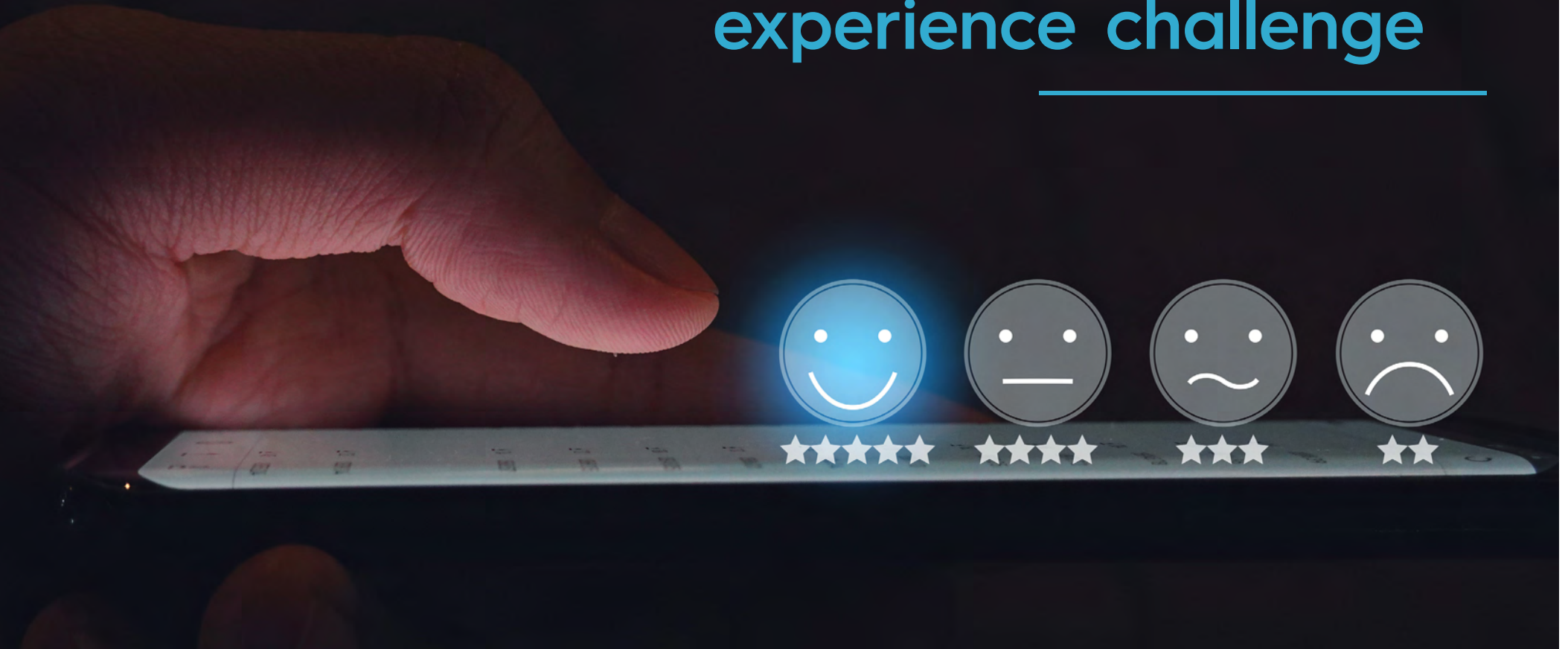



Measuring for future success - **The customer experience challenge**





The utility industry is in the midst of a huge wave of change which Ofgem summarises as “**digitalisation, decarbonisation and decentralisation**”, and Ofwat in their discussion paper on PR24 and beyond: Creating tomorrow, together say -



We face an immediate challenge. Our water sector needs to tackle demands from climate change, customers' increasing expectations for service and the treatment of the environment, and the pressures on people's ability to pay.



With this amount of change and complexity on the horizon, Utility organisations need to get the balance right of making sure they are delivering improved services today, whilst being focused on laying the foundations for meeting customers increasing expectations for even better services in the future.



How do you know whether you're on the right track? (Or, how will the c-suite know you're on the right track?)

Customer experience is commonly measured at board level using NPS (and specific industry measures such as C-MeX and D-MeX). For some it's even the measure by which company wide bonuses are paid. You can see NPS's allure, it's easy to implement and report on, with just one question being asked to customers. But, that's the downfall of a metric like NPS. It only tells you, after all your hard work, how good your current experience is, or with a reasonable lag, how good your experience was a few days or weeks ago.

To make sure customer experiences are delivering to meet expectations today and are ready for a future of change, Utility organisations need to recognise that traditional, historical measures of customer experience will no longer provide them with the valuable insights they are looking for. Instead they need to be considering measures which will tell them how well they are performing right now. For example:

How many measures actively involve customer and user groups in an iterative user-centric approach?

How much user research took place within the last month? How many board members observed it?

How diverse was the research? Did it involve people with additional needs?

Only by utilising these measures will the board and stakeholders know whether the work they are doing now will have the right impact in the future.

Simply put. You become what you value and what you measure.

So where should you start on improving your customer experience?

There are three primary groups - customers, employees and the wider community. Key questions to ask at the start of the customer experience improvement journey include:

- Are customers receiving the right service? Is it updating as their needs and behaviours change? Are you actively engaging those who are vulnerable and have accessibility needs?
- Are employees equipped and empowered to deliver an excellent service, whether in (home) office and field based roles?
- What's the ethical responsibility of the organisation to the broader community - locally to where they are based, nationally and even internationally (for example WaterAid).



Customers



Employees



Wider
Community





How to become more people centric

Someone once said to me **“organisations get the customer experience they deserve”**. It wasn't meant as a pejorative statement towards companies that were delivering poor experiences. Rather it points towards the values, agenda and behaviours of the organisation.

We can all identify organisations that excel at customer experience. They can be typified by not just talking about the importance of customer experience, but by delivering on it.

It starts with a change in emphasis and culture, but it's delivered through new approaches, ones that align programmes of work and the transformational change to the needs and behaviours of customers. For many organisations this approach sounds like it's full of risk **“That sounds like the right thing to do, but it's going to derail our delivery”**, but in fact the opposite is true. Adopting these approaches typically costs a fraction of the overall delivery cost, and by ensuring your delivering the right thing for your customers you are actually de-risking both the overall programme spend and the chance of failure.

To meet changing customer expectations and regulatory demands Utility organisations must take a **‘customer first’** approach to service improvements. By taking a ‘customer first’ approach, Utility organisations will be able to make sure their existing and new ways of working actually fit into the lives of the people that need to use their services, and satisfy regulatory requirements alongside the development of an inclusive customer experience for all.

More Information

By working with Sopra Steria to overcome the challenges related to Customer Experience, Energy and Utility organisations can unlock their potential and provide a Customer Experience which truly delivers for their customers today and in the future.

If you would like to discover more about our Customer Experience services please contact one of our specialists below:

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We look forward to working with you.

