Ideas for companies to make things better for people with cognitive disabilities

Easy English Report
This is a report with information about the project we did

Who wrote this report?

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In this report **hard words** are in **bold**

You can find the meaning of hard words at the end of the report
About the project

We are researchers

We work at the University of Melbourne

We worked with a group of companies who sell telephone and internet, electricity, gas and water services

- Telstra
- AGL
- Energy Australia
- Origin Energy
- City West Water
- South East Water and
- Yarra Valley Water
Companies are not very good at helping people with cognitive disabilities. We wanted to make a list of ideas. They might help companies make things better for people with cognitive disabilities. We also got extra help from:

- lawyers
- people with disabilities
Our list of ideas

We made a list of ideas

Our top five ideas were

1. **Companies** should ask all **customers** if they want someone to help them

2. **Companies** should help **customers** make their own decisions, if that’s what they want
3. When a person from a **company** is talking to a **customer**, it is important to speak clearly and don’t rush.

4. **Companies** should ask all **customers** if they use the internet.

5. **Companies** should teach all their workers how to help **customers** with **cognitive disabilities**.
Focus Groups

We wanted to find out what some people with cognitive disabilities thought about our ideas.

We wanted to know:

- if they thought our ideas were good or bad
- if they had any other ideas

We had 2 focus groups.
Lots of people in the focus groups said they had problems with phone, internet, gas, electricity and water companies.

They said they get phone calls that they don’t want.

People on the phone are confusing or pushy.

Some people said it is also hard to get help when you call companies on the phone.

People in the focus groups said companies should remember that some people don’t have a mobile phone or internet.
Some people don’t like using the internet to pay their bills.

People in the focus groups agreed with our ideas for making bills easier to read by using:

- different colours
- pictures

They liked our idea to ask everyone if they want to list a support person on their account.

The support person can ring up to ask questions or pay bills for you.
Some people did not like telling a **company** they have a disability

We told everyone our idea that **companies** should ask every **customer** if they want some help or support

The people in the **focus groups** said this would be better than asking about someone's disability

Some people liked it better if they could deal with **companies** in person, by

- going into a shop
- going to a ‘Bring Your Bills’ day
After the focus groups

We changed our list of ideas based on what people said in the focus groups.

We also talked to the group of lawyers and people with disabilities about our list of ideas.

You can see our final top five tips at the end of the report.

We then gave our list of ideas to the companies.

We will now keep working with them to help them make changes.
Hard words

people with cognitive disabilities mean people who sometimes find it hard to

- learn
- concentrate
- remember
- communicate
- make decisions

company

A group of people who sell a product or service
**customer**
A person who buys something from a company

**focus group**
A group of people who give their ideas on a problem

**lawyer**
A person who helps people who have problems with the law

**researchers** look for answers to problems
support person is someone you trust to help you

Special thanks to Intellectual Disability Rights Service (‘IDRS’)

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