A PLAYBOOK
FOR BUILDING A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE 2.0 PLATFORM

bidgely

According to the Harvard Business Review Analytic Services Survey, 62 percent of utilities say that 'improving customer experience' is their top business priority. Industry executives agree that customer engagement, satisfaction, and trust are the foundation for achieving the full range of future-ready goals — from decarbonization to resiliency.

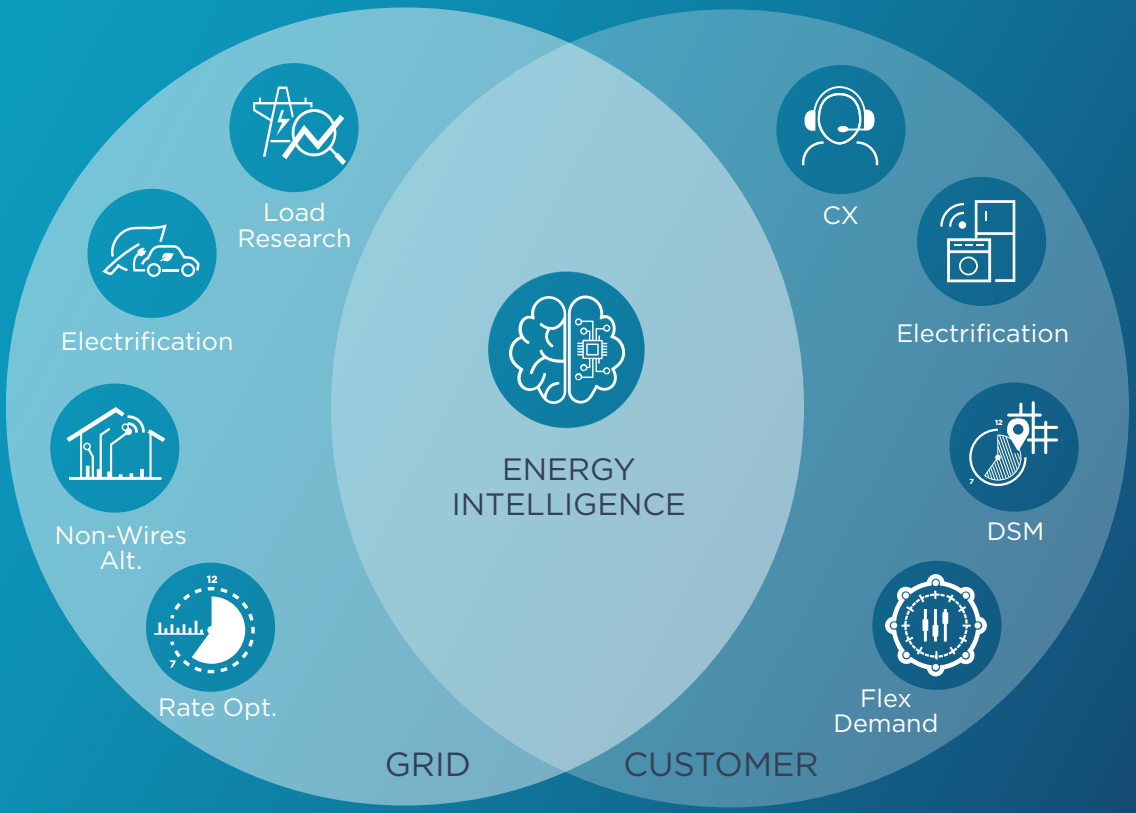
To achieve these goals, survey respondents identified that the top two means by which they plan to support their CX strategies are: 1) investing in digital engagement and 2) integrating customer data with systems utility-wide as a single source of truth.

This thinking represents a shift from the customer experience mindset of decades past. Legacy approaches that relied upon generalized targeting based on traditional demographics, mass marketing campaigns, customer input for detailed information and table-stakes conveniences like automated bill pay and mobile account access. Not only do these antiquated methods fail to lift CX, in many cases, they are negatively received by consumers and cause CX to decline.

Future-ready, data-driven and digitally sophisticated customer engagement looks quite different.

From the perspective of today's consumers, achieving meaningful and elevated CX improvement requires personalized, highly-targeted and seamless experiences across devices and channels as a prerequisite.

This is where establishing an organization-wide data analytics foundation comes in.

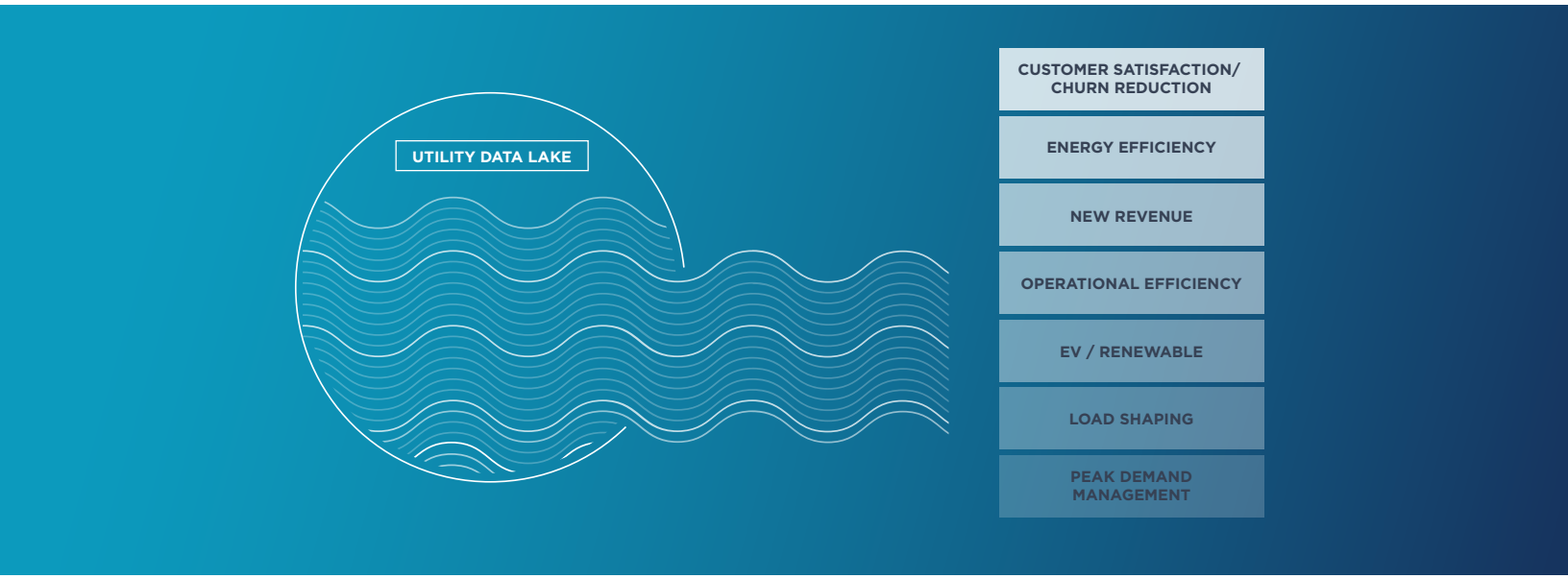


In the energy landscape of the future, the historically separate grid and customer operations will increasingly overlap, with customers become active partners in energy management. Energy intelligence that connects the two will be essential to planning, maintaining and managing the future customer-centric grid.

Utilities committed to improving customer experience have embraced household energy use data as a means to understand their customers at an individual level in near real-time. What is happening in their home today? How are their appliances performing? What energy decisions are they making? How is their current lifestyle impacting their energy use? Smart meter data is an incredibly accurate proxy for the customer's voice and can inform every customer touchpoint across the organization, at every stage of the customer journey.

Customer experience stems in large part from relevancy — which could be defined as the art and science of connecting with the right person at the right time with the right message and channel.

Relevancy can be achieved by accurately and efficiently collecting energy use data from customers, extracting actionable insights from that data, and using those insights to inform relevant, omnichannel (digital+paper+voice) engagement opportunities. The faster these processes are executed, the greater the progress that can be achieved toward boosting customer experience, increasing CSAT, increasing program participation, and helping customers better manage their energy bills while also lowering the cost to serve.



By contrast, failure to invest in data-driven relevancy results in irrelevant and inaccurate insights that negatively impact customer experience, CSAT, call-in volume, and overall cost to serve — putting customer relationships at risk.

