

Dramatic changes in the energy landscape demand a laser-focus on the customer.

In *The Customer-Focused Utility*, IBM's Bob Brnilovich succinctly sums up the state of the utilities industry:

The industry is in transition. External factors—including shifts in governmental policies, a globally felt sense of urgency about conserving energy, advances in power-generation techniques and new technologies—are driving massive changes throughout the industry. These pressures are putting utility providers in a seriously competitive, market-driven environment where the customer experience becomes a primary differentiator.

The massive shift from providing a product only—to offering customisable services and solutions for unique energy needs—requires that energy companies become more agile, cross-functional and service-oriented. To create loyal customers as the industry undergoes these seismic changes, customer-facing employees, primarily in the contact centre, will need tools to intelligently guide them, step by step, in even the most complex customer-service and up-selling situations. And they will need to effectively engage in conversations with consumers to help them understand the value of change.

Utilities that are proactive and embrace the opportunity for deeper relationships with customers will be the winners in this increasingly competitive landscape.



Industry Profile: **Energy**

Guiding Smarter Interactions in Energy and Utilities

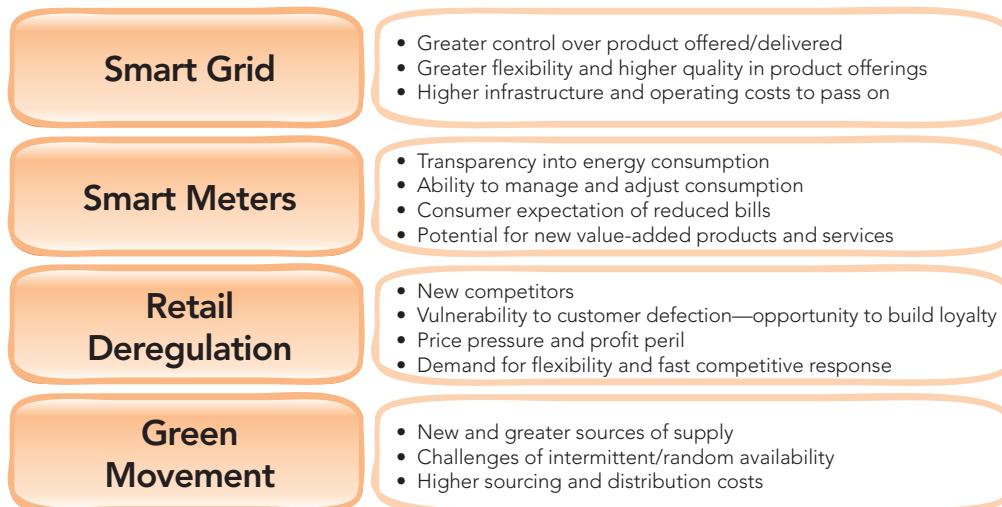


The Customer Engagement Opportunity for Energy and Utility Providers

As smart energy technologies come online, significant new demands are placed on the customer service and sales functions within utility companies. Consumers are rapidly evolving from "passive" to "participatory" as they become more engaged in understanding and managing their energy usage. An increase in call volume—plus a demand for web self-serve supported by chat or call centre—are projected to increase significantly as customers require a higher level of assistance. Customer conversations will become more complex as consumers strive to understand new equipment, pricing and delivery models. As a result, employees need guidance and resources to effectively engage with smart energy consumers. And while these changes and new complexities are a challenge to the utilities and energy industry, they also present enormous opportunity to differentiate and build customer loyalty.

The relationship between utilities and energy consumers is radically changing as energy conservation, alternative energy, smart grids, smart meters, energy management applications, government policies, and rising costs converge to create disruptive change.

Energy Retailing Landscape



"The experience you deliver to your customers every day, through every transaction, either builds value for your brand or destroys it."

