



# Customer Satisfaction Study Report

greatblue

Report of Findings

16 April 2015  
Confidential & Proprietary

# Table of Contents



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## SECTION ONE

About GreatBlue

## SECTION TWO

Project Overview

## SECTION THREE

Key Study Findings

## SECTION FOUR

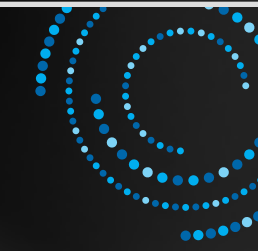
Considerations

## EXHIBITS

Aggregate Data (*Provided Separately*)

SECTION ONE

## About GreatBlue



SECTION TWO

## Project Overview

SECTION THREE

## Key Study Findings

SECTION FOUR

## Considerations

EXHIBITS

Aggregate Data (*Provided Separately*)



# Research you can trust

- GreatBlue provides reliable, actionable research and analytics to help organizations identify, address and improve their offerings to, and the way they communicate with, key constituents.
- With more than 35 years of experience in diverse markets, GreatBlue effectively yokes this knowledge to correlate general attitudes and perceptions with the behavioral trends seen within our clients' studied population(s).
- At GreatBlue, we foster a corporate culture of “clients first” to ensure our account teams anticipate client needs to more efficiently serve their expectations while effectively helping our clients think beyond today.





# Expertise in a diverse set of research methodologies

Having conducted millions of surveys and thousands of focus groups over the past 30+ years, our experience in instrument design, data collection and the presentation of those findings in manageable, actionable ways allows us to serve our clients across the spectrum of research studies.



Telephone Interviews  
In-house, multi-lingual  
interviewing capabilities



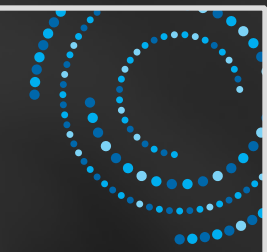
Digital Surveys  
Web + mobile-based  
survey programs



Focus Groups  
State-of-the-Art facilities  
in CT and MA

SECTION ONE  
About GreatBlue

SECTION TWO  
**Project Overview**



SECTION THREE  
Key Study Findings

SECTION FOUR  
Considerations

EXHIBITS  
Aggregate Data (*Provided Separately*)

# Project Overview

- GreatBlue was commissioned by the Belmont Municipal Light Department (Belmont Light) to conduct comprehensive research among its customers to gain a deeper understanding into perceptions of the utility, its service, resources, and rates.
- The primary goal of this research study was to assess the effectiveness of Belmont Light's ability to serve its customers, identify areas for improvement and those areas that may increase engagement.
- In order to service this research goal, GreatBlue conducted telephone surveys among a random sampling of Belmont Light's residential customers.
- The outcome of this research will enable Belmont Light personnel to more clearly understand, and ultimately set, customer expectations while revealing near term opportunities to create a strategic roadmap to increase customer satisfaction.



# Areas of Investigation

The Belmont Municipal Light Department Customer Satisfaction Survey leveraged a quantitative research methodology to address the following areas of investigation:

- Perception of local utilities and area organizations
- Rating Belmont Light's organizational characteristics
- Satisfaction with customer service personnel
- Satisfaction with field service personnel
- Preferred methods of communication
- Rating satisfaction with Belmont Light rebranding initiatives
- Satisfaction with current bill payment methods
- Demographic profiles of residential respondents

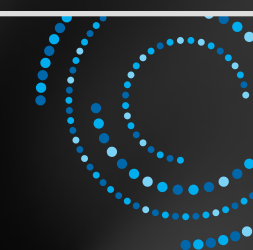
# Research Methodology Snapshot

Item	Description
Methodology	Telephone survey
Number of Completed Surveys	400
Instrument Length	67 possible questions
Instrument Structure	Primarily closed-ended with variable open ended questions
Incentive	None
Sample	Client provided
Sample Structure	Residential customers
Quality Assurance	Personnel and Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI)
Margin of Error	4.9%
Confidence Level	95%
Research Dates	March 18 - April 6 2015

