

Appendix C: Innovations considered in chapter 2 analysis

Year innovation introduced	Type of retailer that introduced it	Innovation description
2014	Non-integrated retailer	Tailored offerings / sub-brands for demographic needs.
2014	Non-integrated retailer	Prompt payment discounts.
2014	Gentailer	New customer billing and service system as part of a multi-year programme for a new information technology system that replaces 20 old systems, to enable enhancing customer service.
2014	Gentailer	A new customer website, to improve the ease by which customers can interact online.
2014	Gentailer	Free online energy management service, that puts customers in control of their electricity, providing transparency to each customer's choices for electricity use and information to help them save energy by understanding their usage patterns.
2014	Gentailer	Proactively calling customers who have identified themselves as 'vulnerable customers' to discuss their situations and payment options. One payment option is 'level pay' which allows customers to pay the same amount each month on their electricity bills, making budgeting more manageable.
2014	Gentailer	Offering to buy back 'unused' solar.
2014	Gentailer	Launched New Zealand's first electricity self-service smart phone app.
2015	Non-integrated retailer	Began to leverage the capabilities of smart meters in 2015, and used the information gathered from smart meters to determine the exact purchase of electricity from wholesalers with the intent of passing on those savings to its customers.
2015	Non-integrated retailer	Cross-customer subsidy: can 'gift' to other customers.
2015	Non-integrated retailer	Free hour of power.
2015	Gentailer	Online customer portal upgraded; enables customers with smart meters to see their energy use over the day, to pay online and to set up personalised alerts to help them manage their power use and costs.
2016	Non-integrated retailer	World's first electricity retailer to pass through wholesale prices to the mass market.
2016	Non-integrated retailer	Flat pricing at all times for predictability.
2016	Non-integrated retailer	Tariff variation (i.e. Time of Use Plans). Slots of discounted power, with different tariffs applying at different times, to incentivise moving electricity demand off-peak.
2016	Gentailer	Launched two mobile apps and improved the website offering, including the ability to pay online.

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2016	Gentailer	Addressed the issue of customer debt by significantly improved debt management processes.
2016	Gentailer	Introduced health check calls to confirm whether customers are on the energy plan that best suits their circumstances.
2016	Gentailer	Introduced initiative which enables new customers to choose when they'd like to be rewarded with an account credit.
2016	Gentailer	Introduced innovative new products such as Home and Bach Plans.
2016	Gentailer	Recognised the needs of existing customers, offering them new services and rewarding their loyalty with giveaways. During the financial year gifted more than 11.5 million Fly Buys points to customers.
2016	Gentailer	Offered customers with electric vehicles a 20% discount off overnight electricity as part of efforts to promote uptake of EVs and to encourage off-peak charging.
2016	Gentailer	Offered Free Power Days to reward customers.
2016	Gentailer	Began a partnership with accounting software company Xero, allowing business customers to receive invoices directly into their Xero accounting systems.
2017	Gentailer	Partnered with Air New Zealand to offer customers Airpoints Dollars.
2017	Gentailer	Made statements easier to understand and more useful for customers by simplifying the layout; and send customers emails that include tips to control energy usage, information about rewards, and support to help them understand their first statement after they have joined.
2017	Gentailer	Did an annual check on the energy usage of those residential customers who are not on fixed-term plans. If a customer could be better off switching from a low-user to standard-user plan (or vice versa) they let them know and automatically changed them over.
2018	Gentailer	Rollout of the transformation programme to deliver operational efficiencies by empowering the customer team to remove bottlenecks, reduce operating costs and react to market opportunities.
2018	Gentailer	Proactive approach to the debt collection cycle. If customers do get into debt, they have a team who proactively works with customers to manage their outstanding bills before they get too big.
2018	Gentailer	Launched the option of weekly or fortnightly payment options that align with customers salary and wages cycles to help with budgeting and make it easier for customers to manage their finances.
2018	Gentailer	Began PrePay, enabling consumers to pay for their electricity upfront – similar to approaches to mobile phone billing.

