Powering the customer experience with AI

Explore IBM Cognitive Care
for SAP® Utilities

Transforming the utility customer experience

Highlights

– Utilities are looking to deliver the high quality experience that consumers expect, while reducing cost-to-serve and identifying new customer segments to drive additional revenue.

– IBM's vision for cognitive care is AI-first with seamless human touch.

– IBM Cognitive Care for SAP Utilities creates intelligent workflows with embedded machine learning, conversational AI, and automation.

Expectation levels for customer service have never been higher for utilities. And in markets where energy services are competitive, the need to differentiate through products and services is critical to acquiring new customers, enhancing loyalty, and reducing churn.

Modern digital consumers are more connected, informed, proactive, questioning, and demanding. They expect instant answers to their questions through the channel of their choosing, and an experience that is personalized to their specific needs and preferences. The challenge for most utilities is that their legacy customer systems often lack the flexibility to enable rich customer interaction across inbound and outbound channels.

The traditional contact center model is ineffective and expensive. Agents rarely have all the customer information they need at their fingertips and are forced to switch between multiple apps or windows to access a variety of systems – often having to log in each time. This not only reduces service quality and first time resolution rates as well as increasing average handle time, but can leave agents feeling frustrated and pressured – resulting in a poor experience for both customer and agent.

Utilities are faced with a dilemma: how do they transform their customer engagement to deliver the high-quality experience that consumers and employees expect, while staying competitive by reducing cost-to-serve and identifying new sources of revenue?

IBM believes that cognitive care powered by the latest AI innovations can help to resolve this dilemma.

The IBM vision for cognitive care

IBM has a clear vision for delivering exceptional customer care:

- **AI-first with seamless human touch:** Enhance digital channels to serve customers 24x7 where and how they chose. Seamlessly blend automated digital service with human assist, if and when needed.

- **Empowered customer care agents:** Provide a single view of trusted customer data across every interaction to empower agents to resolve inquiries on first contact with quick, accurate, and consistent service.

- **Proactive personalized engagement:** Anticipate and address the customer's needs with personalized communications in the "moments that matter" through their preferred engagement model.

IBM Cognitive Care for SAP Utilities

To bring this vision to life, IBM in partnership with SAP developed a cognitive care solution for the SAP for Utilities solution portfolio. It is fully integrated with the SAP® Service Cloud portfolio and Experience Management solutions from SAP and Qualtrics. The cognitive care solution also integrates with SAP Customer Experience solutions and SAP S4/HANA® to create new intelligent workflows with embedded machine learning, conversational AI, and automation.

These intelligent workflows emanate from the core CIS business processes in IBM's impact solution for utilities in SAP S/4HANA. The workflows deliver business services across a range of digital channels to provide round-the-clock service to customers on the channel of their choice and to proactively anticipate and address customer needs. Customers can communicate naturally through their preferred channel and share images, videos, and texts as part of their conversation.

When human contact is required, the solution seamlessly brings in agents to supplement machine engagements. While automation handles the repetitive, low-skill, multisystem tasks, live agents can respond where empathy and focus on higher-value tasks are required. Agents can also answer customer enquiries more quickly and appropriately.

Having a clear channel and automation strategy is key to succeeding in the future. Recognizing these challenges, IBM has created an AI service for cognitive care that's focused on optimizing customer satisfaction and lowering costs while reducing risk for the utility.
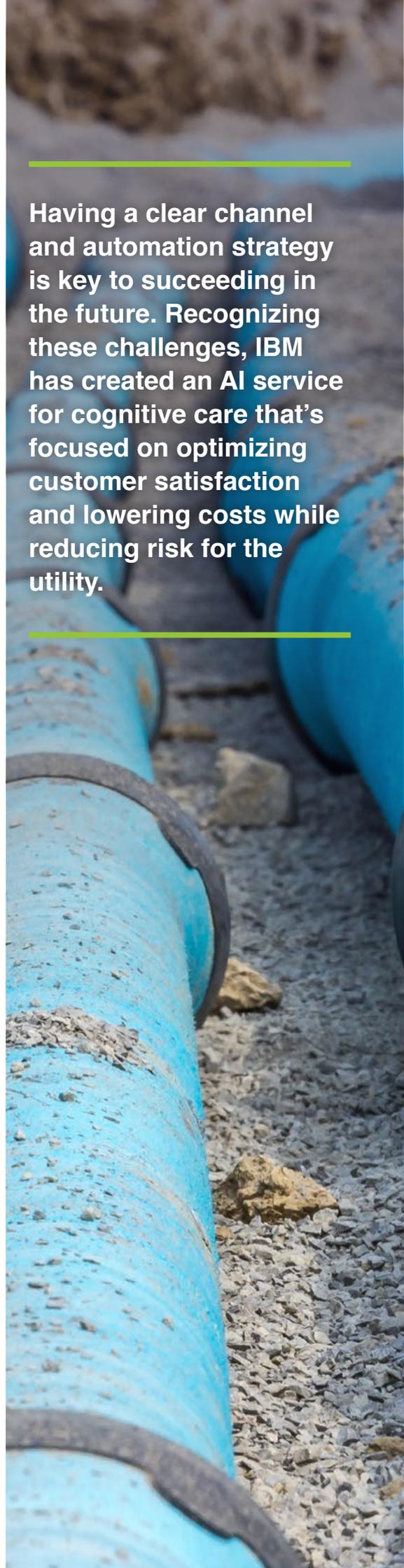
> ❝
> *Intelligent workflows connect and enhance digital channels to provide a round-the-clock service to customers on the channel of their choice, and to proactively anticipate and address customer needs.*
> ❞