SECTION ONE  
About GreatBlue

SECTION TWO  
Project Overview

SECTION THREE  
**Key Study Findings**



SECTION FOUR  
Considerations

EXHIBITS  
*Aggregate Data (Provided Separately)*



# Key Study Findings

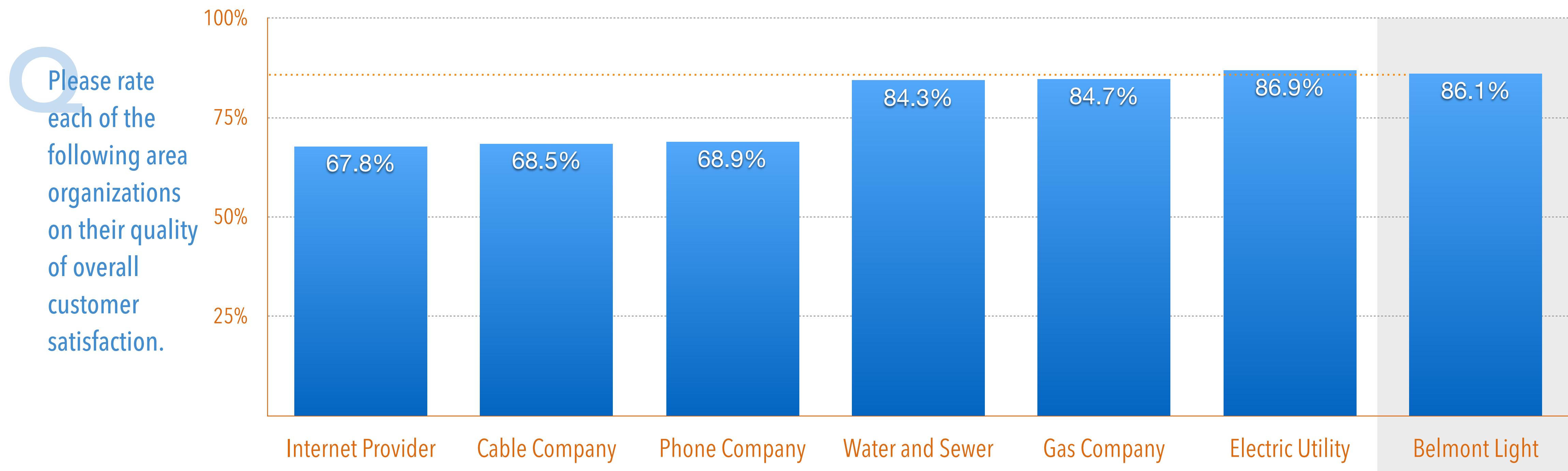
- ⦿ When compared to other utilities (gas, phone, water, and cable), respondents have a more positive perception of the service they receive from Belmont Light than other utilities.
- ⦿ Belmont Light performed well when rated on a series of eight (8) organizational characteristics as the average positive rating among residents was 86.1%. These ratings were driven by the reliable service of the utility as well as the helpfulness, knowledge base, and honesty of its staff.
- ⦿ Customer service personnel and field service personnel performed equally well, as 87.7% of customers were satisfied with the customer service representative who handled their call, while 86.5% were satisfied with the level of service they received from the field representative.
- ⦿ When compared to other municipal utilities in the area, customers reported a consistently favorable relationship with Belmont Light, as the utility scored a similar net positive rating (advocacy+loyalty+satisfaction) of 91.8%. However, it should be noted, specifically, that loyalty and advocacy rates were slightly lower for Belmont Light compared to other surveyed utilities.

# Key Study Findings, continued

- Customers lack awareness of Belmont Light's organizational governance, as 61.5% were not aware of the two governing boards (advisory + selectman) who oversee the actions of the utility. However, a strong plurality of customers reported a value in having community representatives overseeing the Utility.
- With most customers reporting the organizational characteristics of the Utility remain sound, the largest net improvements were recorded in the areas of being “progressive” (+14.0%), “reliable” (+13.2%), and “professional” (+12.9%).
- While the data indicates the rebranding initiative was well received, at the time of the 2015 survey 75.8% of customers had yet to experience the new Belmont Light website.
- More than two-thirds of customers were aware of the rate increase enacted in the previous year, and 70.3% maintain that Belmont Light is doing all that it could to keep customer prices low.

# Belmont Light surpasses most utilities

When compared to utilities, residential customers had the highest perception of the service provided by electric utilities. Further, the average ratings for Belmont Light as an organization were closely aligned with the perception of electric utilities overall.





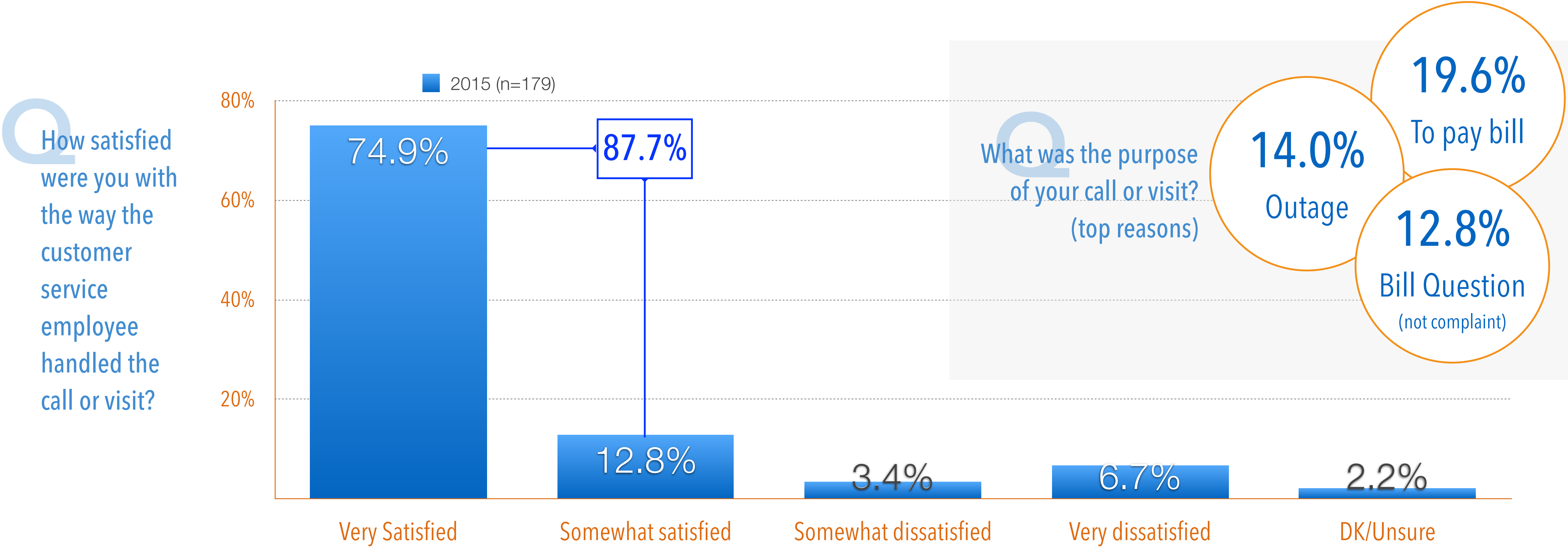
# Belmont Light service + staff drives ratings

While the reliability of Belmont Light’s service performed exceptionally well in 2015, the utility ultimately distinguished itself with high ratings captured for the honesty, integrity, and knowledge level of its staff. Understandably, electric rates were the lowest rated characteristic measured in 2015, with a segment of the customer base citing rates increased over the past year.