The challenge lies in determining the optimal technology solution to enable these data-driven customer experience improvements. The CX space is crowded with competing approaches, each promising to boost utility-customer relationships. We've developed this Building a CX Platform Playbook to provide 10 practical criteria utilities can use when comparing and evaluating their options and ensure their solutions deliver data-driven relevancy.

Criteria 1: Advanced Disaggregation for Meaningful Intelligence

Criteria 2: Personalized Insights for Higher CSAT

Criteria 3: Customer Empowerment to Enable Self-Service

Criteria 4: Bill Insight and Analysis Tools to Improve Billing Understanding

Criteria 5: Cross-Promotion to Increase Participation

Criteria 6: Support for Customers' Decarbonization & Electrification Transition

Criteria 7: Digital Engagement to Reduce Cost to Serve

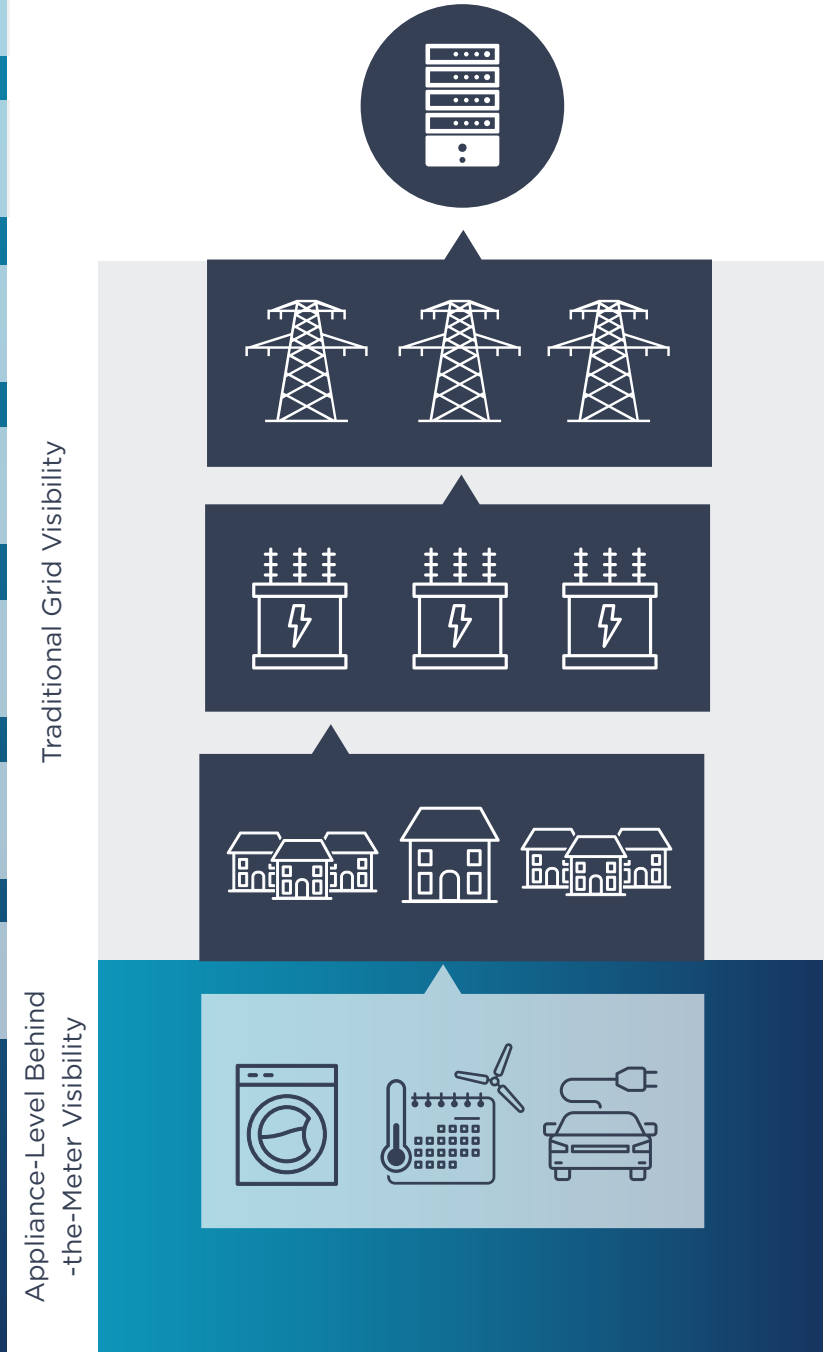
Criteria 8: Seamless Technology Integration for Ease of Implementation

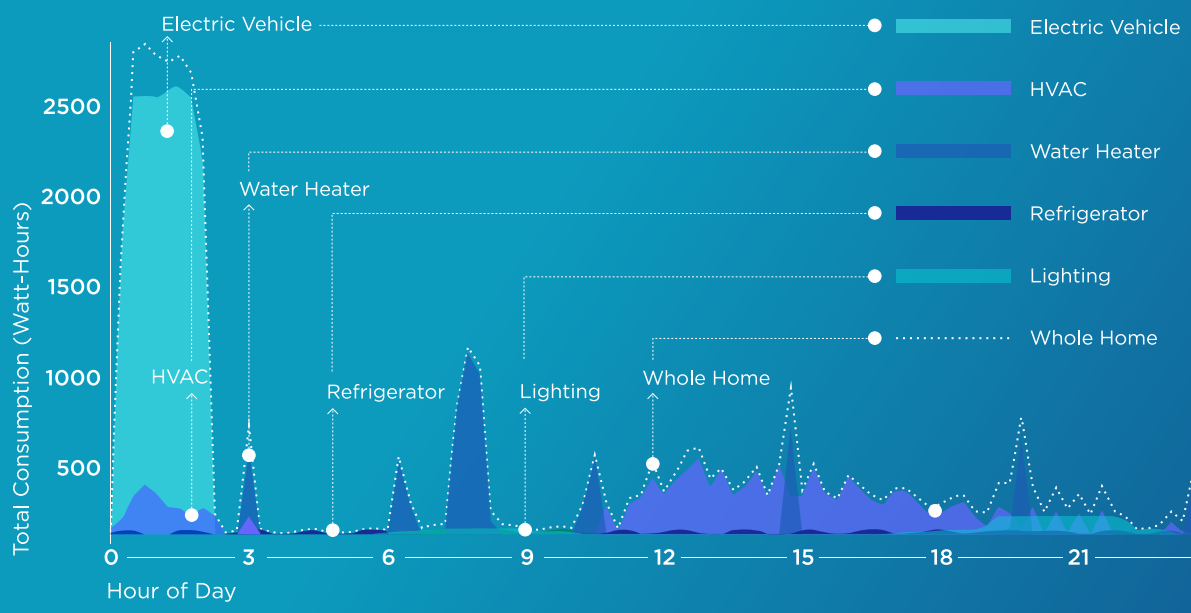
Criteria 9: Call Center Support for CSRs Empowerment

Criteria 10: Proven Track Record to Build Confidence

CRITERIA 1: ADVANCED DISAGGREGATION FOR MEANINGFUL INTELLIGENCE

Established disaggregation methods — both software- and hardware-based — successfully break down total energy consumption data on a device category or device-by-device basis and at a daily, weekly, monthly, or bill cycle frequency. These insights empower both utilities and their customers with personalized appliance-specific energy use data to inform better energy decisions.



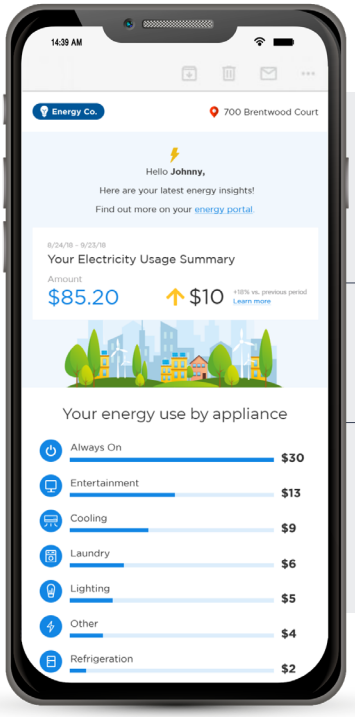


More advanced Time of Use (TOU) disaggregation breaks down consumption to previously indiscernible granularity. This breakthrough level of precision opens up a new world of CX possibilities for energy providers.

TOU disaggregation uses sophisticated machine learning models and signal processing algorithms to take actionable insights to the next level by defining energy consumption patterns at the AMI sampling frequency.

