

# Erdgas Südsachsen Implements Multichannel CRM System to Meet Customer Needs



Erdgas Südsachsen  
Chemnitz, Germany  
www.erdgas-suedsachsen.de

## Industry:

Oil & Gas

## Oracle Products & Services:

Siebel Energy

## Key Benefits:

- Increased sales effectiveness
- Accelerated the order-to-installation cycle
- Enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Enabled the company to compete effectively in a deregulated market

*"In order to retain customers for life, our compelling energy product needs to be backed up by great service. Oracle's Siebel Energy increases customer satisfaction, because our customers now perceive that we understand their needs and are looking after them." – Gottfried Meier, IT Manager, Erdgas Südsachsen*

Erdgas Südsachsen supplies natural gas to more than 150,000 residential and business customers in the South Saxony region of Germany. Established in 1991, the company manages more than 6,100 kilometers of gas piping and nearly 112,000 household connections. Erdgas Südsachsen is jointly owned by a local public energy authority and the large German energy group, Thüga AG.

As the German energy market was opened up to other regional and multinational gas companies, Erdgas Südsachsen suddenly faced formidable competition for its gas services. Immediately following this deregulation, CRM became the most important priority for Erdgas Südsachsen.

Erdgas Südsachsen understood it could only compete effectively if it completely understood its customers' needs and was equipped to respond rapidly and effectively to them. The company replaced its existing system with Oracle's Siebel Energy, a comprehensive, industry-specific, multichannel customer relationship management (CRM) system. Erdgas Südsachsen is now tuned into customer needs, and customers remain satisfied with and loyal to the company's brand.

## A Consistent, Satisfying Customer Service Experience

Prior to the implementation of Siebel Energy, Erdgas Südsachsen's product and customer information was spread across eight decentralized customer centers, and the information contained in these centers was only updated every six months. In addition, a considerable proportion of customer information was separately held in paper documents and unrelated spreadsheets. When a customer contacted the company, service agents were unable to access historical records of previous telephone or face-to-face contacts.

**“It’s all there in one great package. A single, direct line to complete sales management, customer contact management, service requests, and activities.”**

Gottfried Meier  
IT Manager  
Erdgas Südsachsen

“Faced with increased competition, we knew we needed to transform our business processes,” said Gottfried Meier, IT Manager, Erdgas Südsachsen. “Apart from price, the optimal means of distinguishing ourselves in this crowded marketplace is through the delivery of a consistent, satisfying customer service experience. To deliver that experience, we knew we needed a total, integrated understanding of our customers’ needs and behavior. We also needed a system that would empower our staff to sell more effectively. It was apparent that unless Erdgas Südsachsen radically changed its approach to customer management, the company risked losing customers to its more agile, customer focused competitors.”

### **Single, Comprehensive Customer View**

Siebel Energy now supports the German firm’s highly effective approach to sales, marketing, and customer service. Using the single, comprehensive customer view, 110 Erdgas Südsachsen sales and service professionals are able to efficiently profile multiple groups of customers, track opportunities across multiple channels, set up new accounts, formulate detailed customer quotes, and generate contracts.

The benefits of the powerful multichannel system are evident from the very beginning of the sales cycle, when a prospect first contacts the company to arrange service. At this point, the CRM system identifies the opportunity, and all contact information is entered into the system. Once the customer expresses an interest in opening an account, Siebel Energy is used to prepare an offer based on the customer’s location, type of premises, number of users, and type of heating desired. The offer, which includes a detailed quote for the installation and supply of gas and means of payment, is then dispatched to the customer using his or her preferred channel of communication—telephone, e-mail, postal mail, or fax. Business customers can also contact their dedicated sales representative.

Once the customer has accepted the offer, Siebel Energy automatically generates and sends a personalized letter confirming the order. The system then develops a contract that, once signed by the customer, is electronically logged centrally with all other information associated with the account. By using the seamless integration between Siebel Energy, a KADIS energy accounting

system, and a homegrown provisioning system, the installation team then schedules installation.

“Using Oracle’s Siebel Energy, we now have a single, companywide understanding of all customer contacts and related contracts,” said Meier. “This allows us to target key customers and accelerate the entire order-to-installation cycle. Process automation is also transforming Erdgas Südsachsen’s productivity. Contact management, order taking and monitoring, appointment scheduling, and energy consumption accounting information only needs to be input once.”

Erdgas Südsachsen can manage customer service inquiries equally efficiently. When customers call to question an invoice, change a method of payment, or report a suspected gas leak, they can communicate with the company through the channel of their choice. Alcatel Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) directs the customer’s inquiry to the appropriate agent based on whether it is a business or a residential customer, the nature of the inquiry, the availability of an agent, and the agent’s degree of expertise. Using the complete, integrated record of the customer’s history, Erdgas Südsachsen is able to respond quickly, accurately, and effectively to each inquiry.

### **Why Oracle?**

Oracle [Siebel] proved to be the ideal partner to transform Erdgas Südsachsen into a sales-focused, customer-centric energy business. The company was drawn to the out-of-the-box, industry-tailored functionality of Siebel Energy, as well as the software’s predefined workflows and interfaces. Meier and his team were also impressed by the application’s ease of use and the speed with which it could be integrated with the company’s existing accounting, provisioning, and other back-office systems.

“It’s all there in one great package,” he said. “A single, direct line to complete sales management, customer contact management, service requests, and activities.”

### Advice from Erdgas Südsachsen

- Ensure close cooperation between project coordinator, vendor, and systems integrator.
- Record, monitor, and track results at every phase of the implementation.
- Secure complete executive sponsorship at start of project.

*Erdgas Südsachsen supplies natural gas services to more than 150,000 residential and business customers in the South Saxony region of Germany.*