Item	2015 Commercial
Communication with customers	87.1%
Responsiveness to customers	86.8
Helping customers conserve electricity	79.1
Honesty/Integrity	90.3
Reliable service	94.9
Rates	74.6
Community service	85.5
Helpful and knowledgeable staff	90.7
Average (from previous slide)	86.1

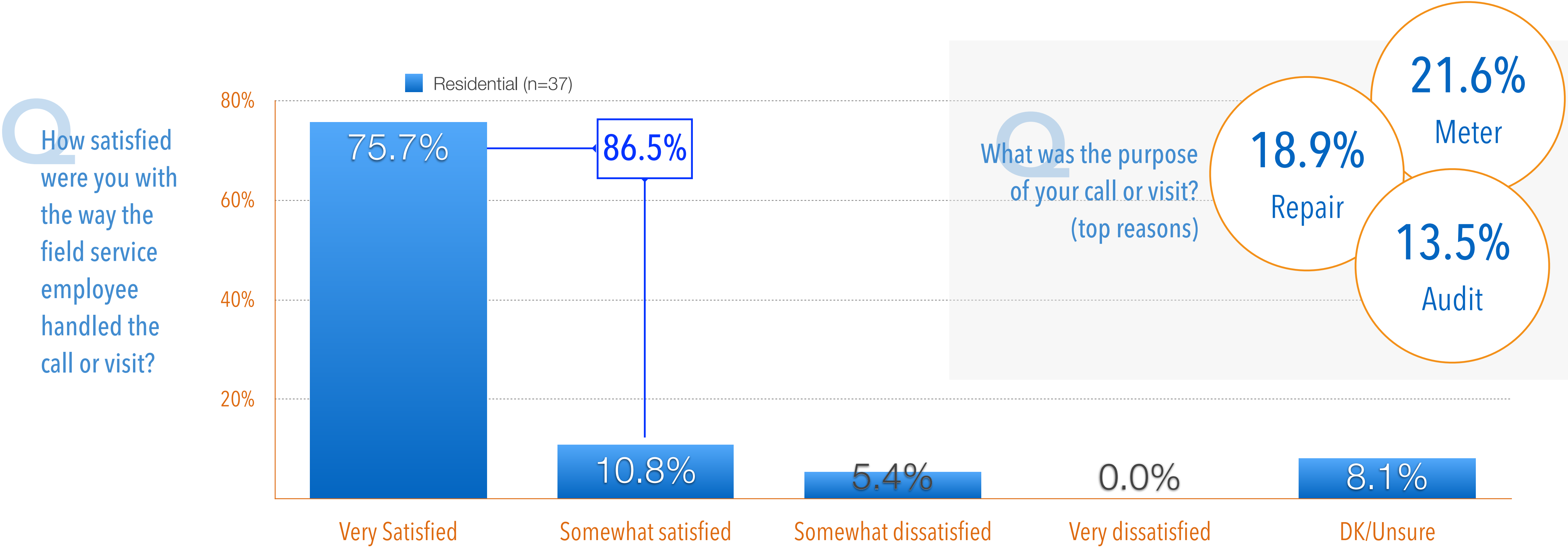
# Customer service staff strong

Among the 179 customers who contacted Belmont Light in the recent past, 87.7% were satisfied with the employee that handled the call or visit.



# Field service staff equally strong

Satisfaction rates were also high for field service representatives. In addition, no respondents reported to be “very dissatisfied” with the employee who handled the home visit.





# Bill pay made convenient, easy + clear

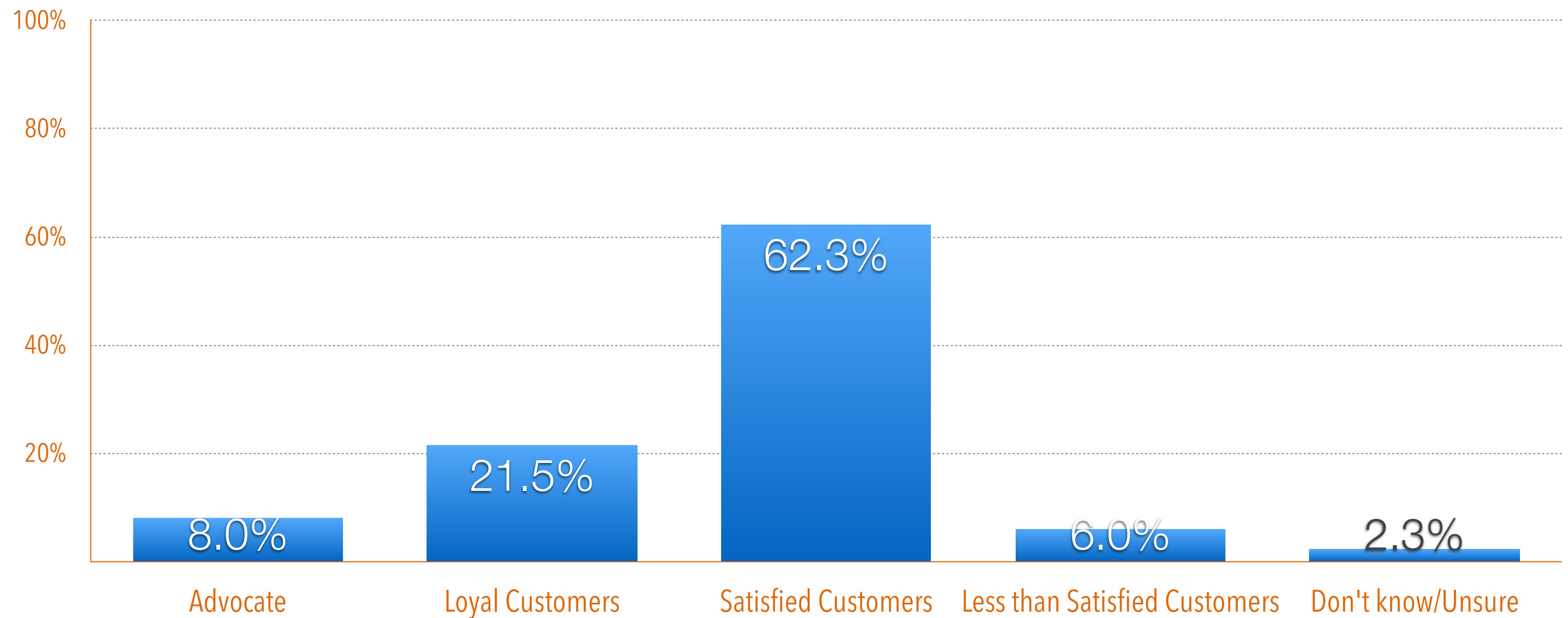
Bill payment is typically the primary reason for contact with the utility, thus streamlining this process is key to overall satisfaction. Receipt of the monthly Belmont Light bill, the ability to quickly process the information included, and provide payment to the utility were well received as they were clear, easy to understand, and convenient.