– Shaun Smith
Author of *Managing the Customer Experience*

Utilities Score Low in Service

According to Forrester Research's Customer Experience Index, utility customers typically rate their overall positive experience with their energy provider at an anemic 20% to 30%, compared to other industries that have overall customer-experience ratings of 70% or more. This is primarily a result of most water, electricity and natural-gas companies being granted legal local monopolies, which meant little attention was given to the energy consumer. That scenario is clearly changing. Coupled with the new services and products choices around clean energy, smart grids and smart meters, focusing on the consumer becomes vital. Utility companies need to rapidly adopt customer experience management strategies to earn loyal consumers and advocates. These strategies need to be implemented across the enterprise, but especially in the contact centre, where your agents are the front line to your consumers.



Why Customer Satisfaction Isn't Enough

Eighty percent of customers who switch suppliers express "satisfaction" with their previous supplier and 61% of customers stated that "poor customer service" led them to change a supplier according to recent studies. Research shows that even though a customer may be satisfied with your "product," a poor overall customer experience (their interactions with your company) may drive them away.

In fact, an excellent customer experience creates an emotional bond between the company and the customer. According to an IBM/Ogilvy study, companies successful in creating both functional and emotional bonding had higher retention ratios (84% vs. 30%) and cross/up-sell ratios (82% vs. 16%) compared with those that did not. Energy and utility companies must take heed of this important differentiator as they strategise and build out new models for service.

Energy and utility companies have a significant opportunity to create new business models that meet the changing demands of smart energy consumers.

How do you GUIDE employees to deliver loyalty-building customer experiences?

Cincom Synchrony guides smarter interactions with customers that deliver optimal experiences and organisational outcomes. Synchrony intelligently guides your agents, step by step, in even the most complex customer-service and upselling situations. It instantly presents the right information and resources for and about the right customer. Synchrony insulates agents from processes and workflow that don't add value to the conversation while simultaneously presenting value-add guidance, personalisation and expert recommendations. This enables employees to respond quickly and appropriately to each customer for better, faster, more effective interactions.

Synchrony delivers benefits across the enterprise by:

- Building customer loyalty
- Guiding employees to deliver the best outcomes
- Providing both agents and management with insights for better decision-making
- Simplifying and streamlining IT support
- Building organic growth and sustained differentiation

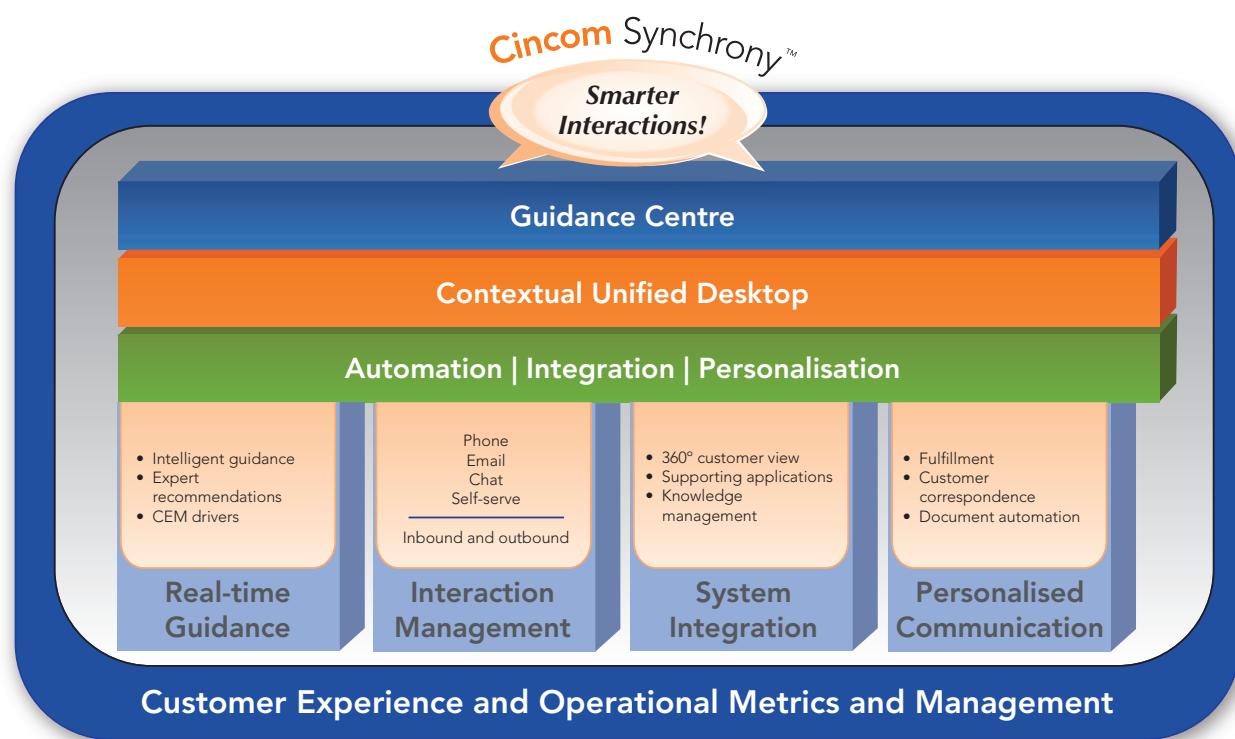
Using a powerful combination of intelligent guidance and a customer-focused unified desktop, your employees are equipped to deliver smarter interactions that are consistent, differentiated and valuable—all hallmarks of a successful customer experience.

