

The Key to Elevating Customer Care: Human-Centered Self-Service for Utilities

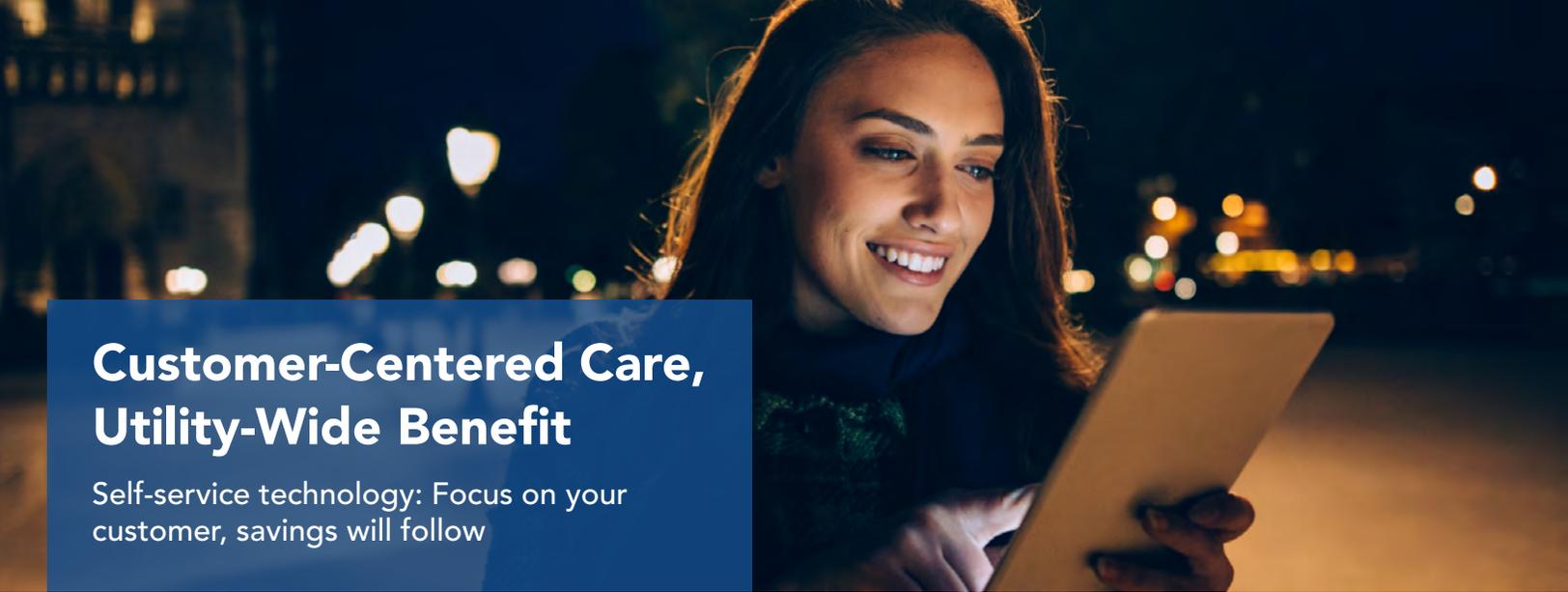
by Vikas Mukhi



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Customer-Centered Care, Utility-Wide Benefit

Self-service technology: Focus on your customer, savings will follow

Analysts at Navigant Research expect utilities in the U.S. to invest \$774 million annually on customer engagement solutions by 2022.

Why is this spending growing in the U.S. and throughout North America? Navigant says it reflects the changing utility-industry landscape: aging infrastructure, more distribution energy resources and renewables, more need for demand management and, therefore, a need for stronger utility-customer ties.

What's more, your customers have been pumping gas without station attendants and scanning groceries without

a checkout clerk for years. When they buy an airline ticket, they go online and do it without a travel agent. Then they select a seat, check in and download boarding passes to their smartphones.