# Belmont Light loyalty and satisfaction high

Customers provided Belmont Light with a net positive rating (advocate + loyal + satisfied customers) of 91.8% in 2015, and only 6.0% of the customer base reported to be “less than satisfied.”

Q How would you describe your relationship with Belmont Municipal Light Department?

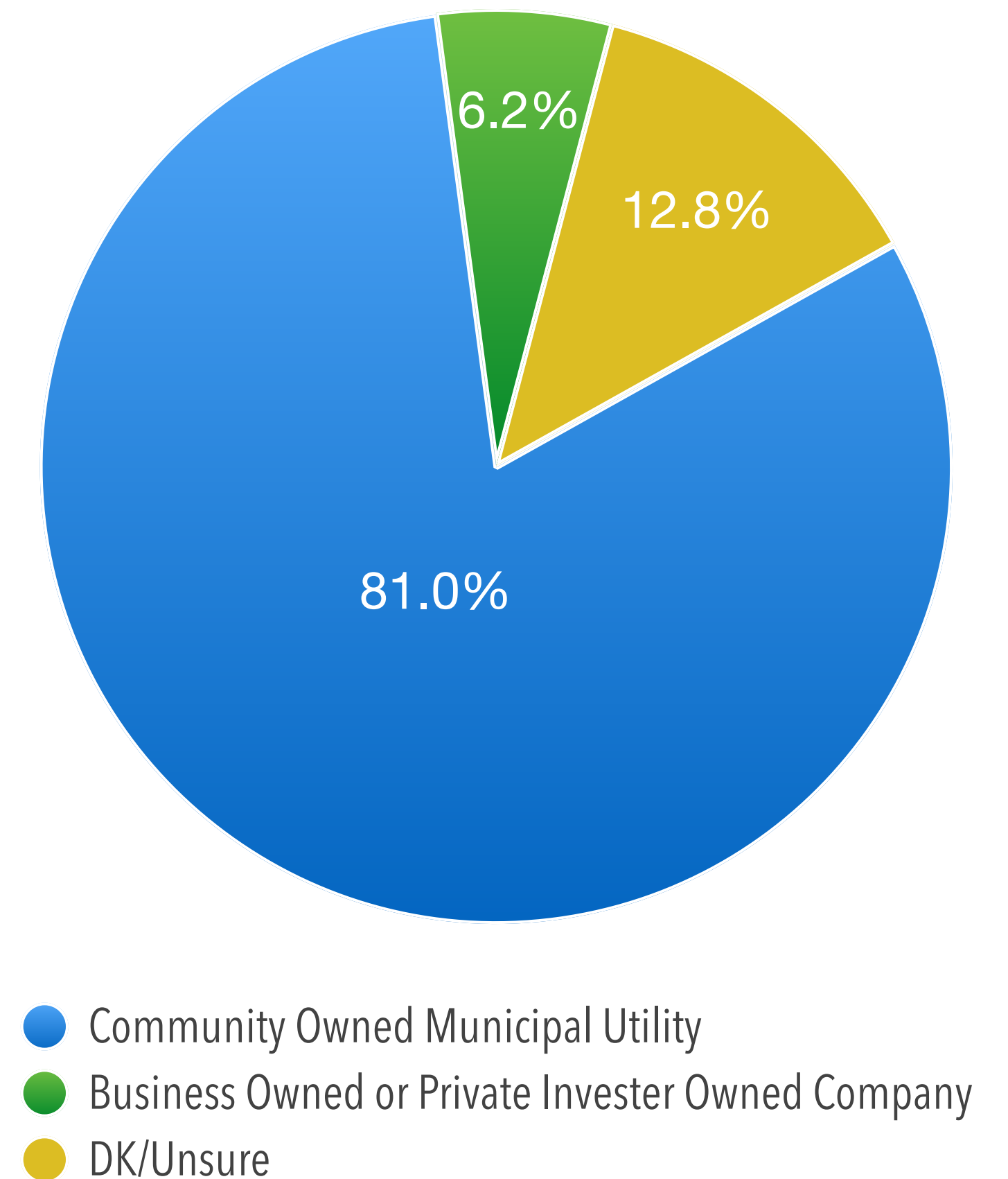


# Customers aware of ownership status...

While 81.0% of customers recognized Belmont Light as a municipal utility, the remaining 19.0% were unsure or incorrectly identified the organization as an investor owned utility.

