

Meeting the Demands of a
Transitioning Market with Oracle
Utilities Customer Care and Billing
for Integrated Utilities

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“[Oracle’s] SPL has an unrivalled track record in transforming former utility incumbents into innovative utility providers. We are a State-owned organization with the objective of being the most modern and customer-focused utility provider in our region. [Oracle’s] SPL experience and technological leadership will ensure that we achieve this goal.”

**—Abdal Saeed
CIS Project Manager
Sui Southern Gas Co.**

“The Board of Directors had very high expectations regarding business continuity in the short term and improvement of the service level/offering to our current client base in the medium term. We met and even surpassed the Board’s expectations.”

**—Patricia Busatto
Project Director, Comgás**

EVOLVE AS THE MARKET DOES

For more than a century, energy utility companies have been an integral part of local economies, ensuring a stable and reliable source of gas and electric services for consumer, business, and industrial customers alike. Today, however, although some utilities continue to engage in traditional business activities, many are being forced to adjust to the demands of an industry in the throes of revolutionary change.

Throughout all the disruption currently taking place, there is one constant: the customer. Keeping customers satisfied and continuously improving quality of care directly influence your ability to shorten billing cycles, compete in recently deregulated markets, and maximize cash flow. Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities enables you to do this, by providing comprehensive system support for all customer- and billing-centric operations.

DESIGN FLEXIBLE BUSINESS PROCESSES

With so many energy markets in a state of flux, you need to be able to respond to changes in competitive and regulatory conditions swiftly and efficiently. By implementing Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities, you can design business processes that are extremely flexible and that enable demand-side management and demand-response programs that conserve energy and help commercial and industrial customers maintain competitiveness.

Additionally, many utilities are facing the formidable challenge of making the transition from a regulated to a competitive market. Regional authorities routinely expect existing full-service utilities to make sweeping changes according to unpredictable and constantly evolving schedules and to help customers understand often-radical changes to their service options.

SCALE TO MEET EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

Newly deregulated niches provide you with revenue-rich opportunities in cable and telecommunications markets as well as opening up possibilities of selling equipment and related support services. On the other hand, escalating demand from a rapidly expanding customer base is straining your existing infrastructure. And constant—

and frequently unanticipated—changes in regulatory requirements necessitate the ability to change strategic direction instantaneously.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities makes it possible for you to do all this, by improving the efficiency of business processes that manage capacity and handle increased customer loads without requiring you to hire additional staff.

“System flexibility and ease of use have turned out to be real success stories. Our users can easily make changes and adapt. That’s a crucial factor in today’s business climate. If we want to add another business function, we can.”

**—Marv Routliffe
Director of Information Services
and Technology, EnWin**

Cut Costs While Improving Customer Service Quality

With regulatory requirements and infrastructure improvement initiatives squeezing your profit margins, cost containment is not an option but an imperative. However, you can’t afford to sacrifice customer service quality when pursuing cost-cutting goals.

The call center is the lifeblood of your customer service strategy. It is the primary conduit through which your customers contact you and is your first—and best—method for responding in a way that communicates your dedication to delivering the best-possible quality of service.

Yet your call center personnel may still be dependent on outdated legacy systems or even manual processes for accessing customer records. This makes it difficult—if not impossible—for them to respond quickly to customer queries. Likewise, data collection and billing errors can take significant amounts of time to properly research and often require calling customers back hours or even days after the initial call. Not only does this frustrate customers—who want to resolve problems immediately—but it is also an extremely costly and nonproductive use of your call center workers’ time.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities streamlines call center activities, increasing customer satisfaction while significantly reducing costs.

Among other benefits, the system allows you to

- Shorten call times and significantly cut down on callbacks, by giving call center staff members complete and immediate access to customer account histories
- Minimize employee training time through an intuitive user interface, online help, and prewritten scripts to handle the most-common customer service scenarios
- Increase the productivity of call center workers, reducing the need for personnel and therefore dramatically cutting employee costs
- Steer customers to alternate sources of help via integrated voice response (IVR) systems and self-service Web sites
- Spread call volumes out over the month by varying billing cycles of customer accounts

Automate Field Service Tasks

Field service tasks—such as establishing new connections, dispatching field personnel to do special reads, performing final reads, and scheduling routine and emergency service calls—are activities that water utility firms perform every day. You can reap enormous efficiencies—and dramatically reduce costs—by streamlining and automating the underlying business processes that support them.

With Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities, you can

- Automate service order initiation
- Enable rapid service order dispatch
- Upload data from completed field service tasks to a centralized, integrated database for call center personnel to access in real time
- Redirect field personnel to respond to emergency calls for service

Optimize Cash Flow

Integrated utility companies must minimize the time it takes to turn customer energy consumption into billing statements and billing statements into cash. Consumer, business, and industrial customers pay more quickly when they receive easy-to-read, accurate bills that are timed to coordinate with the availability of financial resources or that fit into their schedules for disbursing funds for monthly expenses. Consumers, for example, might prefer to receive their billing statements at the beginning of the month, after they have been paid by their employers. Companies with multiple offices might request that individual statements sent to regional hubs be consolidated into one bill that's sent to their headquarters. And large industrial customers might ask for utility bills to be provided in the form of electronic data tables.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities allows you to do all this, in addition to monitoring debt levels, adjusting collection methods to the specific financial situations of individual customers—consumer, corporate, or industrial—and better managing deposits to speed payments and reduce uncollected debt.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities also allows you to

- Ensure bill accuracy, by automatically identifying and resolving issues before sending out billing statements
- Tailor bill formats according to customer preferences
- Let customers choose the end date for their billing cycles
- Help customers better understand their bills, by providing graphs that show how consumption varies over the course of the billing cycle

- Offer a choice of payment methods, including e-mail, internet, cash deposit, direct debit, and postal service
- Lower debt collection costs

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 sign-ups or add large numbers of customers simultaneously without affecting overall system performance. Additionally, you must be able to adjust service offerings and prices swiftly in response to competitors' actions or to regulatory requirements.

With Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities, you can

- Scale readily from thousands to millions of customer accounts
- Smoothly integrate disparate legacy systems brought into your organization through mergers or acquisitions
- Create what-if scenarios about service adjustments, with realistic options for executives, community leaders, and regulators
- Spontaneously generate reports to examine the effects of program changes on customer consumption volumes and resulting grid use
- Process any number of new customer accounts
- Upgrade your system quickly and easily without undermining the investments you've already made in customer care automation

"To ensure implementation success, we wanted to maintain close control of the entire process. The key was assembling the right team—both internally and through our partnership with [Oracle's] SPL. Human capital is your number 1 asset. [Oracle's] SPL implementation team worked seamlessly with our staff to help us craft an implementation methodology that was flawless. We knew we had chosen the superior solution with [Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing] for Integrated Utilities. Its partnership and team approach enabled the follow-through and completion of a very successful project."

—Shahab Saeed

**President and Chief Operating Officer,
Questar Energy Systems**

Reduce Total Cost of System Ownership

Upgrading systems requires extensive personnel time, which results in high costs but often fails to produce tangible benefits. Energy industry average expenses for upgrading customer care applications can exceed US\$20 per customer. With Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities, a full upgrade costs less than US\$2 per customer. Upgrading individual components costs less than 4 cents per customer.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities has several key features that help minimize the total cost of ownership, including

- Low-cost archiving that stores and protects data over its entire lifecycle
- Tracking and automated workflow processing
- A configuration lab that moves data safely from testing to production
- A robust architecture that supports internal business-process-engineering initiatives

ADVANCE TOWARD THE FUTURE

You operate in an industry that is in the process of a radical transformation. Moreover, rising infrastructure costs, shifting regulatory requirements, and customers demanding superior service all contribute to your need to continuously improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Integrated Utilities enables you to accomplish these goals and more. By allowing you to swiftly evolve your business as the market demands, it reduces risk, boosts customer satisfaction, and maximizes revenues.

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.



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