They're in control. That's the way they like it. A 2016 survey of U.S. consumers found that 71 percent want the ability to solve most customer service issues on their own.

Done right, customer self-service applications can strengthen your customer ties and help you navigate the industry changes ahead.



Your customers look for self-service options

One study found 90 percent of customers expect it.



Your satisfaction scores will likely rise

Research from J.D. Power shows that communication and control are keys to raising customer satisfaction ratings.



Self-service shows customers you value their time

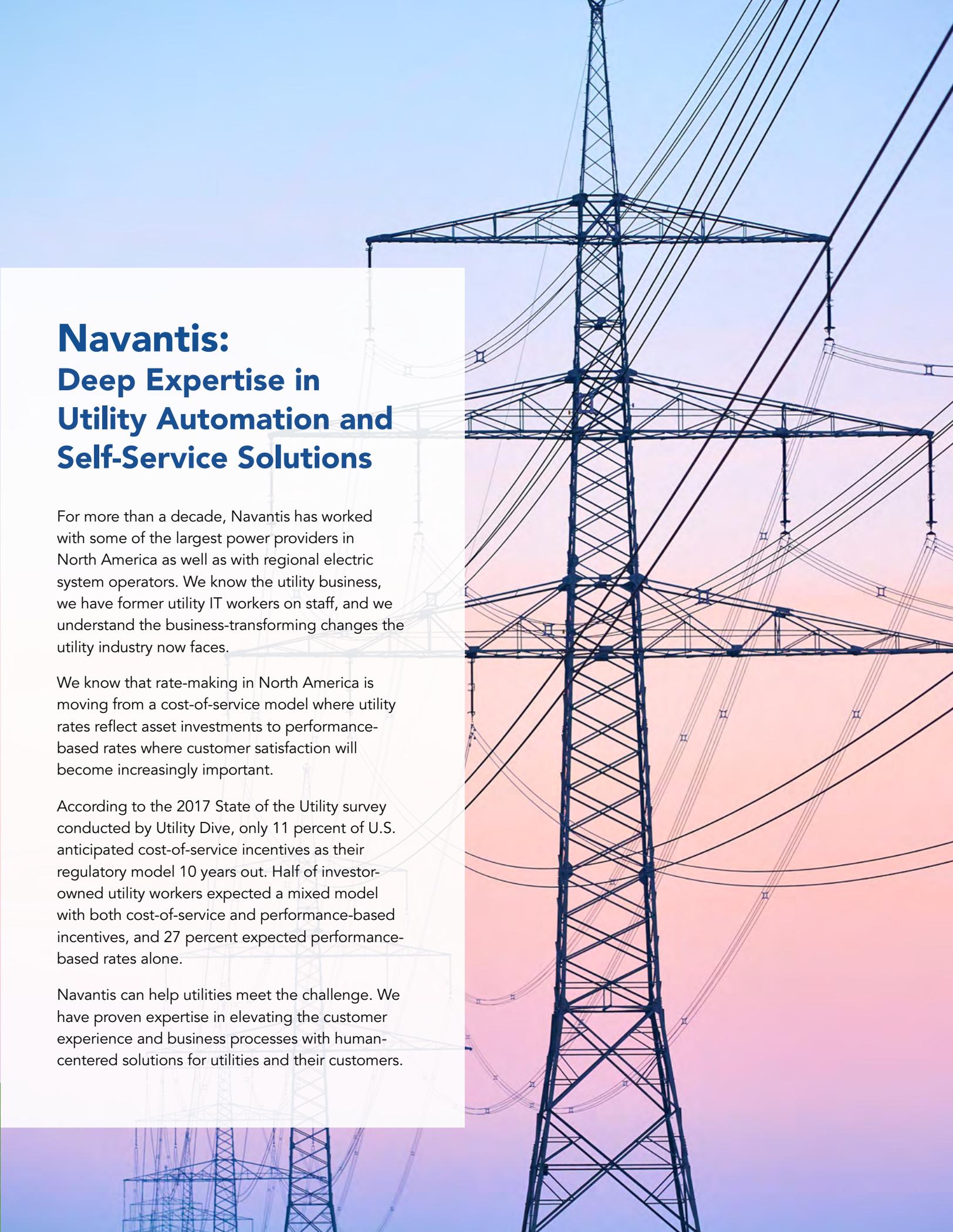
It lets your customers do things like pay bills on their own schedule, not during your call center hours. Forrester researchers found that 73 percent of customers say valuing their time is the most important thing companies can do to provide good customer service.



