

# Motivating and empowering utilities employees

How Rizing can help your utility organization transform the experience you offer your employees.



The utilities sector – which encompasses power, natural gas, water and sewage - is one upon which we all depend. Globally, its value is predicted to reach \$8,105b in 2026.<sup>1</sup>

It's also a sector in the midst of change. As well as the challenges posed by Covid-19, utilities are under enormous pressure from customers and citizens to reduce their emissions and carbon footprint, as well as adhere to an ever-growing set of regulations and requirements. According to a recent study, 93% of utility organizations plan to adapt to meet consumer expectations for a cleaner economy over the next few years.<sup>2</sup>

Digital technologies are playing an increasingly central role in helping utilities businesses achieve these targets, and Covid-19 has amplified the need for more automated, digital tools in areas such as IoT, edge computing and AI.<sup>3</sup> A recent study reveals that the pandemic accelerated digital implementation in 45% of utility companies.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, the knowledge of utility workers needs to change too – with more emphasis on specific digital skills, and knowledge of compliance and regulatory frameworks. This means employers must focus both on the learning and development of existing employees, as well as attracting and retaining talent with expertise in new areas.

Adding to this, employers in the utilities sector continue to be affected by a growing skills shortage. In the US, more than half of energy employers say they are challenged to find the right talent, and three out of four think the problem will worsen in the next five years. Over 30% of utility workers in the US are also close to retirement.<sup>5</sup> In the UK, 27% of the utilities workforce is set to retire in the next 10 years, and this, combined with the need for new skills, means the sector will need to replace or retrain 48% of its current workforce – which means 277,000 vacancies over the next decade.<sup>6</sup>

Health and safety remains a key priority among utility companies. According to a recent State of Safety Culture in Utilities report by Sentis, 87% of worksites operate within a negative safety culture; 1 in 4 incidents aren't reported; and team support is strong, but workers still don't feel able to raise incidents and near misses.<sup>7</sup>

The reality also remains that many utility forms are still using dated technology to manage core infrastructure like payroll and HR, which limits efficiencies, impacts the employee experience, and increases potential vulnerability to cyber-attack.

In this eBook we explore some of the core challenges that relate specifically to employee experience in the utilities sector, and explain how a solution from Rizing can help.



## Why employee experience matters in utilities

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**36%** Just one-third (36%) of utility workers feel highly satisfied with their jobs, and 55% feel fairly satisfied.

**6%** Only 6% of leaders believe their utility is performing excellently at recruiting younger/technical talent.

**52%** Just over half of utility organizations (52%) listed employee experience as one of their top priorities.

**60%** Over 60% of utility workers indicated that their workplace technology needs at least some updating.

# In this eBook:

Challenges for the utilities sector

How to innovate with technology

Why Rizing?

