

HCLSoftware



A Complete Guide to Transforming Your Customer Experiences

Picking the Right CX Platform for Energy and Utilities

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Introduction: The challenge of going digital for the energy and utility industry

In 2022, supply chain issues and extreme weather plagued the utility sector, causing energy prices to surge by [14.3% in the U.S.](#), and by more than 50% in other parts of the world. This has not only frustrated both customers and suppliers, but also fueled customer demand for engaging digital experiences, such as the ability to continuously monitor energy usage, access billing information, and communicate easily with a provider.

In fact, customers are looking to digital experiences more than ever: according to EY's 2022 Energy Survey, 65% of respondents have increased their interest in monitoring their energy usage over the past year, with 61% saying they want to use digital tools to help reduce their impact on the environment.

However, when it comes to innovative customer experiences, energy and utilities (E&U) have often lagged behind other industries. According to the [J.D. Power 2022 U.S. Utility Digital Experience Study](#), as many as a third of large utilities do not yet offer customers an app. Now, changing customer expectations are finally prompting energy utilities to make the customer experience a priority.

By providing a better digital experience for customers, energy and utility companies can:

- Greatly improve customer satisfaction
- Stay competitive in the market
- Save costs and resources
- Make a commitment to sustainability

An increase in competition is another reason why energy companies are starting to care more about digital experiences. As the market becomes increasingly crowded — with new players entering the market and existing players expanding their offerings — organizations need to differentiate themselves from their competitors, and providing a better digital experience for customers can help them do that.

Cost savings, too, are another driver: digital channels, such as customer-facing apps, can be more cost-effective than traditional channels, such as call centers or paper bills. Providing digital experiences also means that utility companies can shift to become more sustainable, reducing paper usage and transportation costs.

Ultimately, providing a better digital experience for customers can help energy and utility companies stay competitive, improve customer satisfaction, and save costs while aligning with environmental concerns.

While energy and utility companies are recognizing the need to “go digital,” this is not just a case of flipping a switch. Rather, becoming digital is an evolution that requires a number of cultural and under-the-hood changes that many organizations aren't equipped to deal with, be it due to technical debt or a lack of skilled technical staff.

Transforming customer experience, the optimal way

The optimal way to transform customer experience (CX) is by leveraging a CX platform. Energy and utility organizations can rip the biggest advantages when equipped with the right platform to handle their end-to-end customer experiences.

The best-in-class CX platforms provide all-in-one solutions to handle functions like:

- Payment and billing tools, in-app or on the web, to view and pay bills, set up reminders and even auto pay
- Outage notification apps that alert customers when there is an outage in their area
- Customer service apps that allow customers to chat with customer service representatives, file complaints, and receive updates on their inquiries
- And more

CX platforms should also allow organizations to leverage the latest innovative technologies to engage their customers in new ways. For example, integrating apps with smart home automation to control thermostat and lights when the user is away from home and to monitor real-time energy consumption directly from their device.

This guide covers what E&U organizations should look for when selecting their customer experience platform.

What is the HCL UCX platform?

HCLSoftware has built the premier one-stop shop for all Utility Customer Experience Platforms, bringing together everything you need to achieve digital success. The HCL UCX Platform empowers your customer teams with the tools they need to deliver optimal customer experiences. Our focus on improving customer experiences is nothing new — but now, it's easier than ever to integrate systems and share data to solve problems and make well-informed decisions. By connecting back-end systems to front-end customer experiences, you can make customer teams more productive.

Five features to look for, when choosing a CX platform

#1 Low-code app development means faster time to market

It's no secret that the energy and utilities sector, like most industries, is being held back by a shortage of skilled technical staff. Hiring an army of professional developers to build a vast range of new customer-facing apps might seem like an additional challenge. Organizations can overcome this by embracing low code, a visual approach to software development.

