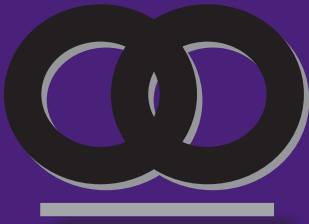# Chartwell's Best Practices

Customer Experience

SRP's new Spanish-language site broadens usability and appeal

Summary

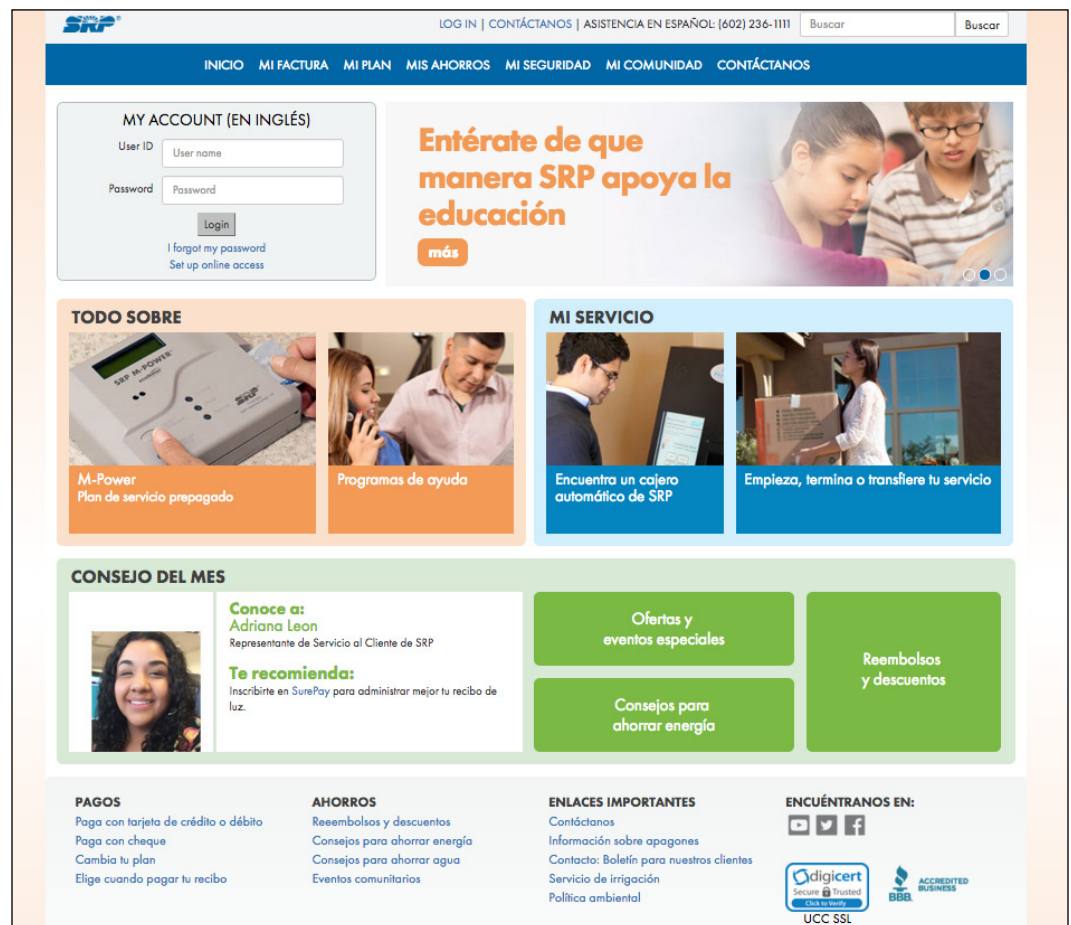SRP's new Spanish-language website - www.misrp.com – supports the utility's goal to provide customers with improved site navigation and frequently requested information. Incorporating flat website design and other current trends, the enhanced site drew 6,424 visitors in the two months following its February 2015 launch, representing almost a tenfold increase in traffic.

Company Profile

Salt River Project (SRP), Tempe, Ariz., is one of the nation's largest public power utilities, providing electricity to more than 984,000 retail customers in a 2,900-square-mile service area. SRP also is one of the largest raw-water suppliers in Arizona.

In February 2015, SRP launched a completely overhauled Spanish-language website, www.misrp.com, to provide its customers with an improved user experience. The new site is easier to navigate, more informative and culturally applicable, according to project leaders. As a result of carefully planned modifications, site traffic remains on the rise.

When visiting the dedicated microsite, Spanish-language customers are able to access user-friendly pages that include custom photography, vibrant colors and helpful graphics. To better serve its customers, the site is mobile-responsive and offers easily accessible links to information in Spanish.