Your utility can save money

Self-service options can improve outage reporting and speed restoration efforts, reduce call-center calls, lower bill processing/mail-out expenses and more.

The question isn't if you should increase self-service applications. The question is **"How should you do it?"** The answer is simple: **with Navantis, a Datavail company.**



Navantis: Deep Expertise in Utility Automation and Self-Service Solutions

For more than a decade, Navantis has worked with some of the largest power providers in North America as well as with regional electric system operators. We know the utility business, we have former utility IT workers on staff, and we understand the business-transforming changes the utility industry now faces.

We know that rate-making in North America is moving from a cost-of-service model where utility rates reflect asset investments to performance-based rates where customer satisfaction will become increasingly important.

According to the 2017 State of the Utility survey conducted by Utility Dive, only 11 percent of U.S. anticipated cost-of-service incentives as their regulatory model 10 years out. Half of investor-owned utility workers expected a mixed model with both cost-of-service and performance-based incentives, and 27 percent expected performance-based rates alone.

Navantis can help utilities meet the challenge. We have proven expertise in elevating the customer experience and business processes with human-centered solutions for utilities and their customers.

Case in point: Savings through self-service e-billing sign-ups

A North American T&D service provider serving 1.3 million business and residential customers had only 8 percent of those customers signed up for e-billing. Each paper bill cost the company an average of \$5 in processing and mailing costs. With an industry adoption rate for e-billing of up to 30 percent, increasing e-billing sign-ups was a priority for this utility.



The utility brought Navantis in to build a single platform that would reduce operational and management costs while enabling customer self-service. Navantis:

- Redesigned and re-platformed the public-facing website and self-service for a better customer experience.
- Implemented a hybrid infrastructure in Azure to host the website and portal, thereby shaving infrastructure costs with a cloud-based solution.

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An award-winning Microsoft partner since 1998

Microsoft has been at the forefront of digital transformation, and Navantis has been a Microsoft partner – in delivery, deployment and education – since the inception of .NET, the language and development framework that enabled organizations to first extend themselves online.

As each new technology joined the Microsoft solution suite, Navantis mastered it. We're experts at knitting together multiple technologies – SharePoint, CRM and BizTalk – to create a unified whole that enables utilities to better serve their customers. As a long-time resource for multiple utilities, the Navantis team also is well versed in the Microsoft Smart Energy Reference Architecture, a reference architecture based on familiar, cost-effective Microsoft platforms that can serve as the basis for development of the "integrated utility of the future."



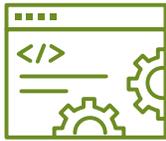
Experienced Integrators

The average call-center agent must access as many as 19 different systems to complete common customer service requests. That means self-service projects require deep integration knowledge across multiple types of legacy systems, including Microsoft, IBM, Oracle, SAP, home-grown and others. Navantis can seamlessly connect back-end and front-end systems.



Master Data Experts

Customer self-service portals are only as effective as the integrity of the data that empowers them. Navantis has data cleansing expertise and thorough understanding of source or master data best practices.



Content Management Proficiency

We're adept developers in a variety of CMS technologies and frameworks, including Progress Sitefinity, Orchard CMS, Agility CMS and SharePoint. With hundreds of customer self-service portals in production, Navantis is one of Microsoft's top SharePoint integrators. That's one reason we've earned multiple awards, including the Microsoft Portals and Collaboration Partner of the year for 2012 and Microsoft 2017 Technology for Good Partner of the Year.

