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Utilities

Utilities Cloud Solutions

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Moving from “new abnormal”  
to “new normal” to “new next”  
with the cloud





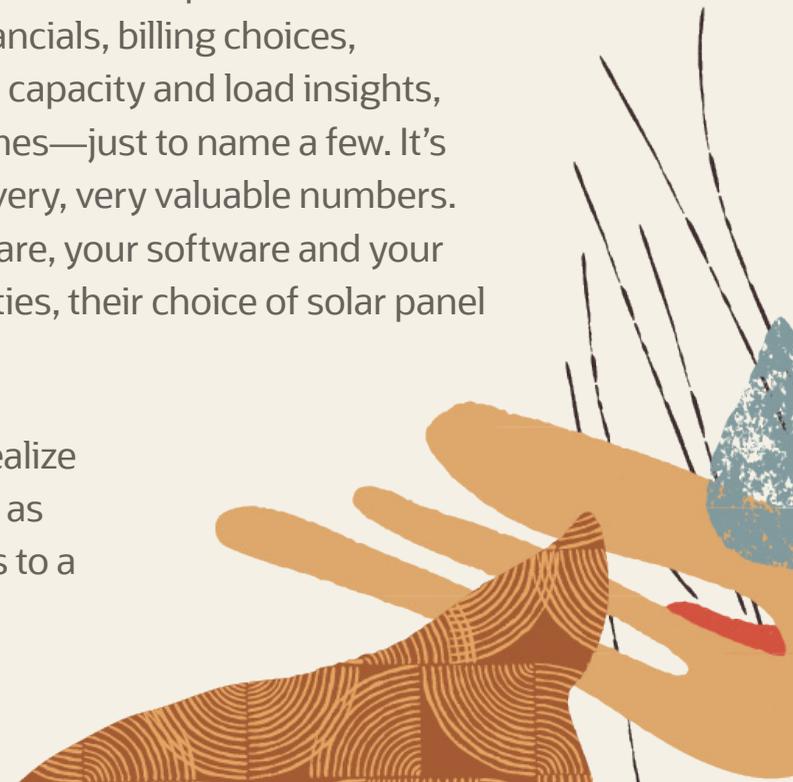
# Today's utility/retailer universe is defined by data.

Within a world more physically distant these days, we're all tapping into digital to keep a close eye on all the utility fronts, from your meter to your feeder.

You're getting data from places on your network that, six months ago, you weren't entirely sure you needed. But, today you do. Today, all that information you're collecting will smooth the transition to that new utility universe where visualization tools and real-time options are more important than ever.

That helpful data is a whirlpool overflowing with details and preferences. It's a tsunami of sign-up information, market financials, billing choices, communication options, PMU or citygate health, capacity and load insights, substation maintenance charts, and peak use times—just to name a few. It's the pure essence of your work world reduced to very, very valuable numbers. Now, as you gain more insight about your hardware, your software and your customers—their wants, their needs, their anxieties, their choice of solar panel installations—where are you putting all of it?

Our suggestion: in the cloud, of course, but we realize saying you need to be in the cloud isn't the same as helping you get there. So, let's talk practical steps to a cloud solution.





## Understand the basic benefits of cloud across your utility, from field service to executive buy-in.

First and foremost in any good plan is nailing down a good understanding—of both the problem and potential solutions. Picture an area of your business where you're having data collection, storage or use issues. Think about the meetings you've had and the experts you've brought in. Then think about the benefits a cloud-based solution can bring you: faster access to infrastructure and

time-to-market, greater scalability and higher availability, larger geographic reach and more continuity at the same time, higher performance and greater cost savings (plus greater efficiency). And, of course, there's a growing opportunity to incorporate customer data and access it on the go.



## Look to peers for reference points and, yes, a little reassurance, too.

No one wants to be the first person to take the leap on a new area of tech or software, but, luckily, you're not alone here in this move toward more comprehensive cloud coverage. In a recent Oracle Utilities-sponsored survey, the top two areas where utilities said they planned to leverage cloud were meter data management (89%) and customer information systems (69%). As with many open doors, sometimes the way forward can't be completely seen. There's a leap of faith with digital

transformation—faith in yourself, faith in the numbers, faith in technology reliability and faith in your strategy. The percentage of utilities taking that cloud leap is growing. In that same survey, over half of North American utility executives said they were already using cloud technology, with even more planning on new uses in the near future. In Europe, nearly three-quarters of those surveyed said they are using the cloud now and plan to grow that use.





## Let go of the old cultural needs to keep things in house (and shift old arguments to new ones).

Anonymous, one utility executive confided this: This industry is well past the era of in-house builds. It's well known, but, traditionally, it's not been well accepted. There's been a closed culture that persists in utilities globally, and it can be hard to convince people who've always controlled infrastructure that having the responsibility shift to a third-party isn't a bad thing at all (and can bring a lot of those benefits in #1, especially scalability

and lower costs). But the world shifted with COVID-19 has made that push for digital bridges and cloud options that live outside the utility not just more acceptable but entirely necessary. So, rather than making the argument for keeping/updating legacy systems and tech in-house, why not shift this argument to how your utility can work better (and more efficiently) in this new, distributed normal?



## Dissect that big leap into baby steps but keep final goal in mind.

**The end goal: everything in the cloud.**

But it doesn't have to be a single step there. You can step up your game just that way—in steps. Start with on-premises options and then plan how to move to a hybrid, to managed hosting to a software-as-a-service or platform-as-a-service option. And break it down farther. Systems

software, data centers, application middleware, business applications and configurations, they may need to make this journey at varied and different speeds. And that's OK. Need help deciding speed of that transition and the hierarchy of what should go first and what can wait? Give us a call. We'd be happy to help you sort out that puzzle.



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## Avoid shopping pitfalls and know your focus.

The cloud will soon no longer be an option; it will be a necessity. So, when shopping cloud services, what should you look for and what should you avoid? While it may sound odd, stay away from the big picture and concentrate on those areas of your business that can benefit the most from that shift right now.

Likely, in this environment, that's going to be customer-focused. You'll need the ability to manage regulatory changes, robust rating and billing options, support for efficiency and demand-side products and time-of-day pricing and tariff issues—along with an offering that automatically patches for security.

Look for a solution made for the cloud (not forced into it). Know the gap between cloud options. (Private cloud and software-as-a-service are very different animals, for example.) And shop for an offering that keeps up with IT and utility-specific security standards. (But don't buy into the myth that the cloud is less secure than on-premises solutions.) Finally, find an advisor and a partner with the full capacity to work with all of your systems and the flexibility to help you navigate the changes that will continue to morph your utility universe.



### About Oracle Utilities

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