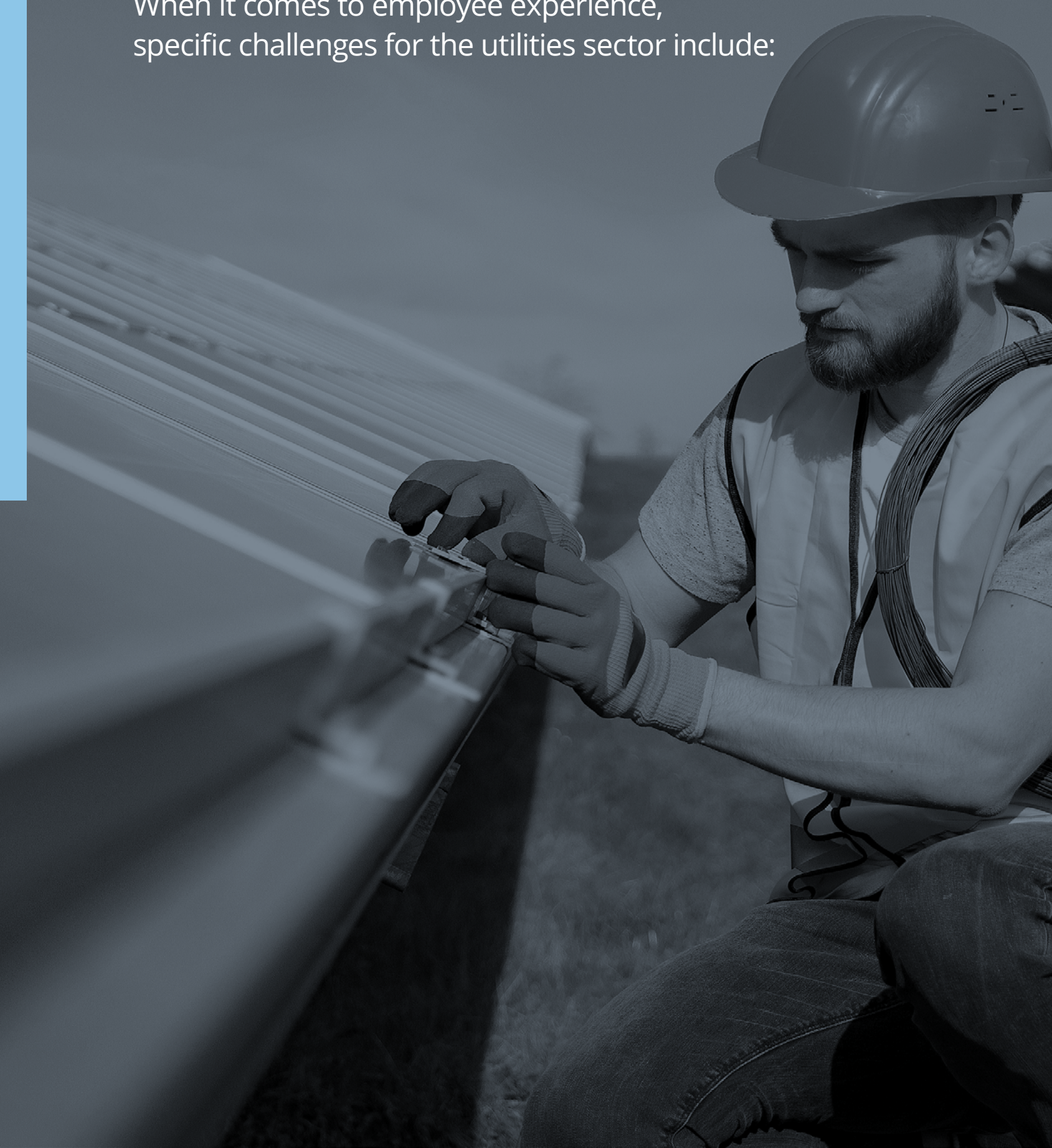
Is your employee experience up to scratch?

Success story: Fortis BC



# Challenges for the utilities sector

When it comes to employee experience, specific challenges for the utilities sector include:



## Growing importance of sustainability

Increasingly, utilities companies are under pressure to operate more sustainably. This is particularly the case with energy companies, whose reliance upon distributed energy resources like wind and solar is increasing constantly, as part of the shift away from coal-generated power sources. However, in a recent survey, 50% of energy and utilities executives also said that increased process complexity is an obstacle to meeting sustainability goals.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, many organizations lack the in-house expertise and skills to tackle sustainability effectively. To minimize their emissions, as well as attract and retain employees with the required level of sustainability expertise, organizations need the right tools at hand. A robust digital solution can also ensure existing employees can be up-skilled and trained regarding sustainability processes and requirements.



## Disparate locations

For many utilities organizations, which operate across several different facilities and sites, it can be hard to provide a consistent and equitable employee experience. This is particularly the case in organizations which employ a high number of contract workers, and where field crews are required to have very specialised and distinct roles.



## Managing labour costs and hours

Many utility workers have different ways of reporting on their hours – from online clocks, to mobile devices and even high-volume crew entry screens – which can also make it very difficult to control labour costs and get an overall understanding of where inefficiencies or opportunities for improvement lie. For instance, it can be hard for operators to determine when labour thresholds have been met for a particular facility, or to synchronise labour according to work order hours.



## Manual core HR and payroll processes

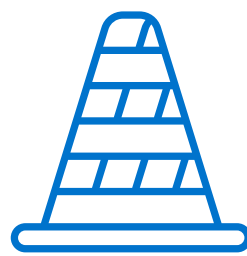
In many utilities, it's not uncommon for employees to use paper-based timesheets, and for scheduling to be done using Excel spreadsheets. Payroll is also often managed manually, despite the complexity associated with managing pools of contractors in different teams and with varying levels of expertise and pay rates. Employee enquiries are typically handled on an ad-hoc basis, managed over the phone by the human resources team, or even the business owner. Similarly, maintaining employee records and managing transitional HR tasks can be very time-consuming for HR professionals.