Consider utility bill applications, which have historically been one of the core use cases for disaggregated energy data. Imagine if credit card statements only identified spending based on categories — i.e. you spent $500 on restaurants, $200 on groceries, $170 on gas, etc. That is how the information in traditional disaggregation-informed utility bills is organized — they break down energy usage by appliance category. It is a helpful but insufficient metric. (And for those utilities that haven't yet advanced to this basic level of disaggregated billing, there is even more lost CX ground to recover.)

The detailed credit card statements that we actually receive tell us how much we spent each time we went to a restaurant, grocery store, or gas station. Similarly, TOU-disaggregation-informed utility bills itemize energy usage by each instance of appliance use within a given day, hour, or shorter TOU increment — which is a far more meaningful metric because it provides the specific cause and effect appliance usage detail upon which consumers can take informed action.

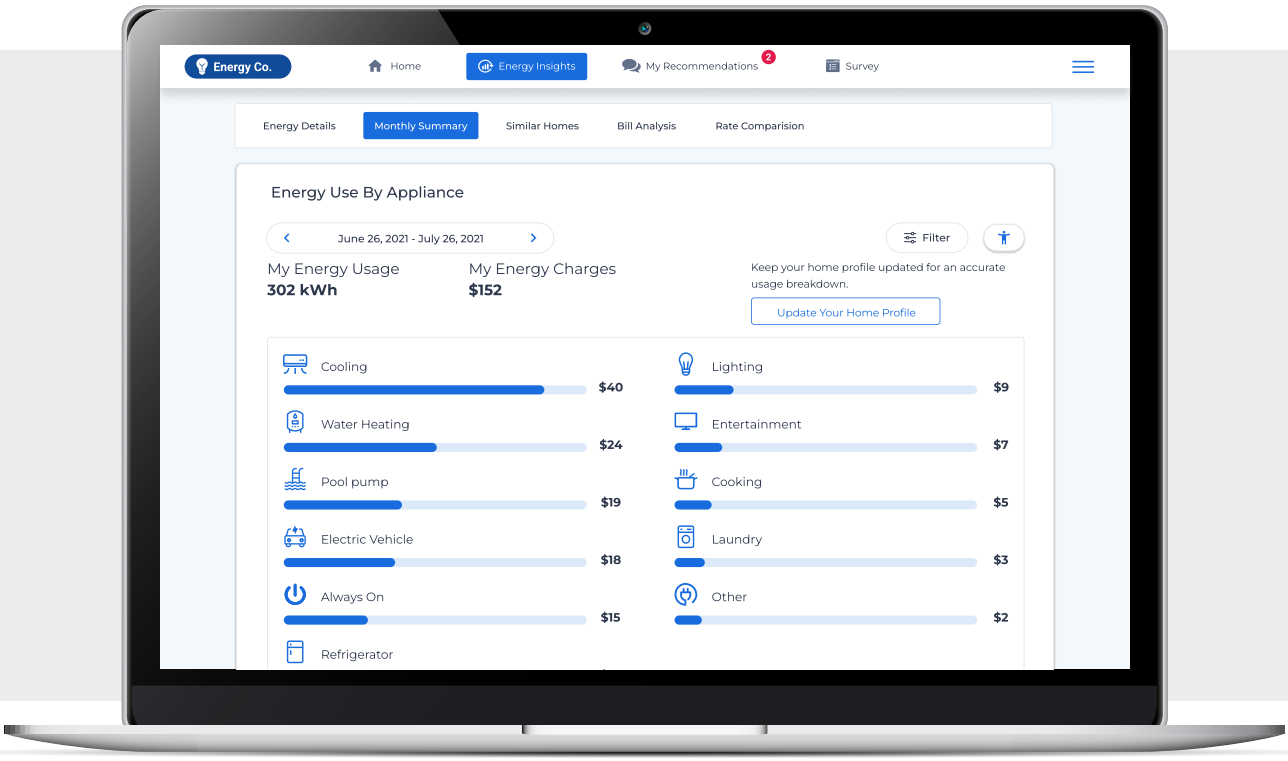


Bill Summary & Self Comparison
Track the trend of usage.

Appliance Itemization
Using true disaggregation to calculate the spend of energy usage in each appliance category.

LOOK FOR CX solutions that can provide itemized energy reports for every customer, every month. The energy itemization should include at least 8-12 end-use categories (depending on what categories apply to each customer's appliance ownership and use). TOU insights should also be provided for the primary electric loads, including water heating, pool pump, electric vehicles, air conditioning, and space heating. For maximum accuracy, the energy itemization should be based on customer-specific AMI data at 15-60 minute intervals, and not static models applied to large customer segments. In the case of serving new customers without any historical data, the first insights should be provided after the first month of onboarding.

In addition, as AMI deployments continue to advance, look for solutions that can create a seamless customer experience (disaggregated usage, alerts, etc.) for CX program participants through the transition from non-AMI infrastructure to smart meters. As many customers are still reluctant to adopt this new technology and might not understand the benefits that AMI can deliver, building enhanced trust is an imperative during this transitional event. Making the technology evolution as seamless as possible demonstrates to customers that AMI infrastructure is not an investment undertaken only to benefit utility operations and the grid, it is also an investment for their own comfort.

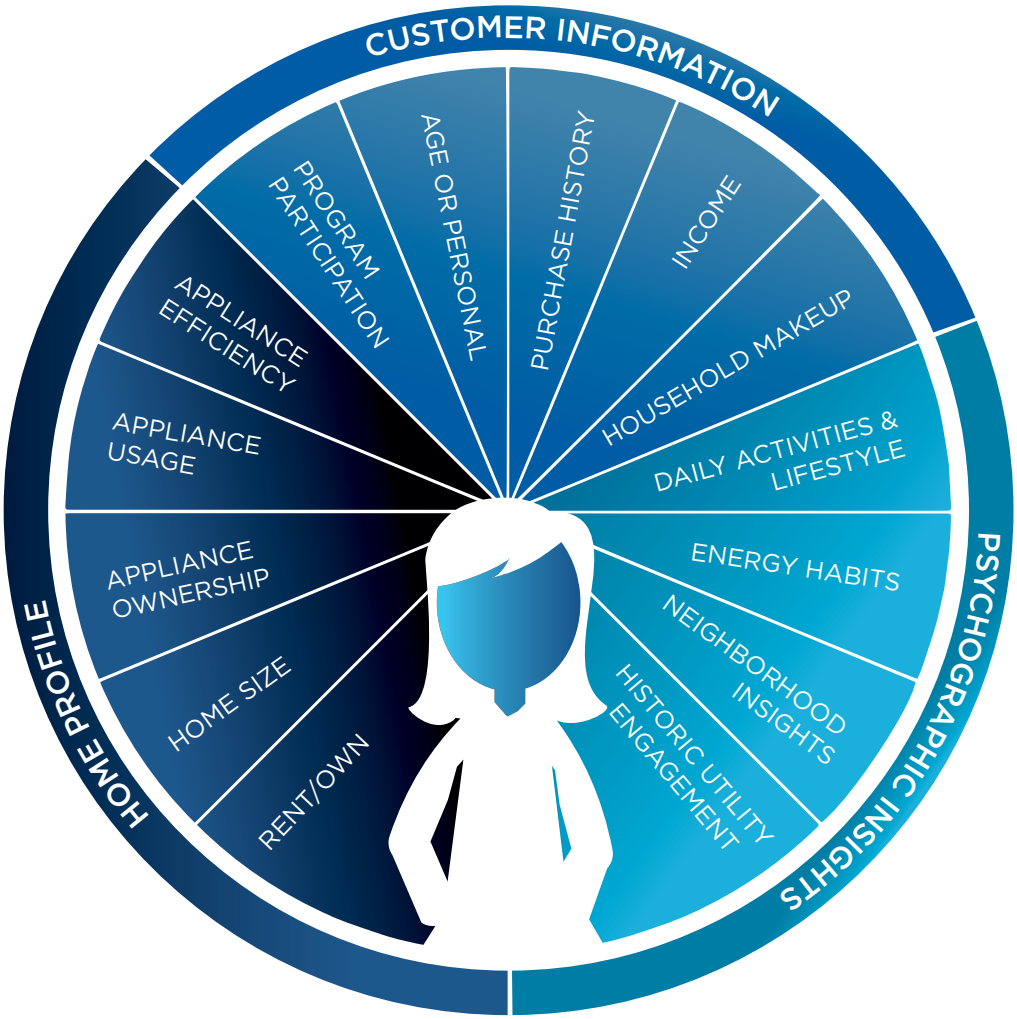


Bidgely's UtilityAI™ disaggregation technology enables utilities to empower customers with itemized insights down to the appliance level, to make better-informed decisions about their energy usage, delivered on their preferred channels.

