

Customer Communication

I've said it before and I'll say it again: In most of the U.S., it's easy to take clean drinking water for granted. We turn on the tap and as much safe, clean water as we need pours out.

Certainly, recent events are chipping away at this façade. The drought in California brought water conservation and efficiency center stage last year when the state implemented water use restrictions, and the Flint, Mich., lead contamination crisis has caused the public to question whether municipally supplied water is truly safe.

Despite the heightened awareness, the general water consumer uses more water than ever—according to WQP Dealer of the Year Jeff Colasante of Bennett & Cole Water Solutions, a household of four can use up to 400 gal of water daily. "I'm blown away by how much water some of my customers use," he said, adding that growing up if he tried to take a shower longer than 10 minutes, his father would have shut off the water.

In Colasante's experience, even though consumers are aware of water efficiency and often ask for more efficient water treatment systems, it does not affect their water consumption. "It's not that they're using less water, they just want to maximize the consumable portion of their treatment to accommodate this big usage," he said.

Hope is not lost, though—Colasante predicts that consumers will desire to be more in tune with household water consumption. Technology is advancing to the point that this is possible. Smart meters and controls can tell consumers



how much water they are using and alert them to possible concerns, even sending those alerts via email or text message.

Letting the machines do all of the talking is not enough, however—water treatment professionals possess a wealth of knowledge that customers will find valuable. Conducting water tests that make

customers aware of any issues with their water quality are not enough—an ongoing stream of information and education for customers will position you as the water treatment expert in your community and help customers feel they are valued.

There are so many ways to reach customers today. Colasante said he primarily uses text messaging to communicate with clients. Enewsletters and social media also are excellent ways to convey information on water quality and conservation issues, especially because they allow you to reach customers quickly when breaking news, like the Flint crisis, hits.

If you don't already, consider communicating with your customers on a regular basis outside of sending them reminders when they need service. Presenting yourself as a resource for reliable water information to your customers will keep them coming back to you anytime they have a question or concern about their water quality.

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