Low code means:

- Both citizen developers and professional developers can build applications
- These apps are built and deployed faster
- A greater range of apps becomes a reality
- Better collaboration between IT teams, technical and business users
- Innovation and efficiency across the organization

When low code is one of the features in a CX platform, even a lean team of developers at an E&U company can handle all of its application needs. A separate app for customers, business units, and technicians won't mean months of development and testing. Instead, all of those applications can be deployed within weeks, if not days.

What's more, even business users with little or no coding experience can create or customize applications to support their processes. Low code reduces the dependency on IT teams but ensures strong IT governance and reduces "shadow IT", while accelerating time-to-market. This, ultimately, delivers fast value, enabling energy and utility companies to adapt to the changing world and greatly improve their customers' experience.

HCL UCX provides a low-code platform that makes this new way of working a reality. It enables an E&U organization to swiftly build and launch custom applications to streamline essential business processes. The platform's low-code capabilities empower every team member to innovate and collaborate, allowing professional developers to focus on more critical or higher-value projects, while improving agility and maintaining IT governance.



Case Study: Using low code to empower customers, save costs, and grow

A water utility firm that provides fresh water, wastewater, and drainage services throughout western Australia had long relied on its legacy systems to manage and maintain functionality for more than 1,000 mobile devices in the field for its technicians. However, these outdated systems eventually stopped working on the newer mobile devices, which ultimately led to interruptions in customer service, and the organization recognized the need to build a future-proof solution.

The company did so by embracing a low-code approach, which enabled it to use off-the-shelf components to build an advanced mobile app that not only works offline but also in remote areas.

The new functionality empowered its customers to access the latest energy news, insights, and expert analysis — via animation, videos, podcasts, and blogs — straight from their chosen device but also resulted in major cost savings for the company.

#2 Multiexperience development means reaching customers wherever they are

Energy and utility customers aren't just demanding access to mobile apps, they're demanding access to digital experiences across a range of different touchpoints, be it their smartwatch or AI-powered speaker.

This essentially means that, by embracing multiexperience development, energy and utility companies can reach their customers wherever they are, building stronger relationships and brand loyalty.

A multiexperience development platform (MXDP) enables organizations to support digital user journeys across:

- mobile platforms (Android, iOS)
- interfaces (wearables, web or mobile, conversational UI)
- across different modalities (voice, touch, gestures)
- and more

By 2025, the MXDP market will reach \$4.7 billion

According to [Gartner](#), by 2025, the MXDP market will reach \$4.7 billion, and over a quarter of the mobile apps, progressive web apps (PWAs), and conversational apps built at large enterprises will run through a multiexperience development platform.

Failing to try to reach each and every customer can have a serious impact on energy and utilities. It can turn customers away, as the industry becomes more competitive, and it can harm brand trust and reputation.

The HCL UCX Platform comes with multiexperience capabilities out of the box, enabling organizations to simply and rapidly build applications across all digital touchpoints and platforms.



Case Study: Less code, more digital channels, and an increase in value

The Australian energy market is becoming more and more competitive, which means providers need to offer dynamic experiences in order to stay ahead. One Australian energy firm embraced an out-of-the-box approach in order to create a modern digital platform that would help unlock new value for consumers by offering access to all sorts of data, from up-to-date market statistics and fuel mix dashboards to relevant podcasts and tech updates.

A low-code, multiexperience approach saw this energy giant enjoy an 80% reduction in code, while developing an experience for various digital touchpoints that can be customized by non-technical staff for any audience.

This approach also saw the company deliver its app within just six weeks — way ahead of its initial 12-month delivery goal.

#3 Personalized customer experiences and communications are as valuable as products

A core strategy of energy and utility companies should be improving customer experience as it can deliver big rewards. **Qualtrics estimates that an average company can experience as much as 633% return of investment into customer experience, over three years.**

Similarly, 80% of surveyed customers say their experience is just as vital as a company's products and services, according to the [Salesforce State of the Connected Customer Report](#). For customers, communication is at the core of their experience.