CRITERIA 2: PERSONALIZED INSIGHTS FOR HIGHER CSAT

Effective personalized engagement and better CX start with creating a holistic and accurate 360° profile of every customer in a service territory. Generic insights don't resonate in a relevant, timely, or actionable manner. They leave customers unhappy and dissatisfied with their utility, therefore impacting the utility's bottom line with low program participation and rising call-ins, complaints, and cost to serve.

Establishing one-to-one consumer understanding requires sophisticated machine learning and statistical solutions to analyze raw energy consumption AMI data. In addition to appliance and technology intelligence, applying sophisticated machine learning and statistical solutions to raw energy consumption data also reveals essential attributes that describe each customer's behavior, lifestyle, propensity to buy, and other personal characteristics.



Real-world 360° customer profiles and digital tools make it possible to replace one-size-fits-every-season customer touchpoints with an evolving cadence of more precise, personalized insights that are more frequently delivered. Providing relevant, customer-specific recommendations and calls to action at key points during the billing cycle improves customer engagement, satisfaction, and experience.

Granular energy use insights allow every step of a customer's energy use journey and next best interaction (NBI) to be hyper-personalized and optimized for success. These personalized journeys can be designed to guide customers through consumption and savings, billing, rates, demand response and more.

When utilities understand customers at a deeper level, they can anticipate their needs and proactively solve their problems as they engage in an ongoing dialogue with individual customers about their energy use.

AMI data provides the near real-time insights utilities need to make adjustments quickly to ensure customers consistently have optimal experiences, including presenting relevant offers, optimizing program participation on the fly, and delivering better customer support.

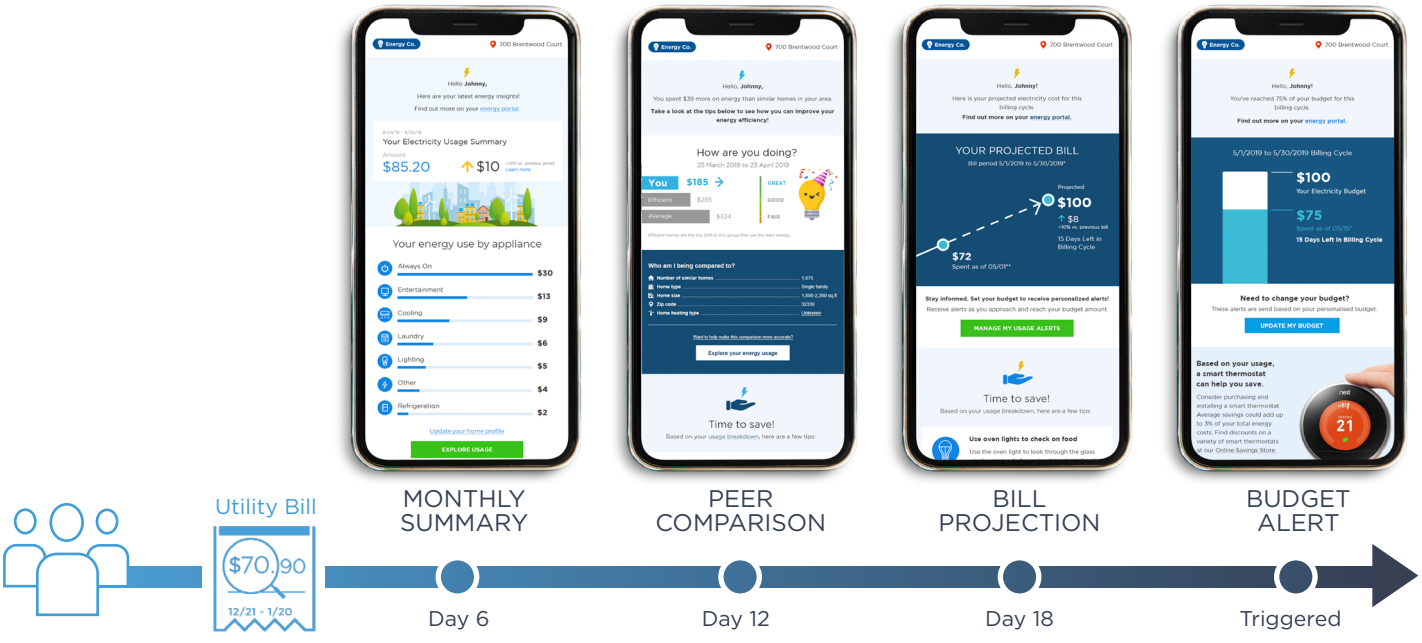
This customer responsiveness extends to rate design. Fortunately, the availability of AMI data is empowering utilities to rethink rate design and base new rates on granular information about every household's appliance ownership and energy usage habits. The result is customer-centric rates that not only better satisfy utility objectives, but also more equitably charge customers, yielding improved CX.

LOOK FOR

CX solutions that deliver real-world 360° customer profiles for every customer in a service territory using meter data and analyses of actual customer energy habits, enriched by other supporting data inputs. Look for platforms capable of continuously improving and personalizing these insights as customers go about their daily lives and engage with the utility over time.

Look for partners who are able to provide relevant, timely, and actionable insights and NBIs cost-effectively to every customer as a means to establish the utility as a trusted energy advisor and improve CX. Seek out data-driven and customer-centric approaches to rate design.

And look for a built-in feedback module in all customer communications that collects ongoing feedback to refine personalization and allows the voice of the customer to be heard.



CRITERIA 3: CUSTOMER EMPOWERMENT TO ENABLE SELF-SERVICE

In the early days of customer engagement, "comparison shaming" was a go-to strategy to motivate users to take action. However, studies have shown that people typically respond better to affirmative feedback than to negative feedback and that customers prefer to compete with their own past performance rather than the performance of their peers. Creating a positive, enduring relationship that benefits programs utility-wide requires an understanding of this psychological reality.

The most advanced CX platforms empower customers with appliance-specific, hyper-personalized recommendations that allow them to take meaningful and immediate action and feel good about doing so.

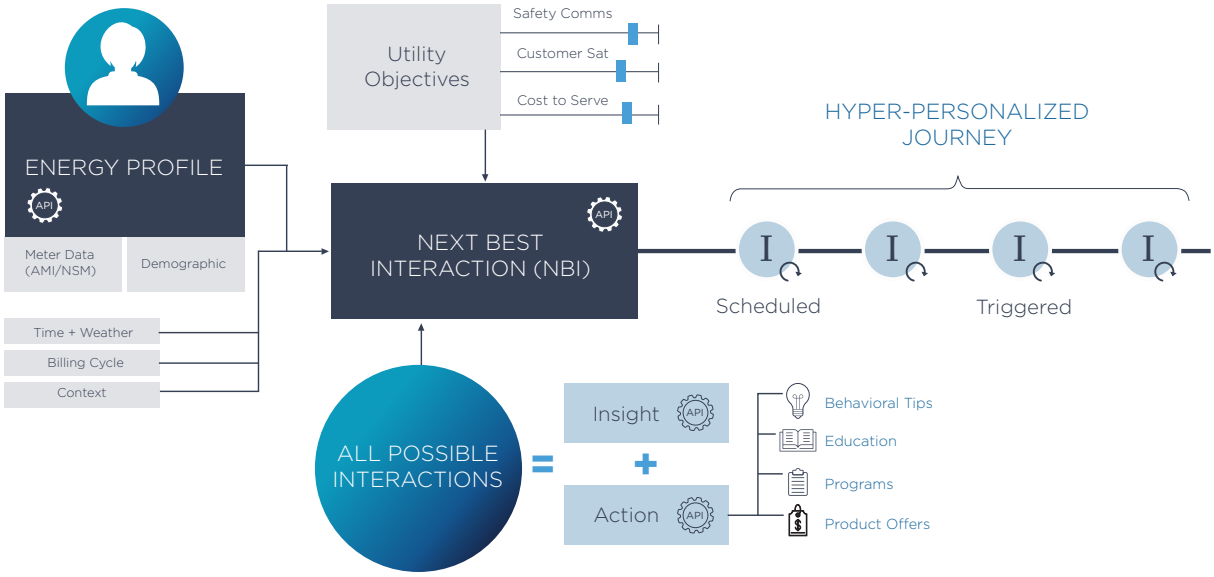
Leveraging AMI meter data to educate customers about their energy usage and carbon footprint in an easy-to-understand fashion is key to improving customer satisfaction. For example, Next Best Interactions on each customer's journey should be derived from previous customer behavior and informed by their unique customer profile.