This finding will be important to track moving forward. Belmont Light has served the community for well over 100 years, however the recent rebranding effort has moved the utility's strategic position away from its municipal roots. Future research should indicate whether or not the rebranding has had any significant effect on whether customers can properly identify the utility's ownership status.

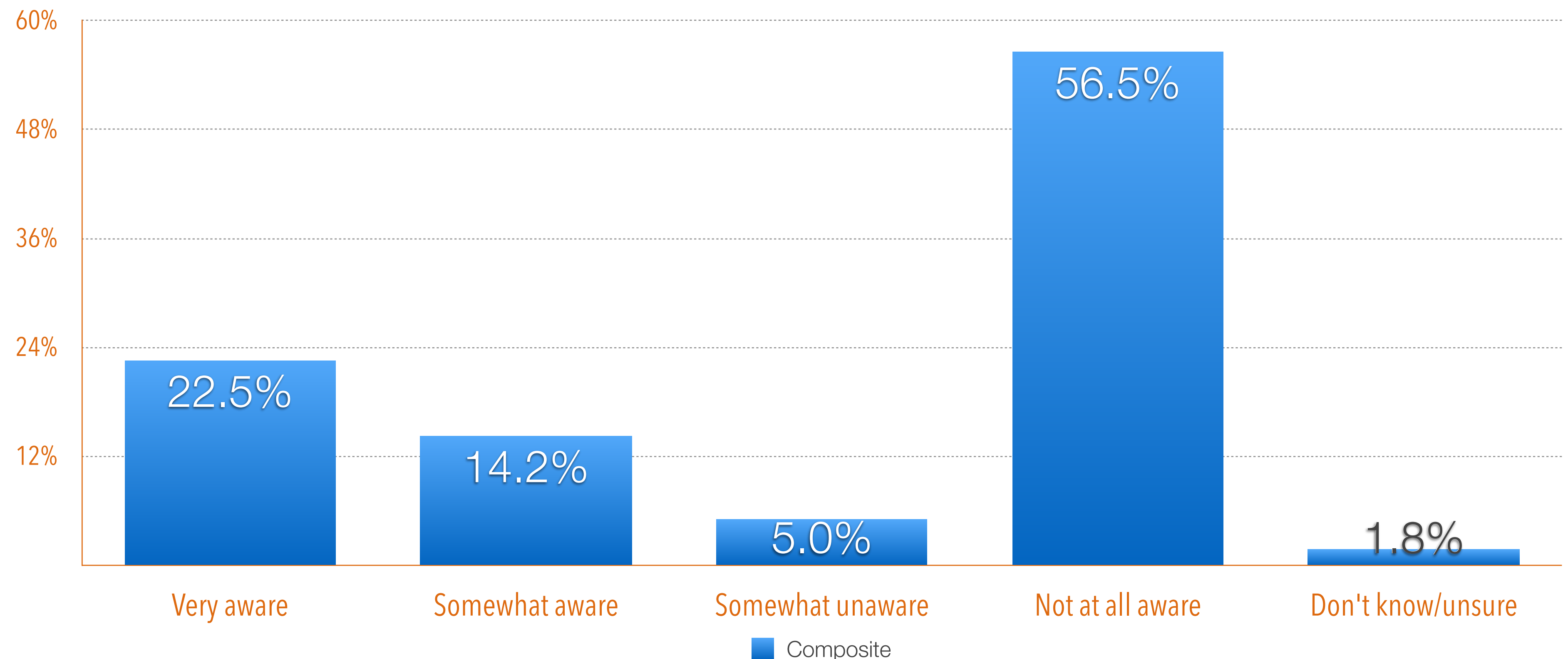
Q Would you say that your own electric company is a "Community Owned Municipal Utility" or a "Privately Owned Investor Company"?



# ... Yet unaware of Company governance

When asked to rate awareness of the different boards governing Belmont Light, 61.5% of customers were unaware of the appointed advisory board and the board of selectmen.

Q How aware are you that in addition to having a general manager, Belmont Light is governed by two boards; one appointed advisory board and one made up of the town selectmen?