So, a CX platform for energy and utilities ought to include features that support the latest customer communication technologies as well as personalization. For example, a digital assistant or conversational AI can help provide quick, accurate, and efficient customer support and help direct customers to the right resources. Another necessary set of tools can enable the energy company to send personalized content to customers, exactly when and where they want it.

Improving customer experience and engagement goes hand in hand with a great digital experience. The HCL UCX Platform can help E&U companies to:

- Easily map and help manage their navigation
- Create customizable authoring experiences
- Ensure modern and responsive content is presented in the most impactful way
- Provide an organization-wide digital asset management
- Test the digital experiences for errors
- Help implement a cutting-edge digital assistant

80% of customers say their experience is as vital as the company's products and services

#4 Security and scalability for peace of mind

Energy and utility companies are particularly vulnerable to cyberattacks. This industry has become a tantalizing target for cybercriminals, so much so that **the energy sector has become their number one target**, according to [Hornet Security](#).

A number of recent incidents have drawn attention to the unique vulnerability of the sector, such as the [Colonial Pipeline ransomware attack](#) in May 2021 that forced all of the company's operations to come to a halt — triggering fuel shortages and panic buying across the U.S.

To that end, for energy and utilities, some of the biggest features to pay attention to when choosing a CX platform are its security offerings.

Here are some questions to consider:

- Does the platform follow the industry's best practices?
- Are there any built-in security features?
- How often is it updated?
- Do the developers have access to performance monitoring tools?

Scalability is another important consideration to keep in mind when choosing a CX platform. As an energy and utility company grows, the platform should scale. For example, it should be able to handle large volumes of data, allow apps to be deployed on-premise or in the cloud, and be modular to meet an organization's changing requirements.

Energy and utility companies that embrace the HCL UCX Platform can feel safe in the knowledge that they are well-protected against malicious adversaries, by design. The platform has built-in security features such as access controls, data encryption, performance monitoring, and auditing to help protect data, and all of its components are regularly updated to address any known security vulnerabilities. Just as they are built with security in mind, HCL products — including the UCX Platform — are also designed to be highly scalable, meaning they can grow as your organization grows.

#5 All-in-one: One solution for all customer experience needs

When looking for the right customer experience platform, a solution that offers the most features under “one roof” is likely to stand apart.

Considering the urgency of going digital and the need to provide the best customer experience today, if not yesterday, energy and utilities can’t afford to look for point solutions. Instead, these organizations are best matched with an all-in-one platform.

Some features to keep in mind:

- A CX platform should consistently serve all customers and their growing digital demands
- A CX platform should give all customers a tailored experience
- A CX platform should easily integrate with any existing solutions
- A CX platform should be reliable, scalable, and trusted by employees and end users alike

HCL UCX’s multiexperience and low code capabilities enable fast value, reduce complexities and costs, and help customers solve their problems quickly and easily. But it’s not just about efficiency and speed. UCX’s ability to help create exceptional digital customer experiences is validated by a recent IDC survey, where 61% of respondents saw at least a 5X return on customer experience investments. And with customers demanding better digital experiences, UCX is the clear choice for E&Y organizations looking to enhance — and transform — their customer experience.



65% faster time to market



91% reduction in downtime and outages



45% decrease in ticket resolution times



5x return on CX investments

Conclusion

Overall, providing a better digital experience for customers can help energy and utility companies like yours to stay competitive, improve customer satisfaction, and save costs while also aligning with environmental concerns.

The UCX Platform enables you to do just that by empowering employees to transform your customer experience through digital innovation. By creating immersive and seamless digital experiences, you can boost customer satisfaction, retention rates, and ultimately, your bottom line.

With the UCX Platform, energy and utility companies can stand out in a crowded market, stay ahead of their competition, and look forward toward the future.

Contact us to learn more:

www.hcltechsw.com/volt-mx/ucx