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Declining site visits led to site overhaul

In response to a decline in traffic to SRP's previous Spanish-language website – www.srpnet.com/español – the utility's Hispanic communications team embarked on a journey to revitalize its online content.

"SRPnet/español was very troublesome and wasn't user-friendly," said Senior Corporate Communications Strategist Ramiro Camarillo, who manages all Spanish content and communications. "There was no navigation. The content on the homepage was constantly updated with different links and was very confusing for the customers."

In response to these issues, SRP's digital team began the creation process for misrp.com in August 2014. A project roadmap with three critical steps was created to ensure the site met key customer information criteria:

Step 1: User analysis
The first step, a needs assessment, involved partnering with Spanish-language customer-facing departments to pinpoint specific website improvement requirements, content enhancements and customer communication preferences, an initiative led by Camarillo. The team looked at srpnet.com/espanol's analytics to review customer behavior related to the content that was being searched, how information was processed and why customers left the site. These learnings were incorporated into the new site through focused user experience modifications, including the introduction of a navigation bar.

Step 2: Content planning
Next, SRP's digital team outlined a content marketing strategy to create and update information relevant to its customers "Our Customer Service department gave us a list of the top 10 reasons why customers call our Spanish lines, so we chose to feature that information on the homepage," Camarillo said.

Step 3: Design overhaul
Lastly, the misrp.com project team worked to incorporate design features to provide culturally appropriate colors, information and photography. Graphically, background research of mostly Hispanic websites was instructive in designing the new website. The outcome included a vibrant color palette blended with the SRP brand.

"We wanted something that would be complementary and soft, yet easy to understand because sometimes these vibrant colors can take over a website," said Web Graphic Designer Beatriz Antelo. "We used a lot more faces and more families, which we had never done with SRPnet. We definitely wanted to spotlight our customer representatives to humanize the site a little bit more, which is something that Spanish-speaking customers like. They like to be able to look at something they can relate to."

SRP has also maximized cross-promotion of available information, since company policy requires any Spanish communication channel to direct customers to other channels also offered in the language, such as billing statements, inserts and newsletters, Camarillo explained.

SRP also applied recent web design trends to maximize the user experience, including:

- Hyperlinked boxes rather than anchor text
- Simplified drop-down menu navigation
- Expedited page loading across devices enabled by Bootstrap 3 framework
- A flat design centered around simple elements, type and colors

Website improvements continue to draw traffic

SRP's misrp.com was launched in 2015 to a welcoming audience. The utility's Spanish-language communications, customer service representatives and homepage – www.srpnet.com – have all been leveraged to increase visits to the new site.

Internally, the project was very straightforward and involved no real challenges, noted Camarillo. The team was even able to launch the site a week ahead of schedule. "We got a lot of support and information that we needed to put together this website from our different departments," he said.

Since the launch of misrp.com, the site has delivered a number of benefits, not the least of which is an enhanced online experience for its Spanish-language customers. "Our main goal at SRP is to make it easier for customers to do business with us," Camarillo explained. "The response has been great, according to the feedback we're getting from Customer Service."

The utility also credits best practices in design as a component of the site's success. "The new website is not only more convenient for the customer … it's also helping our Customer Service reps because they can go to the site and help the customers navigate or tell them where they can find the information they need," Camarillo said.

Through misrp.com, customers can access a variety of self-service options and informational pages on topics that have historically prompted calls to the utility's contact center, Camarillo said. The new site offers customers the ability to pay bills online and change service plans and/or due dates. The site also links to ahorraconsrp.com, providing Spanish-language customers with information about SRP's rebate and discount programs as well the utility's prepaid price program, M-Power®.

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Moreover, visitors can access employee spotlights or information on SRP's volunteer activities and safety initiatives through misrp.com.

Following the launch, misrp.com drew 6,424 site visits in March and April 2015, compared to an average of 300 visits per month to the former site. In 2015, the new site received a total of 42,724 visits, according to Daniel Moran, Jr., Senior Online Communications Strategist. As of late April 2016, misrp.com had garnered a total of 13,347 visits for the calendar year, averaging 3,418.75 visits per month in 2016.

Also of April 2016, customers were most frequently visiting the site's pages on duct test and repair, water safety and canal safety, Moran reported.

Future site plans include additional self-service options

Content for misrp.com is updated regularly to keep information fresh and provide a reason for SRP's Spanish-language customers to visit on a regular basis, Camarillo said. "The site's based on our customers' needs, which are constantly changing. We're always communicating with our Customer Service department to keep getting feedback from them," he noted.

SRP is also working to provide its Spanish-language customers with additional self-service options, including the option to start, transfer or cancel service online. Additionally, based on customer feedback, SRP is exploring creating sections within misrp.com to provide customer education on community programs and environmental policies, Camarillo said.