

Delivering Superior Value to Retail
Customers with Oracle Utilities
Customer Care and Billing for
Energy Retail

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“Customer care and billing has become a crucial competitive element since retail competition began for us four years ago. This initiative is a key part of our overall strategy to stay ahead of the competition in delivering flexible and competitive offerings to our customers at the highest service standards.”

**—John Ng
Executive Director, PowerSeraya Ltd**

“Our legacy system just couldn’t handle the complexity of the commercial and industry rates we faced in a competitive marketplace. Today, when the rep and the customer finally come to an agreement, they simply hand the information off to [Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing] for Energy Retail, which sets up the customer accounts automatically.”

**—Paul Naquin,
Director, IT Applications, TXU Energy Services**

EXTEND MARKET REACH

To be competitive, energy retailers must put customers first. This means providing outstanding service, supporting flexible rate and billing structures, and offering promotions and special incentives to attract new customers while retaining existing ones. Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail allows you to accomplish all these things quickly and at the lowest possible cost. By providing comprehensive systems support for all key operations, Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail enables you to segment your customer base and analyze the profitability of each segment. You can then more-precisely target sales prospects by offering tailored products and delivering service that correspond to each customer’s value to your company. Furthermore, by putting into place billing processes that shorten the time between delivery and payment for products and services, you maximize revenues while minimizing the risks of launching new strategic initiatives.

RESPOND SWIFTLY TO SHIFTS IN CUSTOMER DEMAND

Flexibility is key to success in today’s energy retail markets. Changes in regulatory requirements, unanticipated moves by competitors, and fluctuating market prices mean you have to make quick, decisive adjustments—sometimes overnight—to existing product lists, business processes, and systems in order to provide the level of service that keeps customers happy.

Additionally, you must be responsive to shifting customer demands, discontinuing unsuccessful or outdated products as soon as it becomes apparent that market conditions have changed.

Optimizing customer service and billing operations is therefore at the top of your list of priorities. Whether automating meter data management, energy auditing, equipment repair, or credit card processing activities, Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail streamlines operations and enables rapid execution of strategic business decisions without cumbersome coding changes.

OPERATE MORE PROFITABLY

Offering innovative new products at attractive prices wins new customers. Superior service keeps them loyal. And long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with business partners allow you to supplement your core competencies with those of other organizations and move swiftly to take advantage of new market opportunities.

“[Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing] for Energy Retail has enabled us to deliver multiproduct billing more effectively, and our customers are enjoying better service as a result.”

**—Theo Snel
Program Manager for IT Projects,
Delta N.V.**

All these things require automated tools that seamlessly support all aspects of your business. From accelerating billing and payment cycles to improving communications with customers and partners, Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail facilitates efficient and effective management of all aspects of your retail operations.

Optimize Billing and Collection Activities

It doesn't matter how good a sales force you have or how high demand is for your products and services. If you can't bill customers promptly and accurately—and collect on accounts receivables in a timely fashion—your business will falter.

Retail energy companies must therefore minimize the time it takes to translate meter data to bills, and bills to cash. Achieving this depends on keeping customers happy. Retail customers pay more quickly when they receive easy-to-read, accurate bills timed to coordinate with the availability of financial resources—for example, at the beginning of the month, after they have received paychecks. Having the option of paying via a variety of methods, such as direct debiting from bank accounts, transferring funds online, and putting credit cards on file to be automatically charged each month, results in more-satisfied customers, increased revenue flows, and shortened billing cycles.

“System flexibility and ease have turned out to be real success stories for us. Our business users can easily make changes and adapt.”

**—Marv Routliffe
Director of information services and
technology, EnWin Utilities Ltd.**

Moreover, by monitoring debt levels, tailoring collection methods to the specific financial situations of individual customers, and better managing deposits, you can speed collections and reduce uncollected debt. Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail allows you to

- Ensure that customers get accurate bills
- Tailor bill formats according to customer preferences
- Provide easy-to-understand billing graphs that show how energy consumption varies over customer-specified time periods
- Let customers choose the end date for their billing cycles
- Offer a choice of bill and payment methods, including e-mail, internet, cash deposit, direct debit, and postal service

Enhance Call Center Efficiency

Chances are good that your call center personnel are still dependent on outdated legacy systems or even manual processes for accessing customer records. This makes it difficult—if not impossible—to respond quickly to customer queries.