The Value Provided by Cincom Synchrony

Organic Growth	Cost Reduction
• Increase in customer acquisition through referral	• Increase in productivity
• Increase in sales per customer	• Reduced employee churn
• Increase in unit sales value	• Reduced training costs
• Decrease in customer attrition	• Reduction in marketing costs

Cincom Synchrony leverages the insight you have about each customer in the context of each interaction to deliver the optimal customer experience. It brings your Customer Experience Management (CEM) strategy to life in a realistic, operational model that grows your business while improving operational results.

Cincom Synchrony has earned the respect of industry experts with its innovation, performance and results. Organisations around the world use Synchrony to drive their Customer Experience Management strategy in a realistic, operational model.



Cincom Synchrony™
Guiding Smarter Interactions



"Today's customer service agents are challenged by too much information in all of the wrong places. Agents are expected to know how to drill into a sea of applications, databases and resources for every customer interaction.

Cincom Synchrony brings order to the chaos by dynamically presenting exactly what the agents need from all of the relevant sources. We found Synchrony to be an extremely practical and useful tool."

– Michael DeSalles, Strategic Analyst, Frost & Sullivan

More Involved Customers Demand Better Experiences

Gone are the days of the passive energy consumer who barely gave a second thought to their utility company. Massive industry changes are creating a highly competitive marketplace where utility companies must vie for customer loyalty. Like other hyper-competitive industries, customer experience becomes a primary differentiator and utility and energy companies must move quickly to establish themselves as leaders in this area. Across the board, selective consumers expect great service experiences; customer loyalty must be earned. And when it is, loyal customers spend more with you and tell others about you. The investment in customer experience pays off well into the future.

About Cincom

Cincom recognises that it is your people—your customer-facing employees—who represent your brand. And in each conversation, it is the experience that they deliver to your customers that either builds value for your brand or destroys it. It is a powerful role to play. Cincom's Customer Experience Management initiative is focused on helping companies and its employees to consistently deliver experiences that not only build your brand, but are valuable to both your customers and to your organisation. Cincom does this through its Synchrony offering that guides employees to deliver smarter interactions.

Since 1968, Cincom has helped thousands of clients worldwide by solving complex business problems with its software and services. Cincom is an IBM Premier Business Partner. For more information about Cincom Synchrony, visit us on the web at:

<http://synchrony.cincom.com>.



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