Case in point: The right call for fewer calls

A municipal utility serving 756,000 business and residential customers was fielding some 96,000 calls annually from customer reporting outages and wires down.

Navantis had been working with this utility for more than seven years when they asked for a mobile-first outage-reporting solution so that customers who'd lost power in their homes or businesses could still contact the utility to report loss of service.



Results

- Navantis built the outage-reporting solution in 2.5 months.
- Customers gained the ability to report an outage from any device or location.
- Call center volume related to outage reporting dropped 25 percent.



Build, Measure, Learn, Improve

Navantis comes to the table with artefacts, best practices, proven methodologies, key findings, lessons learned, familiar design tools, and utilities-specific industry experience that will help mitigate any risks that might potentially exist.

We start with discovery. We can help you identify the opportunities that could lead to self-service enhancements or uncover savings that could pay for the project investment. And, once you decide to move forward, we'll do a deep dive into data – customer information, call center records, outage restoration figures and more – to identify customer experience priorities and how to best meet them.

During implementation, we work in an agile, incremental way, delivering applications in phases and validating them every step of the way with users to drive user adoption. All the while, your current state remains in a steady state.

Once we launch your new applications, we monitor user and system behavior to drive continuous improvement. Your customers are constantly evolving, and we help you keep up with them.

Case in point: Listening to customers pays off

A large Canadian utility decided to launch a highly functional customer self-service portal. The power provider worked with Navantis to implement a site built around the Customer Care Self-Service Reference Architecture.

The portal provides 24/7 access to information and services customers need, such as payment history, bills and account details. It is highly targeted to this utility's specific customer needs and experiences because Navantis used actual call center data to understand what drove most call-center traffic. Example: One of the top five requests is to update account information because a customer is moving or has a new phone number.

Results

- Now, the most frequently requested service activities are easy for customers to handle on their own using the new self-service portal.
- Incoming calls to the utility call center dropped from 614,000 to 214,900 calls annually.
- Call volume overall is down 65%.

Managing the data powering your solutions

What powers self-service applications? Data.

Some is customer data, such as contact information, payment history, consumption patterns and more. Some might be data about utility offerings, like energy efficiency programs or green power options customer can choose.

Self-service applications move back-end activities to the front end. You give the customer access to data like the examples above, information you might previously have reserved for call center representatives. When customers conduct business, those self-service applications create more data.

Are you ready to handle it? Maybe not. Research from Microsoft indicates that the quality of customer data hinders 48 percent of companies that want to adapt customer care to customer needs. Nearly one in three chief marketing officers cite technology capabilities as a major challenge to delivering the experiences their customers expect.

These issues won't plague you with Navantis, a Datavail company. That's because Datavail is the largest database services company in North America. With Datavail, you get:



More than 1,000 data and development experts

We hire seasoned professionals with years of technical expertise, business acumen and a genuine desire to serve.



A single resource for any data-related need you have

BI/analytics, application development and integration, intelligent enterprise solutions, data management, project management, remote DBA support – 24 x 7 x 365 – and more: yours with Datavail



Support for every major technology related to data

You name it, we probably have experts who can help you run it.

Navantis, a Datavail company

You gain one company to harness your data through self-service applications, build the systems, manage the data they create and help you leverage insights you gain for enhanced service and operations.

Elevate customer care you deliver at your utility. You can achieve better service through self service with Navantis, a Datavail company.



Biography



Vikas Mukhi

Enterprise Architect, Navantis

Vikas Mukhi is an Enterprise Architect at Navantis, a Datavail company with 15+ years of successful leadership and experience in business processes, complex applications and secure enterprise-class solutions necessary for 24/7 business operations.

His responsibilities include Solution strategy and implementation for business operations and has been recognized as a customer-trusted advisor throughout the project life cycle.

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About Datavail

Datavail is a company of over 1,000 professionals helping clients build and manage applications and data via a world-class tech-enabled delivery platform and software solutions across all leading technologies.

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