### Skills shortage

Like many others, the utilities sector is currently facing a growing skills shortage – exacerbated by the lack of migration prompted by the pandemic. Over 30% of utility workers in the US are close to retirement,<sup>9</sup> and the industry is struggling to attract the next generation of skilled talent. The sector also requires some very specialist skills, especially in technical and digital areas. Attracting the right staff is also a challenge: in the UK, 35% of vacancies are hard to fill in electricity, water and gas sectors, compared with the national average of 23%.<sup>10</sup>

Also, when a new employee joins a utilities business, it's often a case of having to hit the ground running – especially in a busy office. Most businesses simply don't have the time or tools in place to provide sophisticated and automated onboarding. There is typically a lot of manual paperwork, and the process of getting up and running in terms of payroll, can be slow and inefficient. In the case of onboarding from a home office, getting the right tools and equipment to work from home is vital.



### Safety and compliance

The risks associated with working on-site at locations which manage sewerage, water, electricity, gas or other forms of energy can be extensive. Employees need to be up to date with health and safety requirements, and know what steps to take should an incident occur. Organizations also need digital tools to effectively manage and mitigate overall safety risks. According to a recent State of Safety Culture in Utilities report by Sentis, 87% of worksites operate within a negative safety culture; 1 in 4 incidents aren't reported; and team support is strong, but workers still don't feel able to raise incidents and near misses.<sup>12</sup> For organizations to stay on top of health and safety, they need to have specific systems for managing health and safety for employees in high risk environments, automated tools to manage things like work-hour limits and break requirements, as well as to minimise fatigue, and ongoing learning and development – so employees are constantly aware of their roles and responsibilities.



### Security and data protection

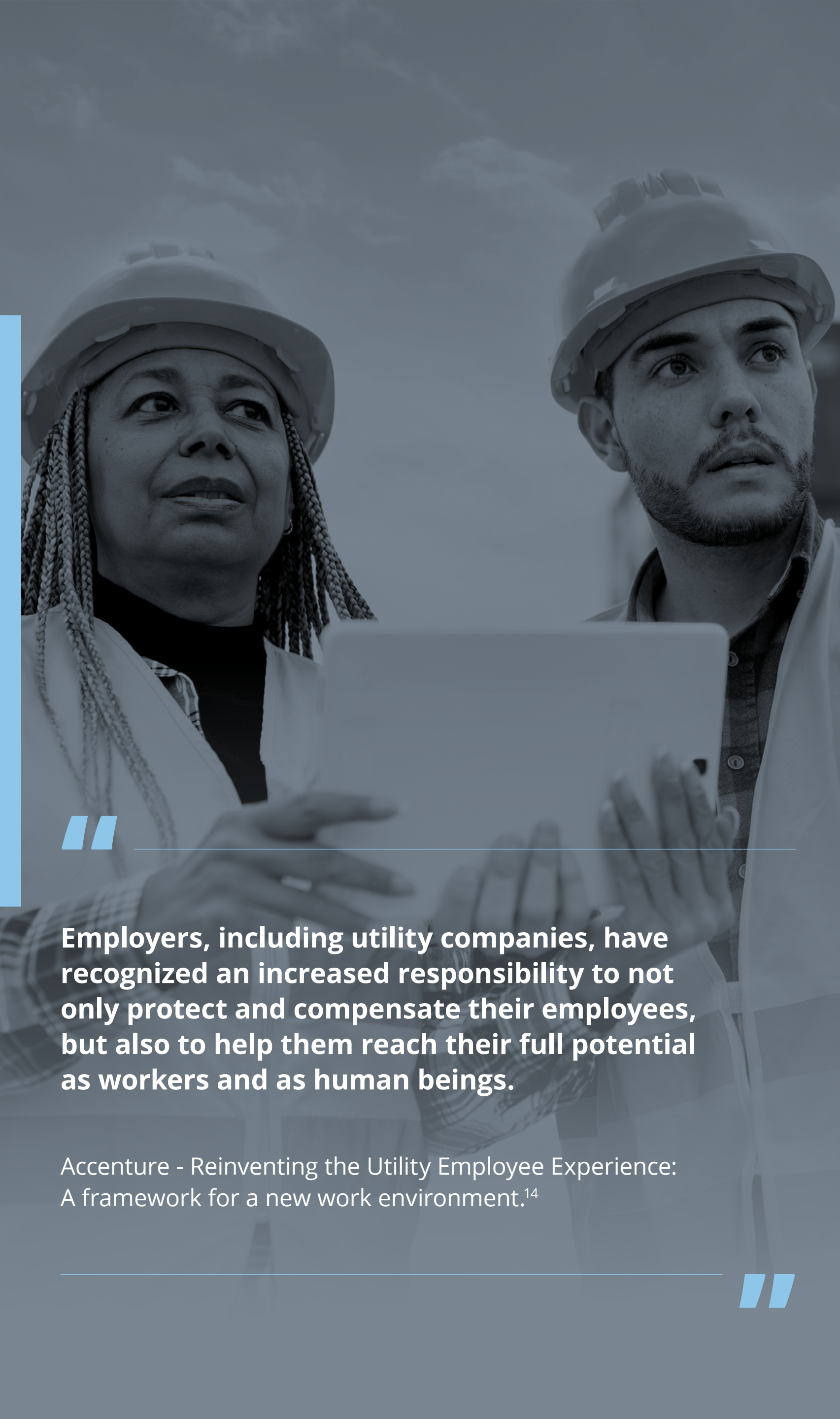
As with many sectors, cybersecurity is becoming a growing concern for utilities companies – many of which hold sensitive data regarding customers and operations. To safeguard data and systems, utilities firms need to both invest in digital tools and establish relationships with trusted cloud providers, as well as keep their employees continually up to date regarding their responsibilities with regards to data security. Just as security risks are increasing, so too are the regulatory requirements that utilities firms must adhere to – particularly when it comes to sustainability and health and safety. Keeping workers up to date regarding their compliance and regulatory responsibilities – and how to best manage them - is vital.



