

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Transforming Utility Customer Experiences

Increase satisfaction and retention by elevating your CX above competitors



Protect your market share with greater satisfaction



Understand and anticipate customer wants and needs



Reach customers everywhere with omnichannel communications



Harness data insights to reduce churn and increase lifetime value

The utilities sector has a problem: the experiences they provide their customers are outdated, unintuitive, and frustrating. Previously, all everyone wanted from their providers was dependable service, clear billing, and a good price. These days the bar has been raised, and many companies are lagging behind.

“The industry average [Customer Experience] score was only 64.4 points, which is within the poor category. That’s the second-lowest score we measured...”

- Forrester¹

Utility deregulation is a growing trend across the world, opening the door to new players. That means that there’s a significant risk of smaller, nimble newcomers invading your market and luring away your customers with a more user-friendly alternative. Studies show that roughly 65% of consumers will switch to a competitor after just 1-2 poor experiences. That percentage increases to 88% after 3 poor experiences.²

¹ Forrester, “The US Utilities Customer Experience Index, 2020”

² “Future of the Contact Center: A Forecast” – Brian Cantor

At the same time, this dissatisfaction is also a big opportunity. Even if your market share isn't in danger, delivering better experiences can dramatically increase customer satisfaction, leading to greater retention, upsell/cross sell opportunities, and compliance with guidelines to reduce strain on resources/infrastructure. The same Forrester report that gives the utilities industry a poor CX score also says:

"Out of customers who feel happy, an 81% majority will advocate for a utility and 63% plan to add optional services."

Now's the time to implement customer experience solutions to make your customers happier. With the right tools, you can even do it while simplifying workflows to free up staff and resources—serious win-win for everyone.

Meet your customers where they are

Energy companies have a public service mission and must inform their customers about an outage or any other exceptional circumstances. Information availability is critical. However, your customer base is changing. Not from one demographic to another, but splitting from basic ratepayers into different strata of engagement.

Some customers still just want to pay their bills and enjoy reliable service, but others are looking to connect, communicate, and participate at a much higher level. With a widespread focus on sustainability, they want to get more valuable information, such as consumption advice, in depth analysis, etc. They want to discuss their bill on WhatsApp, track their usage via your website in real time, and adapt their habits to balance what they want to do with what they want to pay (e.g. moving draws on the system to periods of lower demand).

If you're in the energy business, they may want to implement solar panels and smart metering to get credits back from the grid, or even trade power they generate to their peers.

How do you serve such a disparate group of customers ranging from simple ratepayers to elite power users? Your company needs to become many things to many people without skipping a beat. The only sustainable answer is to integrate solutions that allow you to deliver automated personalization, across channels ("omnichannel"), at scale.

Listen to improve

Call volumes have spiked during the pandemic. The UK reported a 44% increase. Lockdowns and staffing restrictions have made the problem even worse. When demand soars so significantly, responding to each individual customer in a way that makes them feel heard and respected becomes far more difficult.

The contact center can be so much more than a tool for addressing customer concerns—it can be an incredibly powerful window into the people who buy your product—what they like, what they don't, what they're looking for.

Imagine your contact center not only providing guidance to your agents to help them perform better, but also passing Voice of the Customer insights to the rest of your organization. If you can speak to customer concerns before they pick up the phone by refining the rest of the customer journey, call volumes go down while customer satisfaction goes up. That's just the beginning—sentiment analysis and analytics from the contact center can deliver major dividends to other staff.

Customer Experience Platform for Utilities

"After looking at other communication packages on the market, we chose OpenText Exstream because it allows us to effectively communicate with our customers, and gives us a competitive advantage."

Matt Connor
Technical Consultant
E.ON

Watch the video

Make sense of the noise

With new privacy regulations being issued by governments and new policies implemented by industry leaders like Google and Apple, the age of easy access to third-party data is coming to an end. This makes first-party data, collected from your customers with their consent, crucial.

However, having that data isn't enough—it quickly becomes a torrent of information and making sense of it is a serious challenge. Data you can see is data you can act on. You need solutions to distribute it amongst departments with secure, simplified governance, and mine it with AI and analytics for crucial insights. Done right, you'll know when customers are considering leaving you before they go, and when someone's primed for an upsell/cross sell offer.

Doing it all efficiently

Implementing these changes can be an incredibly powerful shot in the arm to your acquisition and retention efforts. The right digital experience platform will pair those powerful new tools with efficiency boosts that free up the resources you need to use them.

The OpenText Experience Platform allows utility companies to manage experiences across the entire customer journey through all channels: websites, customer portals, transactional communications, self-service solutions, and call centers. It is an integrated platform with best of breed capabilities for web content management, customer communications, and customer service management, Voice of the Customer Analysis, Communication Orchestration, and Customer audience and profile management. As a modular solution, Experience Platform allows organizations to build and integrate with their existing technology stack to achieve their goals.

Many of the world's most powerful enterprises utilize OpenText digital experience solutions in their work to attract, engage, and keep their customers. 19 of the world's top 20 energy & utility companies rely on OpenText for mission-critical operations across business units and departments.

About OpenText

OpenText, The Information Company, enables organizations to gain insight through market leading information management solutions, on-premises or in the cloud. For more information about OpenText (NASDAQ: OTEX, TSX: OTEX) visit: opentext.com.

Connect with us:

- [OpenText CEO Mark Barrenechea's blog](#)
- [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#)