# Belmont Light important to community

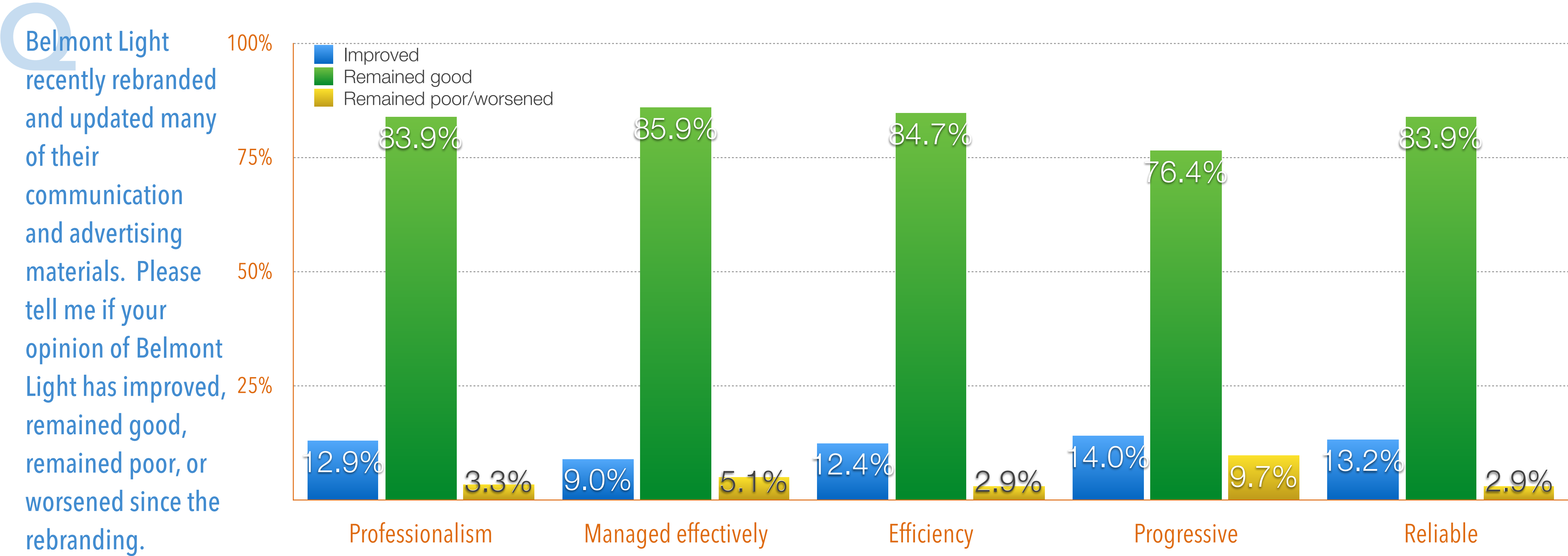
Despite the lack of awareness, customers were mixed on how Belmont Light should manage the “best practices” of the utility industry in relation with the “values” of the community’s goals.

Raising awareness of both the ownership structure and organizational governance, may aid customers in better understanding the functions the different boards perform, and how to most effectively leverage each to provide resources to the community.



# Belmont Light rebrand well received

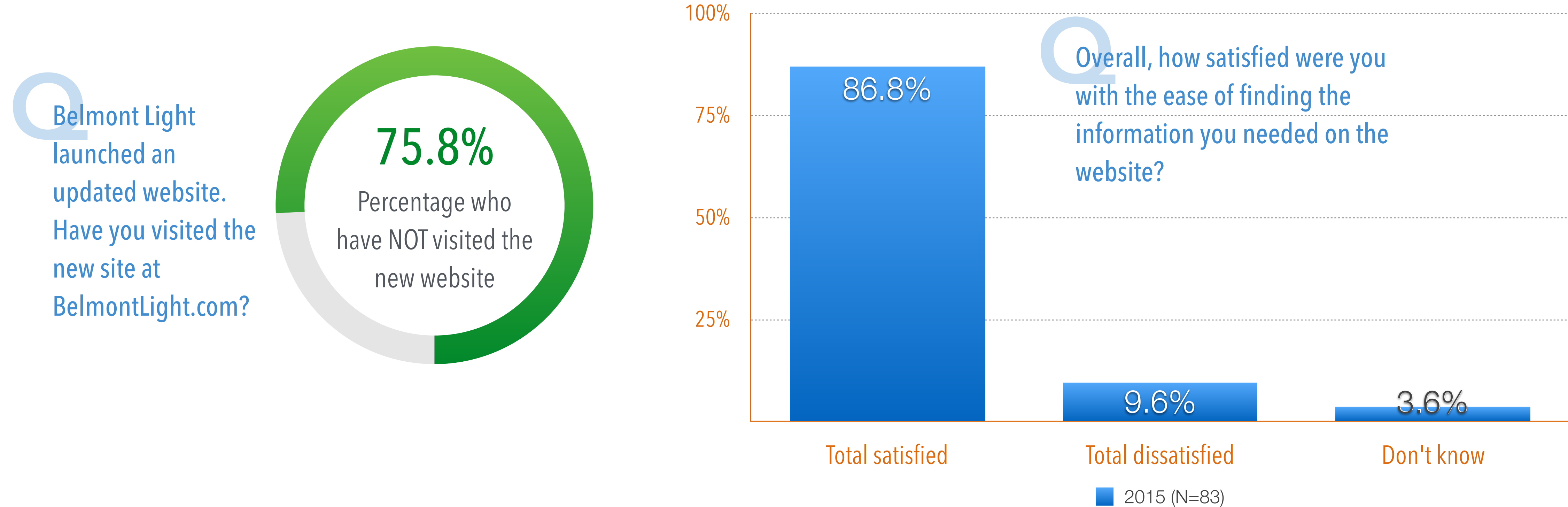
Across several organizational characteristics, customers reported Belmont Light “improved” or “remained good” after going through the rebranding process. Very promisingly, the largest improvements were recorded in customers perception of the “progressiveness” of the organization.



\*Numbers are reflective when “don’t know” responses were removed from the data.