**Utilities are facing a number of challenges to attract and retain the talent they need for the future. More digital skills are needed—across all utility roles—to support the product and service innovations that are transforming the industry**

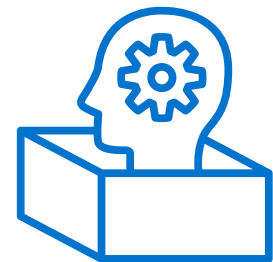
West Monroe: How Utilities can Win the War for Talent.<sup>13</sup>





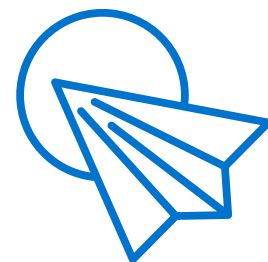
**Employers, including utility companies, have recognized an increased responsibility to not only protect and compensate their employees, but also to help them reach their full potential as workers and as human beings.**

Accenture - Reinventing the Utility Employee Experience: A framework for a new work environment.<sup>14</sup>



### **Learning and development**

Unless a utility offers quality, digital tools for learning and development, its employees may not be growing their skills in a way that is advantageous to their role or overall career. Similarly, they may not have access to the most up to date information regarding relevant regulations and compliance, which is a risk for the business as a whole.



### **Remote working**

Historically, employees at utilities firms have been very much on-site. Now, due to Covid-19, there is more flexibility with regards to when and how some employees work – particularly those in head office or managerial roles. Managing this newly flexible and disparate workforce is a major challenge for many utilities firms which have not had to support remote working at scale in the past, particularly in areas such as learning and development.



### **Payroll accuracy and compliance**

On-time, accurate payroll is a must for all employers, but yet ensuring compliance, reconciling payroll errors and running efficient payroll processing can be challenging for many utilities. This is due to the high degree of payroll complexity related to union agreements, grandfathered benefit programs, overtime or field premiums, etc. Workforce Institute states that of 24% employees will look for a new job after one payroll mistake, this increases to 49% after they experience two payroll mistakes. Considering the challenges and expense of sourcing and onboarding new hires in the current workforce environment, utilities can't risk losing their best people due to administrative errors or payroll mistakes.