When customers are empowered in this way, it contributes to a positive, enduring relationship in which they trust the information their utility provides. The utility earns a reputation as much more than a company to which consumers pay bills each month and to whom they complain when things go wrong. This evolution in consumer-utility dynamic, in turn, leads to greater long-term engagement and adoption of mutually beneficial energy actions.

LOOK FOR CX solutions that differentiate between inefficiencies driven by user actions vs inefficiencies driven by appliance conditions. The root cause of the inefficiency should guide the personalized recommendations.

Look for platforms able to highlight which appliances contribute to home-level inefficiencies and empower users to focus on the appropriate appliances for maximum return on their efforts and money spent.

CREATING HYPER-PERSONALIZED JOURNEYS

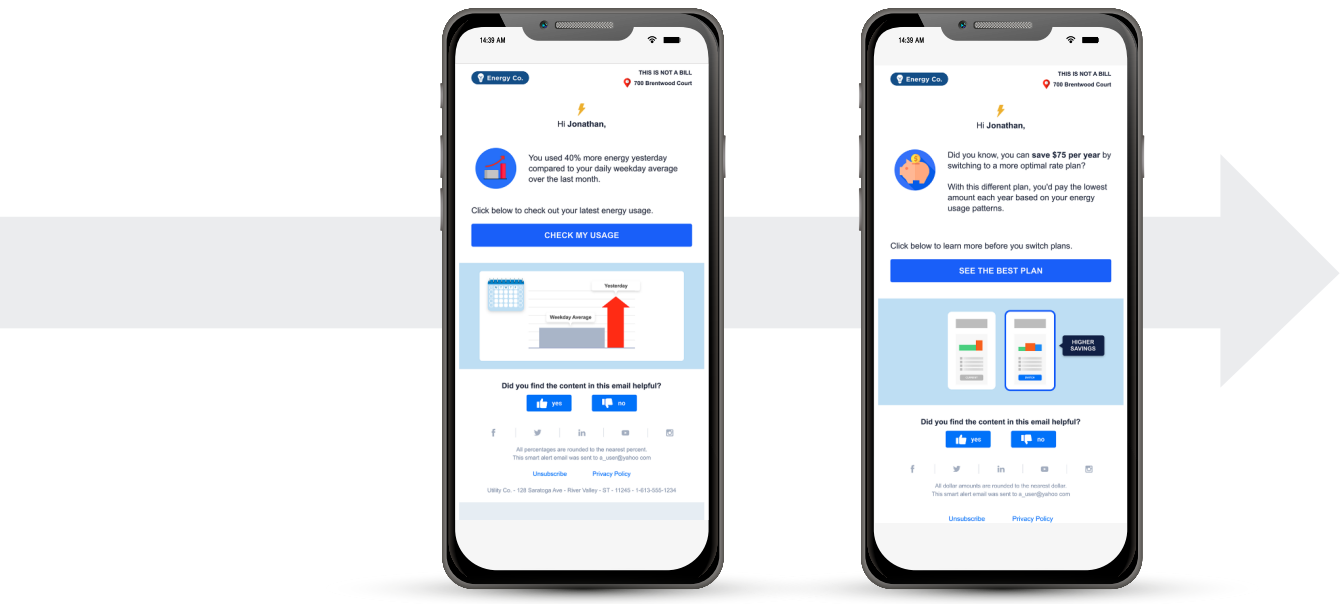


Bidgely's Next Best Interaction (NBI) engine uses behind-the-meter insights and other contextually relevant data to give customers hyper-personalized recommendations that align with utility goals.

CRITERIA 4: BILL ANALYSIS TOOLS TO IMPROVE BILL UNDERSTANDING

By providing customers with self-service and omnichannel bill analysis tools, such as through a web portal and via email alerts, utilities can help customers better understand their bills and how to take steps that have a meaningful impact on their energy costs.

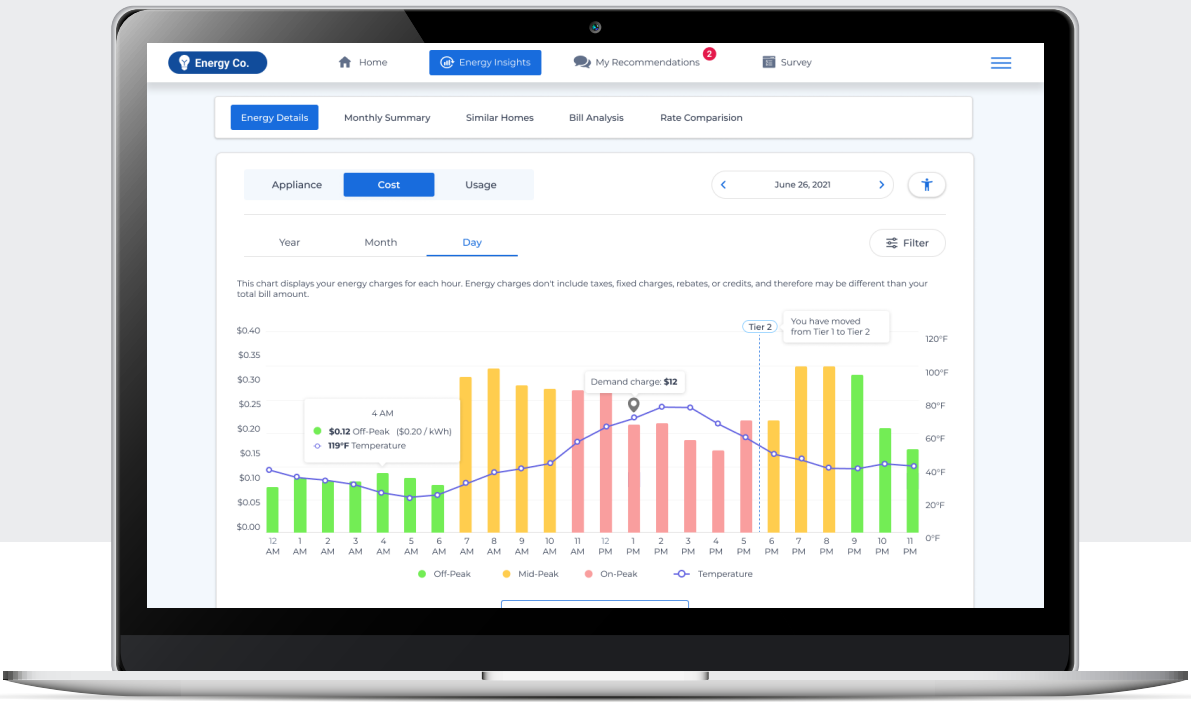
Proactively providing these insights means utility bills are no longer something customers dread to see in their mailbox at the end of the month, but rather a valuable communication that they prepare for and actively engage with. This in turn improves their customer experience and satisfaction with the utility and reduces high-bill call volumes and costs to serve.



This is particularly important when it comes to introducing time of use (TOU) rate structures to shift load outside of predictable peak periods. Utilities have historically faced significant challenges when communicating with customers about TOU rate structures and have often receiving a backlash from customers who unknowingly generate higher bills because of a lack of TOU understanding. Leveraging AI to develop and optimize TOU rate programs allows for more precise identification of customers with high shiftable loads, personalizes the value proposition to adopt time-based rate structures for each target customer, and enables proactive alerts and other customer touchpoints such as monthly budget alerts, itemized energy usage in peak vs. off peak hours, bill projections, and peak time alerts that engage customers ahead of, during and after peak periods in order to ensure the highest satisfaction and outcomes.

LOOK FOR CX solutions that provide a bill analysis module that enables customers to compare billing periods, monthly summaries with bill itemization, accurate bill forecasts, and proactive high usage alerts. Look for TOU rate design and management tools.

Look for solutions that provide customers with data-driven, personalized explanations as to what contributed to a bill increase/decrease, including changes in appliance-specific usage, the difference in the number of days in the billing cycle, or weather.



Bidgely's CX platform enables customers to understand their usage granularly and how their energy behaviors contribute to their energy costs.