Engage anywhere, anytime

IBM's Watson Assistant is embedded in SAP Service Cloud solutions. You can use it to build your own branded live chatbot into any device, application, or channel. When embedded in Facebook Messenger chat (see Figure 1), for example, it can invite the customer to participate in a survey using the SAP Qualtrics Surveys mobile app. This can provide valuable insights into the customer's individual preferences and requirements. Those responses appear automatically in "Agent Assist" within SAP Service Cloud solutions – along with key customer information as well as recommendations and actions to guide the agent's next moves. The solution includes a set of four utilities-specific machine learning algorithms, deployable on IBM's Cloud Pak for Data, that are integrated into SAP Service Cloud to provide valuable insights for predictive targeting.
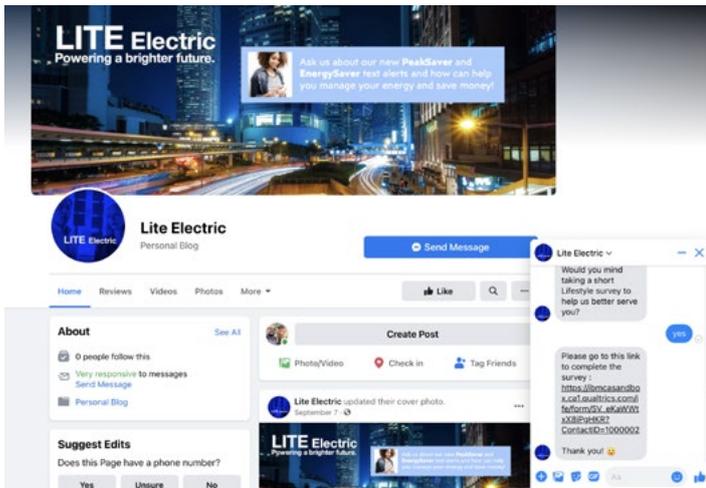

Figure 1: IBM Watson Assistant responding on Facebook Messenger

Create new business value

Utilities customers want to be known and understood. Transforming the customer experience with cognitive care can enable utilities companies to:

Reduce costs through the automation of service requests across different channels and a reduction in handling time for human agents.

Increase revenues through greater personalization and customer intimacy, and better targeting of cross- and upselling campaigns.

Drive productivity by deploying agents to more value-added customer engagements and enabling faster and more accurate responses.

Improve NPS (Net Promoter Score) through quicker response times, faster resolution, and engaging customers on their preferred channel.

Not surprisingly, more and more contact centers have turned to cognitive technology and artificial intelligence to meet these pressing challenges, and IBM research shows that early adopters report improved customer service as a top outcome.

IBM and SAP: Redefining the Intelligent Business Standard

Organizations of all sizes and industries are looking to create exceptional customer experiences, uncover new revenue opportunities, optimize investments and fundamentally reinvent how business gets done by using intelligent technologies and migrating to the cloud. But the shift in strategy to do it right is far from easy.

IBM and SAP have the innovation and industry expertise to help set that strategy and see you through the change. We are actively working with businesses around the world to define the standard for how AI, machine learning, and other intelligent technologies are used most effectively and most responsibly.

SAP provides the world's leading intelligent applications and technologies – connecting, clarifying and using all the data that matters to your organization to make your processes more nimble and decisions more powerful. IBM helps customers build smarter businesses and is a global leader in SAP transformations – offering in-depth industry and process experience, together with game-changing AI, multi-cloud and on-premise deployment, and talent and change management capabilities.

Together, we will lay the foundation for innovation for your business, infusing the best technologies available, preserving your existing investments, and taking your organization where it needs to go. We'll help you take transformation from a boardroom topic to an everyday reality – working together to bring intelligence to your entire enterprise.

For More Information visit: www.ibm-sap.com/digitaltransformation