THE NEW DIGITAL WORLD IN 2020
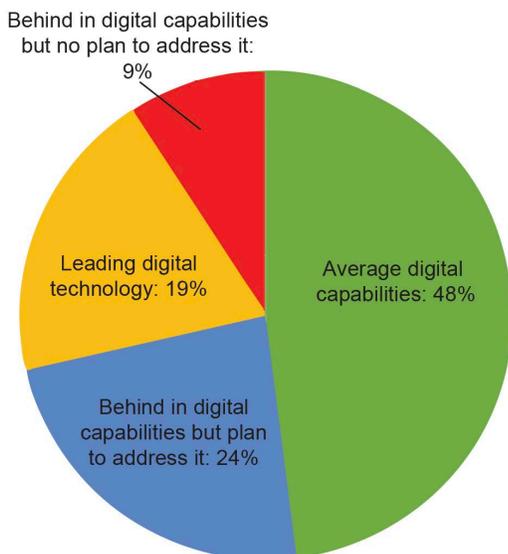

> **BASED ON THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHER INDUSTRIES, UTILITIES SHOULD BEGIN TO ACCELERATE MORE AMBITIOUS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION GOALS.**

As industries across North America grapple with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the utility industry has been on the front lines of essential services, tirelessly implementing contingency plans. Utility companies typically have an award-winning track record when it comes to preparing for emergencies; however, industry leaders and executives anticipated that this event would be different, with a longer-term effect. While some jobs have transitioned to remote or outsourced for the last few years, the industry faced a unique challenge.

With customer advocacy initiatives such as suspended collections, waiving late fees, delaying approved rate increases, and restoring service to combat external pressures, a bigger challenge was manifesting internally. Was the utility industry digitally ready for this event?

A recent poll during SAP's Utility Forum indicted that:

The results show a glaring need of advanced technologies to enable the digital capabilities that are mission critical and provide operational efficiency and enhanced productivity. The need to connect to the customer in a personalized manner, automate back office processes, have a secured environment, and manage cloud products, predictive insights of the workforce, and field assets is needed more than ever for the post pandemic digital utility.

Based on the experiences of other industries, utilities should begin to accelerate more ambitious digital transformation goals. Digital initiatives will emerge as an even bigger opportunity for utilities to improve their resilience of their critical infrastructure and further enhance their ability to provide increase customer experience.

While each utility will have different needs and requirements for a digital workplace and customer service, the following 10 key steps should be considered.

1. Consider ways to increase automation and use emerging technology to minimize person-to-person contact

2. Strengthen your remote access management policy and procedures

3. Geospatial views of the serviced locations and field assets

4. Adapting an agile operating model

5. Use data analytics to inform a responsive and relevant approach to addressing customer needs and support

6. Enhance customer channels, including 2-way texting, conversational AI and social media management

7. Ensure the pulse of your employees

8. Increase customer education via digital channels on ways to conserve energy

9. Attracting and retaining digital talent to manage and maintain new technologies and assets

10. Build a robust ecosystem of trusted partners to support your digitalization efforts

As we move forward, organizations across the spectrum will change the way they operate and serve along with the technologies required to enable the key digital capabilities. Utilities will need to evolve on how to better serve customers and manage assets and workforce in the new normal. The customer and employee experiences have changed forever.

Anthony Sabatini, Industry Executive Advisor for Utilities – SAP

As an Industry Executive Advisor, Anthony builds meaningful relationships and delivers value driven utility specific customer experiences. It is with an industry lens that Anthony drives business development, thought leadership and accelerates value creation for his customers.

Anthony Sabatini joined SAP in 2018 as an Industry Value Advisor within Regulated Industries and currently lives in Spring, TX.

Prior to joining SAP, Anthony worked in the utilities industry for 15 years and held several roles within the business, training and process improvement, and IT.

In addition to Anthony's industry experience, he worked as a consultant implementing SAP solutions for a number of utilities in the US and abroad.