CRITERIA 5: CROSS-PROMOTION TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION

When energy use data is established as a single source of truth, traditionally siloed operational areas can collaborate to deliver customer insights and recommendations that promote a wide range of programs and offerings, including energy efficiency and DSM, solar, energy assistance, appliance rebates, weatherization, LED upgrades, water conservation and more.

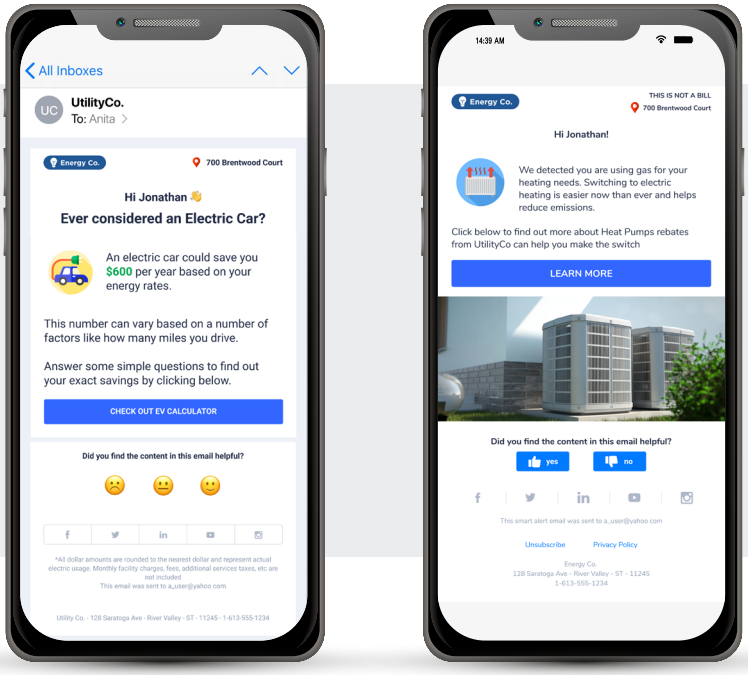
By relying on a foundation of true disaggregation of consumption data, it is possible to send highly accurate and relevant product/program offers to each customer, no matter the operational area responsible for the program.

Customers can then be proactively targeted for a given promotion or program through a journey that is designed to educate them about their personal energy use and efficiency, how it affects their bill and how a utility program would specifically benefit them.

Data-driven outreach also has the power to eliminate, for example, customers who are not pool owners receiving tips about how to run their pool pumps more efficiently. Or customers who have already made the shift to a heat pump won't be included in campaigns educating them on the value of doing so. Not only do such mis-aligned messages fail to resonate with the customer, they erode trust in messaging from their utility moving forward.

This targeted alignment of customers with relevant products/programs leads to an improved cost-benefit ratio for each program and a more seamless, full-scope, and positive experience for the customer.

LOOK FOR CX solutions that granularly target customers with personalized and relevant messaging to promote the full range of programs/products.

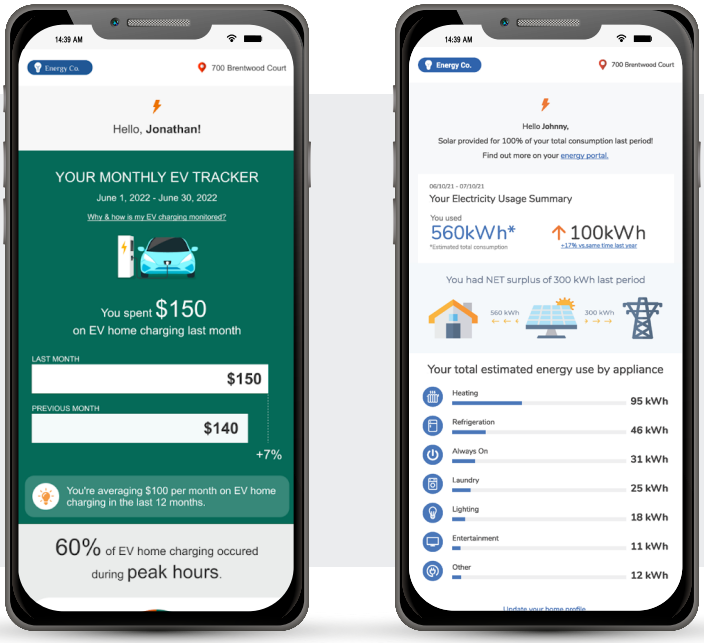


CRITERIA 6: SUPPORT FOR CUSTOMERS' DECARBONIZATION & ELECTRIFICATION TRANSITION

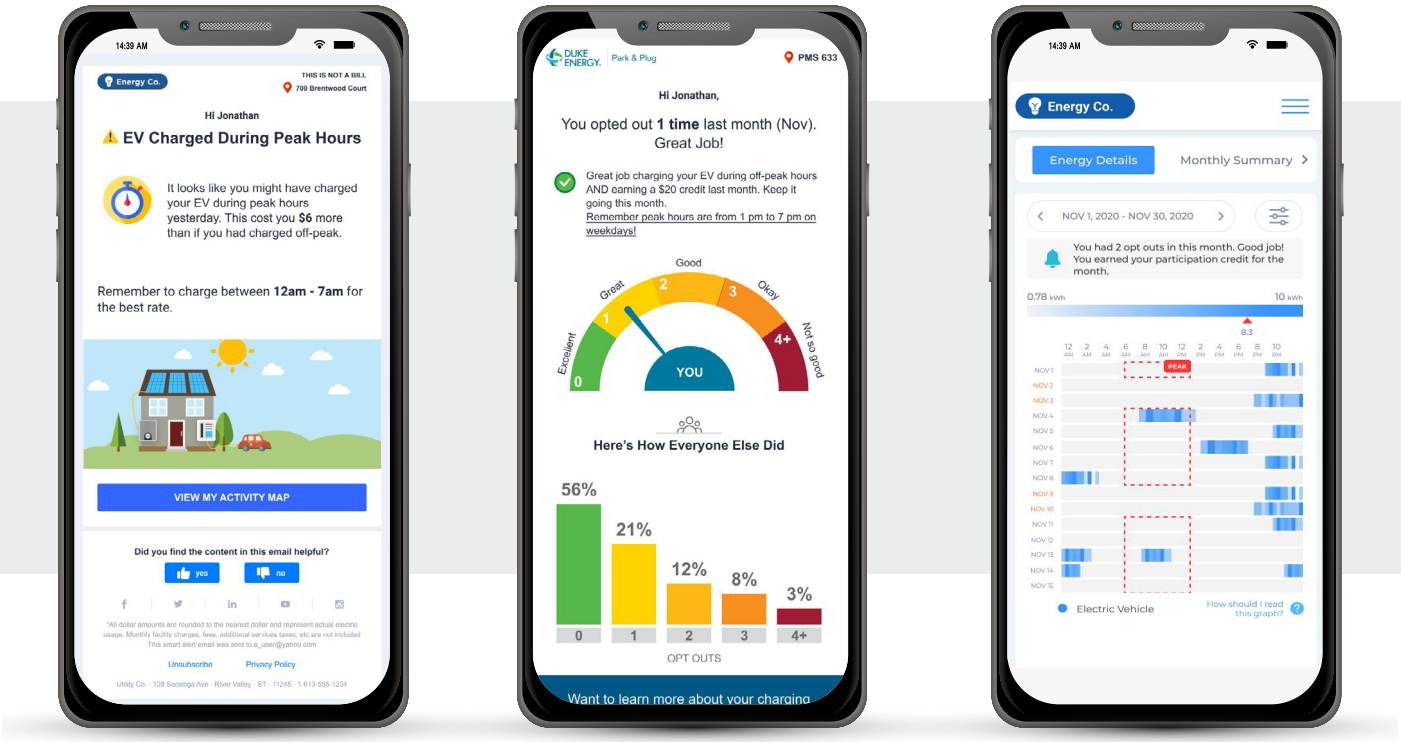
Decarbonization and electrification represent the most significant opportunity in a generation to increase base demand and margins while simultaneously introducing new utility services like home and public charging infrastructure. At the same time, this revolutionary shift presents new challenges to grid reliability and resiliency as we prepare to sustain massive increases in load.

Realizing the promise while mitigating the risk requires a new utility-consumer dynamic in which consumers play a more active role in both reducing emissions and strain on the grid.

In order to achieve a shift in the magnitude of transportation and home electrification, personalized marketing that aligns with each customer's needs, motivations and values is essential to inspire action. It also requires a deep understanding of how customers use electricity and which technologies they've adopted, including time-of-use granularity.