# Is your employee experience up to scratch?



## Mobile and contingent workforce

Do you have tools to control labor costs, increase safety and boost engagement across field crews?



## Flexibility

Do you support flexible, hybrid ways of working for corporate employees?



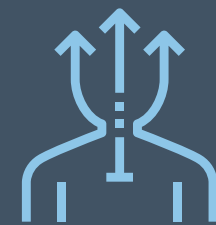
## 360° view

Do you have end-to-end HR software in place that provides management and visibility of your total workforce?



## Learning and development

Do you support continual learning?



## Attract and retain talent

Do you have the right skills within your organization?



## Improve operational efficiencies

Does your solution offer integrated time tracking, automated accrual calculations, advanced scheduling options, geofencing for web-based or mobile time clocks, and streamlined tracking for time off, leave or accommodation requests?



## Payroll

Do you have a central, efficient way of managing your disparate workforce regardless of their location and terms of employment?

# How a modern HCM technology solution can help

When it comes to the employee experience, there is a very real need for businesses to move away from HR solutions that are simply focused on payroll and employee administration, towards more robust, data-led solutions – like SAP SuccessFactors - that support the employee experience at every step.

Rizing's cloud-based talent management software gives your employees, managers, and HR professionals the tools and guidance they need to succeed – regardless of where or when they are working. With SAP SuccessFactors solutions, you can adopt a comprehensive and data-driven talent management strategy that spans the entire employee lifecycle. Hire the best candidates, engage employees, develop the skills of today and tomorrow, and ensure every employee is engaged and valued.

Rizing's consulting teams can help outline an HR roadmap to provide your employees, managers, and HR professionals with the tools and guidance they need to succeed – regardless of where or when they are working.



# Key features to prioritise for utilities

## Attracting the right skills to your organization

Given the shortage of available staff, your HR software needs to support you in identifying the skills needed within your organisation, billing talent pools, and processing both new and internal applicants quickly and efficiently – all while helping you attract the right talent to your recruitment funnel. This means including features for recruiting marketing (for attracting and engaging top talent), recruiting posting (for seamless posting to online job boards) and recruiting management (for selecting and hiring the best candidates) to drive better results.

## Capturing employee sentiment for a data-driven enterprise

Whether your employees are in the office, on job sites, or remote, you need to be able to accurately capture their feedback, so you can take action when and where it matters most. From relational census and pulse, to multi-rater and always-on feedback, Rizing's digital HCM solutions give you the listening tools to understand and design the unique employee experiences your

diverse workforce requires. With these insights, you can then make informed discussions at every step, improve safety and minimise labour costs.

## Automated and efficient scheduling

For utility firms, managing employees across multiple locations, and with very different levels of expertise, can be challenging. Without the right data at hand, maintaining consistency with regards to the employee experience – and ensuring fast and efficient scheduling - is difficult. To operate effectively, utility firms need robust digital tools which support automated scheduling; synchronise labour with specific work orders; alert management when labour thresholds are met; and which automate the escalation of more urgent tasks.

## Payroll, time and attendance

It's not uncommon for larger firms to waste tens of thousands of dollars every month addressing administrative or compliance issues to do with HR management, time tracking, or payroll. In fact, typical error rates are between 1 to 8% of total payroll when companies

do not use robust and integrated solutions. Also, even though the cost for non-compliance can be significant, most companies underestimate the level of risk they currently hold by using dated payroll software. Instead, a modern solution should be based on accurate, automated and centralised data. It should also be compliant across multiple countries and jurisdictions.

For utility organizations, effective payroll management should support flexible time recording - so employers can collect hours worked through multiple time recording methods, and offer real-time workforce visibility, enabling employers to manage employee rosters at a glance, and avoid overtime expenses. Effective payroll solutions should even enable activity-based costing – allocating expenses for each vehicle by associating vehicle usage to a drive's time and labour distribution.

## Safety and compliance

Robust safety and compliance management is vital in the utilities sector, where risks to health and safety can be significant. Having digital tools

at hand can help organizations ensure a high level of security, with things like work-hour controls for workers in high-risk situations; break requirements and minimum rest periods; and the ability to administer day-off requirements to ensure employees get proper rest, especially during states of emergency such as during a power outage.