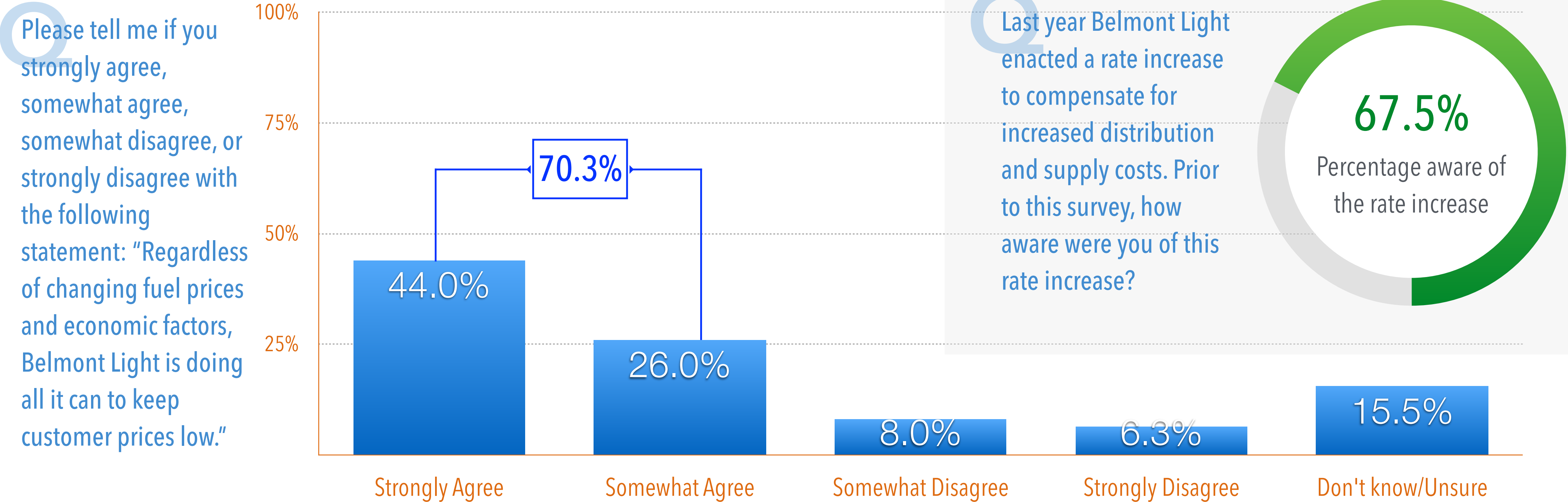
# Customers have not visited new website

Although most customers surveyed in 2015 had not yet visited Belmont Light's new website, among those who had visited the new site, 86.8% were satisfied with the ease of finding information needed on the site.



# Customers aware + accept rate increase

Most 2015 customers were aware of the rate increase enacted in the previous year by Belmont Light. Despite that rate increase, 70.3% of respondents continued to believe Belmont Light was doing all it could to continue to keep rates low.





# Opportunities to increase EE participation

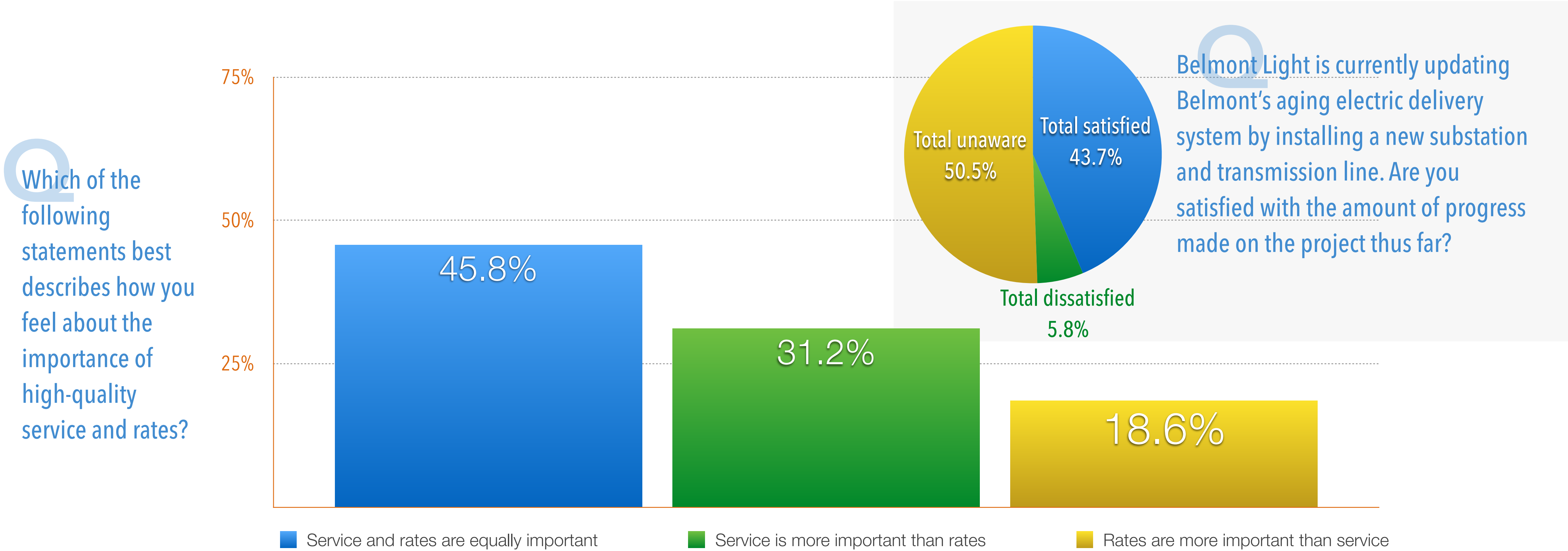
Raising involvement in energy efficiency and conservation programs could help offset high energy costs for some customers. More than half of customers reported future plans to participate in rebates for energy efficient light bulbs or energy efficient appliances. Customers participating in these programs may provide the necessary “jumping-off-point” for raising awareness of newer programs such as the Energy Efficiency Grant program, Green Choice Program, and seminars.