Further, when it comes to direct managed charging, home energy management systems, and virtual power plants, building customer enthusiasm for turning over some degree of control over their heat pumps, water heaters, thermostats, electric vehicle charging, and energy storage to improve grid reliability requires a solid foundation of engagement and positive CX.



LOOK FOR CX solutions capable of providing customers with education about their carbon emissions in the context of their energy consumption and metrics by which to track them. Advanced approaches will also allow customers to set budgets for themselves to help them curtail energy consumption and better understand the rate at which they use energy and spend money. Solutions should also be able to affirm whether or not customers are using insights, alerts, and behavioral or automated responses to help achieve their optimal energy consumption to accomplish individual or aggregate decarbonization and electrification goals.

Look for CX platforms capable of identifying which customers have already electrified their transportation and providing insights about their at-home charging methodology and volume and timing of consumption with a high level of accuracy. Vendor partners should also be able to successfully engage with EV drivers to promote charging rebates, and time-of-use offers and create a sustained engagement with this customer through their EV journey. Also look for sophisticated EV TOU rate design capabilities.

Look for support strategies for solar users with the ability to detect solar generation and reflect the net-metered amounts for a fair representation of the customer's usage.

And finally, look for customer engagement strategies that promote appliance electrification in an intelligent and hyper-personalized way to align with each consumer's unique energy habits, needs, and values.

CRITERIA 7: DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT TO REDUCE COST TO SERVE

According to JD Power, the utility sector's digital experience scores have declined four points year over year. At the same time, a McKinsey survey found that utilities that have maintained or improved digital satisfaction have realized an average 2 percent rise in overall customer satisfaction. They have also been empowered to provide equitable access and engagement to all customers by extending CX strategies to every customer in their service territory. The case for digital transformation is clear.

Utilities have historically moved slowly in offering the individualized digital capabilities that customers now expect. CX solutions that deliver equally powerful outcomes across both traditional and digital channels better enable digital transformation, and provide a more successful path to meet today's CX standards.

The key, however, is personalization and responsiveness. Web portals and mobile apps should be personalized with customer energy use data insights that provide customers with highly relevant content and recommendations. This is where utilities should seek to emulate the proven consumer engagement personalization strategies pioneered by Netflix, Amazon, Google, and other digital consumer platforms. Just as they recommend content, utilities can recommend behavioral changes, programs, or offerings.

LOOK FOR CX tools that can improve the personalization capabilities of both web portals and mobile apps. Look for CX solutions that provide a mechanism to seamlessly transition customers from non-digital channels to digital (e.g. via QR Codes) as well as a mechanism for customers to easily access their web insights from an email without having to log in.

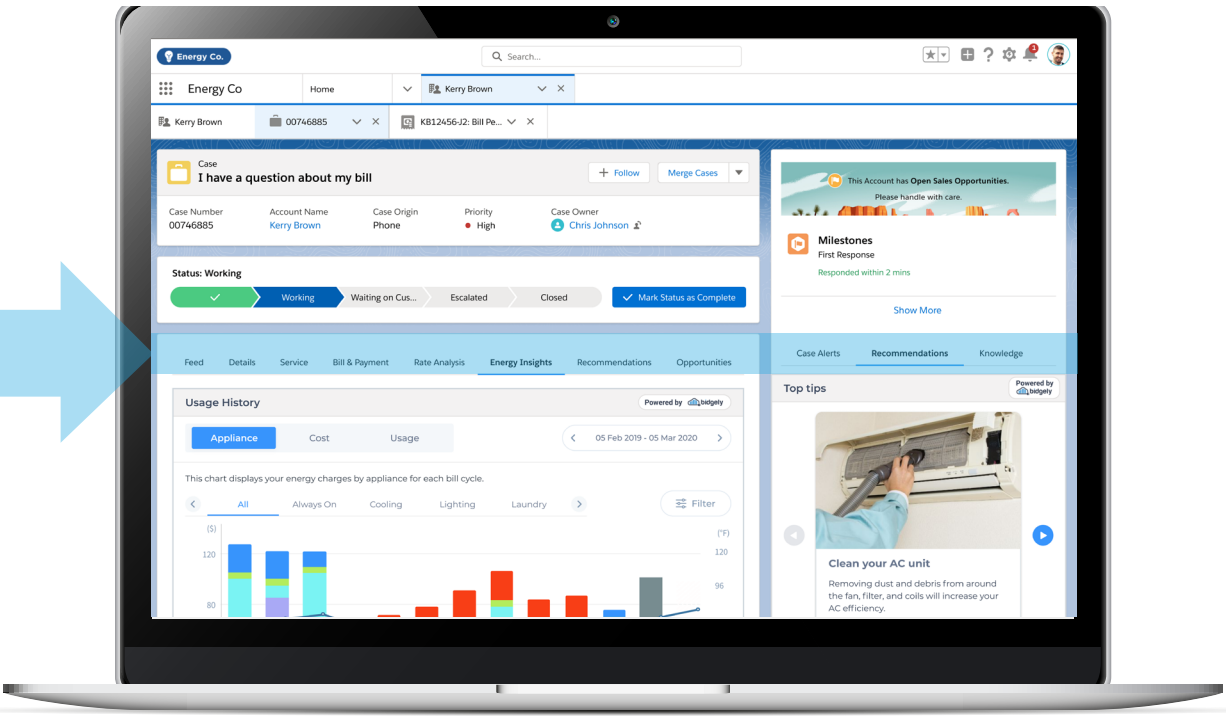
CRITERIA 8: SEAMLESS TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION FOR EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

When it comes to selecting or upgrading your CX platform, there are a lot of stand-alone solutions claiming that the value of their platform comes from replacing multiple existing systems in your IT stack. That can be a daunting prospect — both in terms of the cost and the timeline required for a multi-system IT migration.

In contrast, we suggest that if your existing systems are performing well, there's no need to upend your organization just to upgrade your CX.

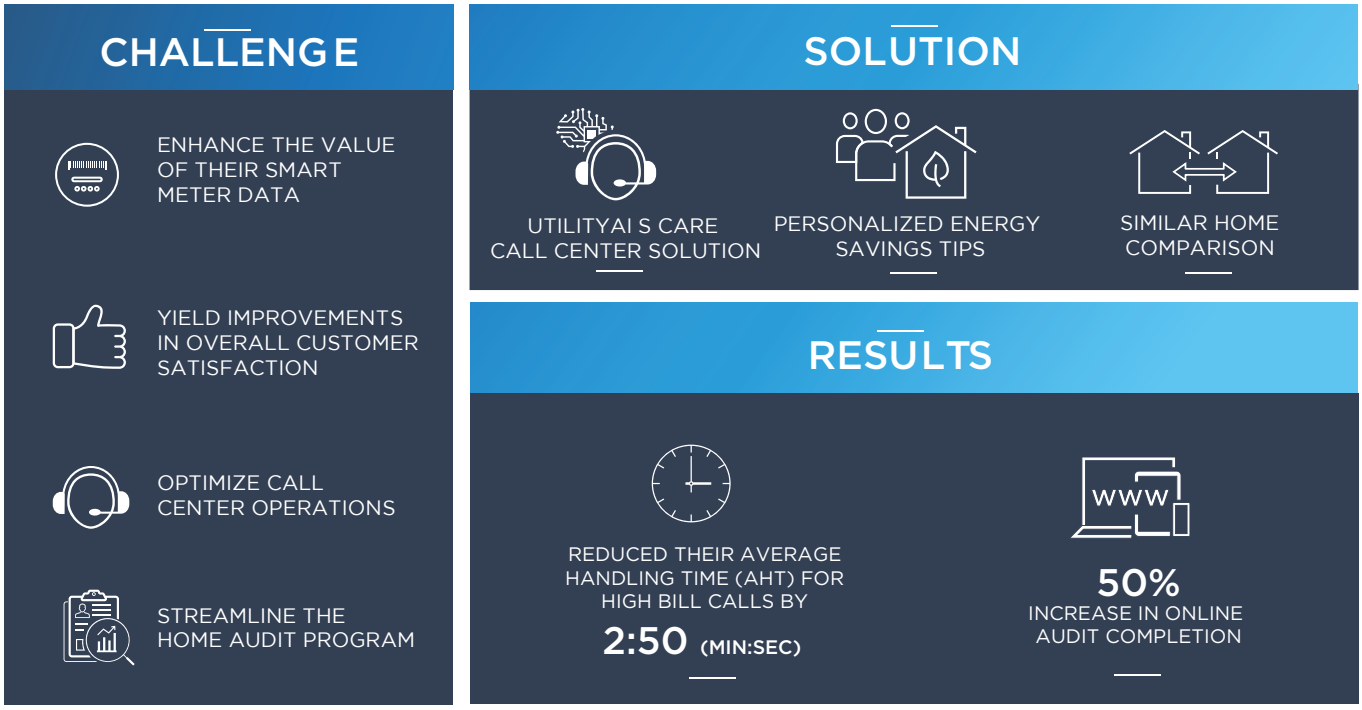
Instead, the focus should be on supercharging existing IT capabilities to get the most out of the IT investments a utility has already made, and to ensure all technology platforms utility-wide are operating with the same single source of truth as their foundation.

