughout the village. One of the primary motivations for this meter implementation was to improve data-driven customer communication, including leak detection and alerting.



## Village of Glenview

LOCATION  
Glenview, IL

POPULATION  
46,740

PRINT ALERTS SENT  
1,021

EMAILS COLLECTED  
3,460

ACCOUNTS SERVED  
BY WATERSMART  
16,131

# Glenview, Illinois

## THE CHALLENGE

After completing their AMI installation, Glenview began communicating with their customers about leaks detected through the AMI data. Leaks can be detected through automated meters by analyzing hourly interval data to identify irregular usage patterns. Glenview developed an internal process for alerting customers of data irregularities using the reports of likely leaks provided by their meter vendor. Utility staff identified likely leaks and then printed and mailed leak notification letters to their customers on a weekly basis. If the staff at Glenview noticed that the leak appeared to continue after one week, they would attempt to notify them via telephone, if it continued after the second week they would send a follow-up letter. While this process did enable the utility to engage their customers regarding likely leaks, the method was manual, time intensive, and challenging to track and manage, consuming about ten hours of staff time each week.

Recognizing that there must be a more efficient way to accomplish their customer leak detection and alerting goals, Glenview partnered with WaterSmart Software in 2017 to leverage their new AMI data and provide utility customers with an online Customer Portal. Glenview took advantage of WaterSmart's automated leak detection and alerting, but they did not have any customer email addresses or phone numbers on file when the program launched. As such, automated email and text leak alerts were unable to reach customers that had not yet registered for the Customer Portal. Since the service address was the only contact information the municipal utility had available for most customers, Glenview needed a solution that would automatically alert customers via print mail, and would convert customers to digital communication channels. The solution would reduce future print and mailing costs and alert customers more quickly.



Print leak alerts are an effective tool to reach over half of utility customers who haven't provided an email address and encourage them to adopt digital communication channels that reduce costs.

## THE SOLUTION: AUTOMATED PRINT LEAK ALERTS

The WaterSmart customer engagement platform offered a helpful solution for the village. Unlike the print alerts that required Glenview to print, mail, and track in-house every week, the WaterSmart leak detection and alerting system prints and mails on-demand. These alerts are automatically generated and sent for printing and mailing the same day the leaks are detected. The alerts also included detail about the leak—including a graphic—and instructions on how to register for the Portal. This was an improvement over the previous manual letter. In addition, the WaterSmart Utility Analytics Dashboard automates all tracking and documentation of alerts, eliminating the need to maintain laborious internal spreadsheet processes.

**20%**  
REGISTRATION

Customer Portal registration rate of accounts initially alerted using print



## SAVING STAFF TIME AND EFFORT

Approximately three weeks after the Portal launch, Glenview customers began opening their leak alerts, which include an easy-to-read chart illustrating their irregular water use and clear instructions for registering for the WaterSmart Customer Portal. These customers, who had previously been unreachable through digital channels, were automatically driven online to investigate their leaks and were given the opportunity to sign up for digital alerts in the future. Residents were grateful to receive leak alerts, and the Village of Glenview staff found that all the time they had previously spent identifying and generating leak alerts could be spent on other high-value activities. “We are extremely pleased with print leak alerts. It saves staff a lot of time,” says Jody Ruiz, Resolution Center Supervisor at the Village of Glenview. “Using print leak alerts saved us time and effort. Being able to see a copy of the print leak alert letter attached to the account (on the Utility Dashboard) is very helpful as well.”

## DRIVING DIGITAL CONVERSION

Of the accounts that were initially alerted using print leak alerts, 20% registered for the Customer Portal. Because Glenview previously did not have any email addresses on file, print leak alerts proved to be an effective way to digitize their customers while saving the utility time and effort in leak communication. Of the users that registered in response to print leak alerts, one-third had additional leaks that were detected within two months of their initial leak.

Because the customers had registered for the Customer Portal, WaterSmart was able to automatically alert these customers of the subsequent leaks via email and text messaging—communication methods that are both more timely and more cost-effective.

Jody and her team see the value of print leak alerts and are excited to expand this program to their multi-family and commercial customers. While their primary goal in converting customers to digital channels was to improve the timeliness of their leak alerts, digitization has other benefits for utilities like Glenview. Digitization increases customer satisfaction by enabling utilities to engage with their customers using text and email, the channels most customers increasingly prefer.

The WaterSmart team is encouraged by Glenview's success and is excited to bring it to other utilities that, like Glenview, need to establish digital channels with their customers but lack a means—and customer emails—to do so.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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**“We are extremely pleased with print leak alerts. It saves staff a lot of time and effort.”**

JODY RUIZ, RESOLUTION CENTER SUPERVISOR



WaterSmart Software provides intelligence beyond the meter to make the lives of water utility managers easier. Water providers using WaterSmart's cloud-based, customer engagement and analytics platform have been proven to reduce costs, protect revenue, and increase customer satisfaction by more than 25%. Come help us change the way the world uses water.