## 2015 Composite

	Yes, and will in future	No, but plans to in future	Yes, but won't in future	No, no plans for future	Not aware of program
Distributing of energy efficient light bulbs	46.0%	9.5%	9.5%	15.0%	17.8%
Rebates on energy efficient appliances	40.8	18.5	10.8	14.5	13.0
No cost home energy audit services on energy efficiency	20.0	19.8	14.5	26.3	14.5
NEW & limited Energy Efficiency Grant program for weatherization & heating / cooling systems	10.8	16.3	8.0	34.5	26.5
Green Choice Program	7.0	11.8	4.3	25.5	42.3
Seminars and presentations on reducing electricity costs and consumption	6.3	10.8	3.5	44.0	30.5

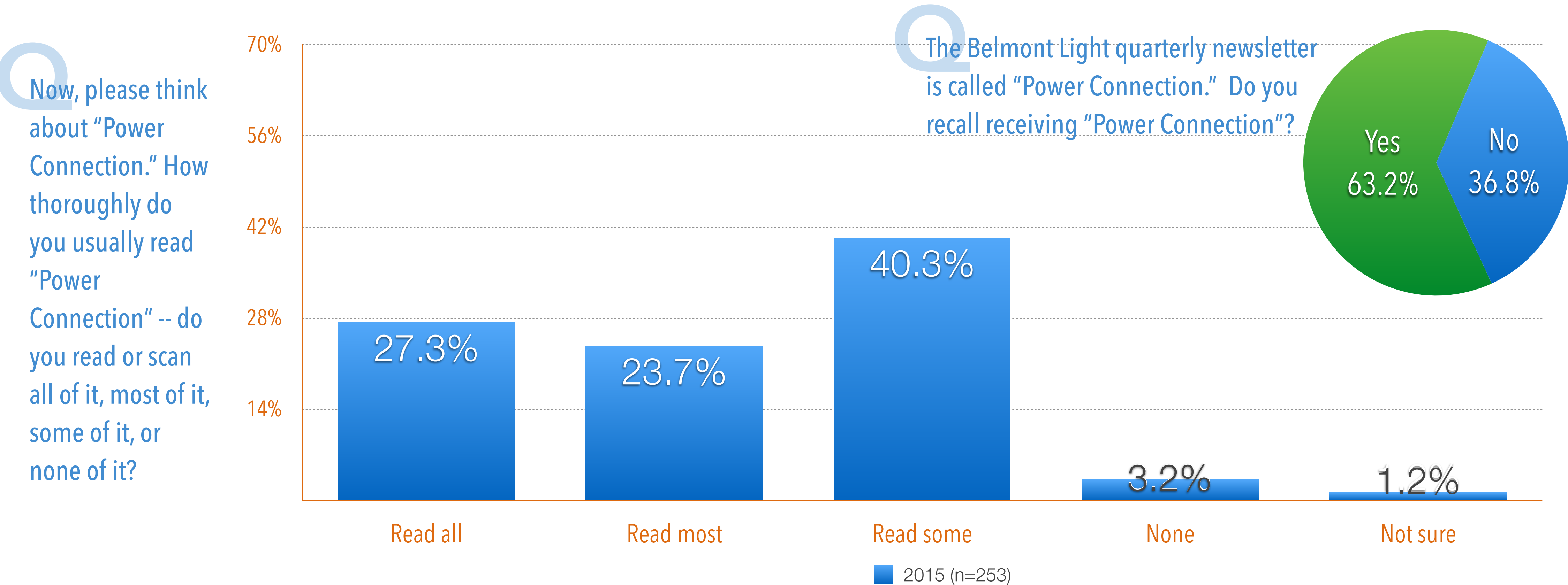
# Rates and service equally important

Most respondents maintain that rates and reliable service were equally important in a utility, with another segment of the customer base slightly favoring service at the sacrifice of rates. Continuing to relay information regarding Belmont Light’s improvements to electric delivery system (i.e., new substation and transmission line) will promote the utility’s commitment to reliable service.



# Customers Recall "Power Connection"

The "Power Connection" newsletter remains a viable option for communicating with customers, as 63.2% of residents recalled receiving the newsletter. Among those individuals, over 90% reported reading at least "some" of the newsletter.

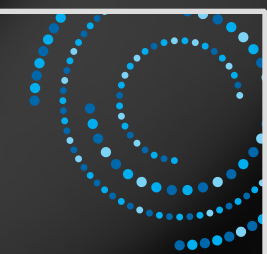


SECTION ONE  
About GreatBlue

SECTION TWO  
Project Overview

SECTION THREE  
Key Study Findings

SECTION FOUR  
**Considerations**



EXHIBITS  
*Aggregate Data (Provided Separately)*



# Considerations

## Findings Driving Considerations



- Belmont Light performed in-line with its utility peers across a multitude of topics including customer service and field service. With over 100 years of serving the community combined with the recent organizational changes, this time may serve to conduct company-wide on boarding to recognize the performance of staff to-date and set expectations for the future.
- The rebranding initiative was well received by those customers who were aware of the efforts. In addition, those customers who had the opportunity to visit the new website liked the improvements. This effort may present the opportunity to more effectively promote the utility's new programs (such as the new substation and energy transmission line), and leverage the progressive feel of the new brand into building and retaining Company loyalty.

# Considerations, continued

- ⦿ As the new brand begins to resonate with customers, packaging additional efforts within the branding initiative such as infrastructure improvements or community service projects will continue to promote the improvement of the utility. Furthermore, this may also serve to position necessary rate increases more positively when and if they are needed.
- ⦿ As the “Power Connection” quarterly newsletter is still a well received source of information for customers, Belmont Light may wish to consider temporarily increasing circulation or providing additional one-pagers with the look of the newsletter. This could provide the necessary bridge to further promote the new brand throughout the customer base while increasing readership.
- ⦿ Follow-up tracking research in early 2016 may be valuable to gain data points on progress of the branding initiative and progress of the new substation and transmission line.
- ⦿ Opportunities exist to provide additional promotional materials for Belmont Light’s newer energy efficiency offerings. Leveraging the results of customers who previously engaged in such programs with incentives to explore offerings for weatherization or the Green Choice program, may build a referral cultural around these resources.



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