LOOK FOR flexible solutions that make it easy to infuse customer intelligence into diverse IT systems using widgets or APIs. REST API Integration enhances a utility's native mobile app with personalized energy insights. API Notification Integration enables a utility to send personalized insights not only via email alerts but also through push notifications. Widgets allow a utility to embed new CX features within an existing customer web portal without having to build an entirely new web platform.



Bidgely's energy intelligence enriches the functionality of existing CRM systems and other technology platforms and adds new capabilities with seamlessly integrated widgets like "energy insights" and "recommendations".

CRITERIA 9: CALL CENTER SUPPORT FOR CSR EMPOWERMENT



While utilities continue to expand the role of online and mobile channels as a point of contact and extend self-service options, the call center currently remains the primary channel for customer support.

In fact, customer call volume and average handle time (AHT) has escalated dramatically over the past year as electric and gas rates have continued to rise.

Empowering CSRs with customer intelligence helps them shorten call duration, limit call escalation, reduce call volume and improve customer satisfaction while serving as a trusted advisor.

In the same way that customer insights inform a personalized customer journey through digital channels, CSRs should also be empowered to suggest the next-best actions for customers including savings tips, utility programs, and products/services to convert every call into an opportunity to provide added customer value. Energy use insights also enable CSRs to access the precise information required to rapidly resolve calls — often triggered by higher-than-expected customer bills.

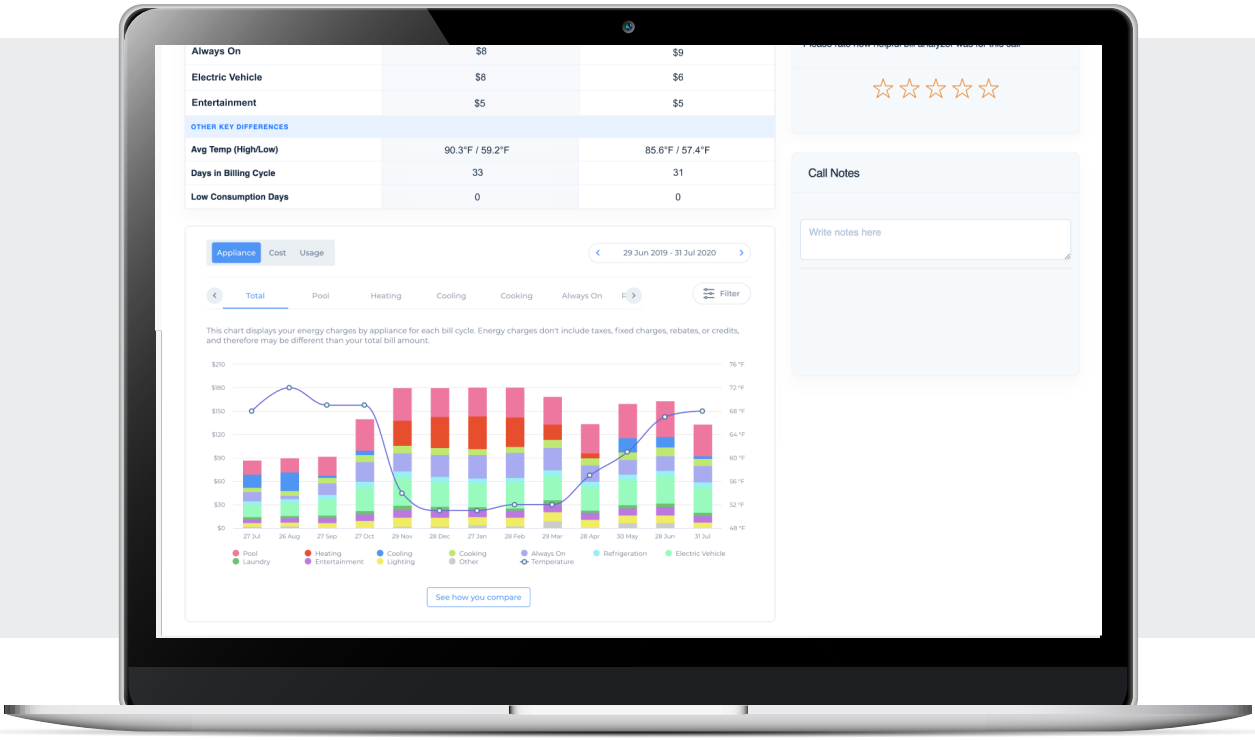
Bidgely worked with one utility in the southern USA to integrate customer intelligence into its call center operations, including enabling CSRs to provide personalized energy savings recommendations and put granular high bill insights at their fingertips to better assist customers. As a result, they reduced their AHT for high bill calls 2:50 (min:sec) and realized a 50% increase in online audit completion.

LOOK FOR solutions that provide a call center tool to assist CSRs in answering bill-related customer queries most efficiently. The tool should provide a detailed view into the individual factors that contributed to a bill increase/decrease, such as a change in A/C spending due to appliance degradation, higher temperatures, a smaller number of days in the past billing cycles, or holidays.

Look for solutions that enable CSRs to track and view all communications sent to customers — including the date, channel, type, and status (sent, bounced, delivered, etc.) for each communication, with the option to click to view the full content.

Look for CX tools capable of integrating with the Call Center CRM via Single Sign On technology.

And for those utilities that have invested in Salesforce and SAP, look for CX solutions that enrich that investment and don't require an additional tool setup for their CSRs.



Bidgely's CX platform gives agents access to the same behind-the-meter insights as customers, so they can help resolve customer issues quickly and become energy advisors.

CRITERIA 10: PROVEN TRACK RECORD TO BUILD CONFIDENCE

It goes without saying, but reputation, demonstrated experience, and proven outcomes are essential elements of vendor comparison.

Analysts' reports can play an invaluable role in this assessment, providing nuanced comparison tools across vendors and helping to differentiate what sets each vendor apart. Relevant reports include the Guidehouse Insights Home Energy Management Leaderboard or the IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Digital Customer Engagement Solutions for Utilities 2021 Vendor Assessment.

Intellectual property is also a useful metric. How much emphasis does the vendor place on R&D and pioneering patented data science approaches to better foster CX? Vendors should be able to demonstrate ownership of patents for AMI and HAN disaggregations and a commitment to continuing to advance new AI-driven data analytics methodologies.

Consider also the breadth and scale of a vendor's deployments. How many utilities have deployed the technology on behalf of how many customers? Which markets have embraced this technology? Is it able to deliver substantive value to both regulated and deregulated utilities?

Quantitative customer outcomes also provide a reliable measure of solution excellence. For example:

- Achieving above-average customer satisfaction in connection with utility communications received and overall experience
- Increasing overall satisfaction of customers with their utility, including via standard industry metrics like JD Power Scores
- High email engagement, such as open rates and click-through rates at least twice above in dustry averages
- Reducing operating costs associated with customer call-ins, call times, and escalations around energy use and their bills

LOOK FOR measurable outcomes, case studies, and third-party validations. Don't hesitate to ask around to learn first-hand about how your utility peers have leveraged a specific vendor or technology.

GETTING STARTED

Improving customer experience and engagement through data-driven hyper-personalization is the key to achieving nearly every future-ready utility success metric, and energy use data and digitalization are widely recognized as the key levers to realizing CX goals.

In a crowded industry, there are hundreds of CX solutions vying for utility attention and promising to deliver the best results. Our hope is that these 10 criteria serve as a helpful guide in evaluating CX options.

For more information you can use to evaluate Bidgely's AI-enabled CX Platform, we've prepared the following resources:

White Paper: True Disaggregation: What It Is and Why It Matters
Solution Brief: Bidgely AI-Powered Smart Alerts
Demo Portal: Explore Bidgely CX Solutions for yourself

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