

Straight Talk with PG&E: Farah Pelayo

Episode 5: Bill management tools and what impacts your bill

- Hey, everyone. Welcome back to Straight Talk with PG&E. I'm Tatiana Manning, senior program manager at PG&E, and I also support our voice of a customer team. Today, we're gonna talk about three bill management tools that can help you with your bills. To help us learn about these great tools, I have Farah Pelayo from our small business engagement team.

- Hey, Tati. Thank you for having me.

- So Farah, small businesses can have their usage and bills affected from things like rate changes, operational shifts, and even the weather can impact them. What bill management tools exist for our customers?

- Yeah, we have our budget billing program, and what budget billing is it allows a customer to get more control of their bills. So the budget billing program averages the customer's energy costs from the last 12 months, and then that's what allows us to determine a monthly bill. So with that, the customer will be paying a monthly bill of that predictable amount for the next four months. And the cool thing about this program is that if the customer does not agree with that monthly bill amount or cost, they can actually unenroll from the program.

- It kinda helps with the customer's bill over time, so there's no huge swings in the summer or the winter,

- Yes.

- which is pretty neat. That's awesome. What's the second resource that you have customers look into?

- One of our other resources that a lot of our customers are not aware of is our payment arrangements. Also, you know, payment extension. So not a lot of times do our customers need a payment arrangement. Sometimes they just need a payment extension. So they're actually able to log into our website or even contact our business center and they're able to request a payment arrangement and break down their amount that's owed. You know, maybe that's a potential amount that came from like a high bill, whether it was from the winter, summer, and they can break it up into

payments or they can just simply request an extension by calling in or logging into their online account and setting that up.

- That's pretty neat. I'm pretty sure, like you said, there's not a lot of customers know that you can actually just request an extension or even split up your actual higher bill over a few months. Okay, so we learned tips to help our customers stay on top of their payments, but where do I even go to know how much energy and money my business is using each month if I'm a customer?

- We do have our cost and usage tool, and within that tool, our customers are able to track their usage day by day, hour by hour, and they're able to determine at what hour, what day is it that they're utilizing the most energy, and then they're able to maybe change the way that they're using that electric appliance during their operational shift, which will definitely help our customers offset peak bills, whether it's during high winter heating or summer air conditioning months.

- That makes perfect sense. So we have a tool that the customers can actually utilize and visualize to see what time of day their actual energy is being utilized the most, and that can help them shift things a little bit if possible.

- Yes, and it's pretty neat. You actually have where you're able to hover over the usage itself and then you're able to use the dropdown and it can provide you the dollar amount or you can just simply verify how many kilowatts you're using per hour.

- Thank you so much for joining us today, Farah, and sharing some helpful tools and tips.

- Thank you for having me, Tati. It's always a pleasure to see you.

- Stay tuned for upcoming episodes of Straight Talk with PG&E where we will share more helpful tips and resources as well as programs that can help our business customers save energy and money. And be sure to check out our show notes where we will link all the tools and programs mentioned on today's episode. You can learn more at pg.com/straighttalk. Talk to you all soon.