“Over the years we have been under pressure to meet the market’s constantly growing need for electricity, and with our accession to the European Union last year, the time has come for us to undertake a radical restructuring of our business processes to meet the challenge of the new era in Cyprus. [Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing] for Energy Retail will significantly contribute to our ability to achieve this goal...”

**—George Petousis
EAC Customer Service Executive
Manager, Electric Authority of
Cyprus Manager**

“This is an exciting time in the industry, and we look forward to working together to ensure that NIE is are ready to meet the needs of a competitive marketplace and implement the best customer care and billing services for customers and businesses in Northern Ireland.”

**—Caroline Murphy
Program Manager of Customer
Service Systems, Northern Ireland
Electricity**

Likewise, data collection and billing errors can take hours to properly research, and often require calling customers back hours or days after they first contacted you with their questions. Not only does this frustrate customers—who want to resolve problems immediately—but it is an extremely costly and nonproductive use of your call center workers’ time.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail streamlines call center activities, increasing customer satisfaction while significantly reducing costs. Among other benefits, the system allows you to

- Reduce call center staff so that personnel costs are dramatically cut
- Shorten call times and significantly cut down on callbacks by giving call center staff complete and immediate access to customers’ account histories
- Minimize employee training time through an intuitive user interface, online help, and prewritten scripts to handle the most-common customer service scenarios
- Facilitate faster processing of payments made over the phone

Improve Relationships with Partners

Collaborating with partners to deliver more or better products to the market, or to provide better service to customers, is a critical aspect of doing business in today’s energy retail markets. After all, in this era of deregulation, customers increasingly have their choice of energy providers. Working in conjunction with other participants in the marketplace is thus no longer an option, but a competitive imperative.

In many cases, your ability to supply rate- or bill-ready data to other energy suppliers can make a difference between retaining or losing a customer. And being able to work with partners to coordinate complex processes—for example, inspecting a new premise to determine its energy capacity and needs—requires open and transparent communications capabilities. Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail’s Open Market Exchange allows you to

- Accommodate all changes when a customer chooses a new supplier
- Adjust your billing model to adapt to whatever customers demand
- Automate multiprocess events that require coordination with other suppliers
- Speed settlement of revenues generated by joint activities with partners

Manage Risk

The system you choose to support your business must be scalable enough to grow as you do. You also need to be able to accommodate single customer signups and add large numbers of customers simultaneously without slowing overall system performance. Additionally, the market demands that you offer incentives such as discounts and affinity programs swiftly in response to competitor’s actions.

Getting a handle on key operational metrics is also key. You need to continuously compare them to industry standards to understand how well you are performing against competitors. With Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail, you can

- Scale readily from thousands to millions of customer accounts
- Process new customer accounts in any quantity
- Support both short- and long-term sign-up incentives
- Upgrade your system quickly and easily without undermining the investments you've already made in customer care automation
- Access predefined key performance indicators
- Provide decision-makers with dashboards that offer a comprehensive and consolidated view of all operations
- Integrate disparate data from multiple legacy systems into a single knowledgebase

Reduce Total Cost of System Ownership

Upgrading systems usually requires extensive personnel time, which results in high costs and often fails to produce tangible benefits. Energy industry averages for upgrading retail customer care applications can be upward of \$20 per customer. With Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail, a full upgrade costs less than \$2 per customer. Upgrading individual components costs less than 4 cents per customer.

Key features of Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail that help minimize total cost of ownership include

- A free service to integrate the system with other SPL products
- Low-cost archiving that stores and protects data throughout its lifecycle
- Customer relationship management capabilities that facilitate tracking and management of complex customer interactions
- Automated workflow processing
- Access to a configuration lab that moves data safely from testing to production
- A robust architecture that supports internal business process engineering initiatives

MEET COMPETITIVE CHALLENGES

You face an increasingly tough energy retail marketplace. Deregulation, increased competition, rising costs, and customers who demand superior service all contribute to your need to continuously improve organizational effectiveness while

cutting costs. Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Energy Retail allows you to accomplish all these things and more. By evolving your business according to market demands, you reduce risk while boosting customer satisfaction.

CONTACT US

For more information on Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing, call +1.800.ORACLE1 to speak to an Oracle representative, or visit oracle.com/industries/utilities.



UTILITIES

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