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2018	Gentailer	Created an unprecedented web and mobile insights tool that unlocks customers' personal energy use, giving them the ability to understand and act on it. The app's features give customers daily electricity forecasts, showing the cost of electricity they are likely to use that day, usage breakdowns showing their home's heating, hot water and 'always on' costs.
2018	Gentailer	Launched a brand targeting price-sensitive customers wanting simplified, no-frills services.
2018	Gentailer	Launched a tool giving real-time visibility of energy assets for commercial and Industrial customers. Gives customers their very own energy dashboard, which charts real-time energy consumption levels and delivers sophisticated reports, statistical analysis and alerts that capture potential energy savings. It can also immediately notify customers of electrical equipment failure and identify energy consumption by site.
2018	Gentailer	New EV pricing plans, which provide discounted rates overnight for customers.
2018	Gentailer	Launched initiative which allows customers to contribute to a selected charity.
2018	Gentailer	Launched initiative which is designed for those customers who are looking for more traditional set-and-forget arrangements, and tenure rewards.
2018	Gentailer	Structurally separated the software development arm to create a new organisation to improve its customer experience significantly, allowing them to respond to customers' needs and deliver products to market faster.
2019	Gentailer	Accelerated plans to remove prompt payment discounts and are replacing them with simple plans such as existing Basic Plan or guaranteed discounts. Avoid customers getting into debt, and to intervene early if they do.
2019	Gentailer	Made it easier for customers to budget for their power with new billing options and PrePay. Customers now have the option to pay their bills weekly, fortnightly, or monthly to match their wage or salary cycles.
2019	Gentailer	Partnered with other energy companies, community organisations and the government to launch a free in-home mentoring service helping families at highest risk of energy hardship to reduce electricity costs and live in warmer homes.
2019	Gentailer	Launched new and improved mobile app in November 2018.
2019	Gentailer	Increasing self-service options with mobile app, My Account and online services, and continued to enhance these services with added features for customers to manage their payments, and simplified how customers join, add new products, and inform about moving home.
2019	Gentailer	Installed nearly 2,000 energy management connections into customer sites nationwide; with an internet of things sensor.

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2019	Gentailer	Launched LiveChat which allows customers to chat via the website. LiveChat users are connected with an online agent, bypassing queue wait times when calling.
2019	Gentailer	Began a tool that allows customers to see their carbon emissions from electricity generation in real time.
2019	Gentailer	Launched a new mobile app. Through the app, customers can track their daily usage and pay their account. They can also earn rewards by completing fun challenges and can then use these to get money off their bill or redeem them for Airpoints Dollars.
2020	Gentailer	Offered bundle with broadband: customers get discounts by getting one bill for broadband, electricity and gas, or broadband and gas.
2020	Gentailer	Rewards: joined the AA SmartFuel (AASF) scheme in 2017 so customers can sign up to plans that give them fuel discounts.
2020	Gentailer	Introduced 'take a month off': customers can choose any month of the year to waive their entire energy bill for that month.
2020	Gentailer	Conducted a trial which involved overnight EV recharging at home, which is not only the most affordable time, but also has the least emissions.
2020	Gentailer	Piloted a New Zealand first 'charge anywhere' option. This allows customers to recharge their car at any public recharging station and have it billed to their account. It is designed to solve range anxiety and the cost of public charging that some EV owners are concerned about.
2021	Gentailer	Self-service refunds: Customers can 'self-serve' refunds through our apps and website without having to call.
2021	Gentailer	Faster CSR journeys: new digital journeys for Customer Service Representatives have reduced the average handling time for customers looking to join, or change their account to a new address
2021	Gentailer	Improved billing emails: made bills easier to understand and highlighted important information.
2021	Gentailer	Online messaging: introduced new customer service channels using Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. These instant messaging tools help respond faster by talking customers through issues in real time; and are fully integrated with the call centre platform.
2021	Gentailer	A New Zealand first: started rolling out smart meters for reticulated gas customers in May, after two trials earlier in the year. Customers are able to see their daily usage and will have full visibility across all their energy use.
2021	Gentailer	Delivered a number of initiatives to help better support customers experiencing hardship.
2022	Gentailer	Introduced Good Nights plan offering three hours of free night-time power to all customers.

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2022	Gentailer	Introduced 'Fourth Trimester' offering three months of free power to more than 1,000 families with newborns.
2022	Gentailer	Introduced a Voice of the Customer programme using new technology to get faster and more detailed insights from customer interactions and to help uncover opportunities for experience improvements.
2022	Gentailer	Helped 3,000 customers who were experiencing financial hardship by crediting their accounts. The credits largely helped customers who were struggling because of Covid-19. Their team have discretion to credit customers, and to determine the size of each credit based on the customer's circumstances.
2022	Gentailer	Established an Energy Wellbeing Team to work with customers, community groups and industry to address the complex challenges of energy wellbeing, and provide a raft of support and options for existing and prospective customers who are struggling.
2022	Gentailer	Refreshed customer management platform: customers can now open the app and straight away understand what is happening and to then click through for more details, including 3D views of properties that gives a summary, which they can then they can deep dive into.
2022	Non-integrated retailer	Offer customers access to solar power without need for physical panels. Some households could soon have solar power in their homes without having any physical panels on their roof, where customers can have a so-called virtual solar rooftop.
2023	Gentailer	Optimised its inbound channel mix by transitioning from a high-cost voice / email service model to an efficient self-service/live chat customer model.
Year unknown	Non-integrated retailer	First carbon tracker app.
Year unknown	Non-integrated retailer	First retailer in New Zealand to pass through all distribution price signals.
Year unknown	Non-integrated retailer	Pricing to devices.
Year unknown	Non-integrated retailer	EV services: offering a full wraparound service from advice to charging, finance to purchasing.
Year unknown	Non-integrated retailer	Specific solar buy-back rates.
Year unknown	Non-integrated retailer	Offered an assets / DER package, including home battery provision, including financing.