## Core HR

Many HR solutions serve merely as filing cabinets for record-keeping, with no business impact. Siloed from talent, they prevent organizations from making workforce decisions based on a 360-degree view of the employee. They also feature primitive analytics that provide minimal insights into the workforce and no support for workforce planning. Ideally, your HR software should offer a central view of your workers, with support for qualifications and certifications, personal data, time off and payroll data with full employee lifecycle process support. It should also help you digitise and simplify your processes to improve efficiency, while ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.

## Support for continual learning

Ensuring your workers can continually develop and grow their skills is essential for compliance as well as staff retention. It's also important in ensuring you are delivering quality services and buildings, and ensuring everyone is aware of, and committed to meeting, relevant legislation and requirements. A modern HR solution should enable employees to develop new skills, share ideas, and gain insights, making them more motivated and productive. It should support formal, compliance-related training, as well as informal, self-directed training, mobile learning and extended enterprise training.

## Driving career succession and development

Having the right people in the right place to effectively execute on your strategy is quite a challenge. While HR needs to ensure that current leaders are in place and working effectively, it is equally critical to ensure a healthy pipeline of future leaders who are recognised, mentored and developed early to support company strategies.



# How Fortis BC improved learning and development with SAP SuccessFactors

Fortis BC is a Canadian-owned utilities company with more than 2,500 employees. It delivers renewable energy, natural gas and electricity to 1.2 million customers.

Recently, Fortis BC made the decision to upgrade and centralise its learning management system to ensure adherence with growing regulatory and compliance requirements – and turned to the team at Rizing for help. Previously, their learning processes and systems were disparate, and weren't unified across the business. Rizing helped Fortis BC to implement the Learning module as part of a broader roll-out of SAP SuccessFactors.

The business is now far better positioned for future growth, with a central, streamlined system for learning, and a single source of truth when it comes to learning-related data and information. All learning processes are now efficient and accurate – ensuring the business is able to meet complex regulation requirements and drive a culture of growth and development.



Ensuring a positive  
employee experience:  
**a checklist**



## MOBILE AND CONTINGENT WORKFORCE

Do you deliver a consistent employee experience?



### Challenge:

When employees are spread across multiple locations, and employed on different contracts and terms, it's very hard to ensure a consistent and equitable employee experience for all.



### Solution:

Investing in digital tools that can help you control labor costs, increase safety and boost engagement across field crews – regardless of location. Measuring employee experience is also made easier with employee experience management tools like Qualtrics.

## FLEXIBILITY

Do you support flexible, hybrid ways of working for corporate employees?



### Challenge:

Staying current with the post-pandemic workforce. According to a recent KPMG survey, the top 3 priorities for employees post Covid-19 are: increased flexibility (41%), option to work remotely (39%), and more frequent communication (34%).<sup>15</sup>



### Solution:

Updating your HR processes and policies to support a remote workforce, and providing the technology that people need to work reliably and efficiently from anywhere, at any time on their desktop and mobile devices.

## 360-DEGREE VIEW

Do you have end-to-end HR software in place?



### Challenge:

Driving business objectives and employee empowerment. Many HR solutions serve merely as filing cabinets for record-keeping and are siloed from talent; preventing companies from making workforce decisions based on a 360-degree view of the employee.



### Opportunity:

Investing in a solution (like SAP SuccessFactors or Rizing's Lyra) that offers a central view of your employees, with support for organizational data, personal data, time off and payroll data, and creates an engaging experience for the full lifecycle of your employees.



## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

# Do you support continual learning?



### Challenge:

Ensuring your employees can continually develop and grow their skills, and that everyone in your business is aware of, and committed to meeting, relevant legislation and requirements.



### Solution:

Deploying modern HR technology that enables employees to develop new skills, share ideas, and gain insights, making them more motivated and productive. Ideally, it should support formal, compliance-related training, as well as informal, self-directed training, mobile learning and extended enterprise training. Utilities can also benefit by offering courses for purchase to your community partners, vendors or the public at large.

## PAYROLL

# Is your payroll error free and efficient?



### Challenge:

Employees can very quickly become frustrated when their pay is inaccurate, or when errors occur. In fact, typical error rates are between 1 to 8% of total payroll when companies don't use robust payroll solutions.



### Solution:

Selecting a modern, end-to-end people management solution with a robust payroll engine that will ensure regulatory compliance and data accuracy while managing complexities such as retro payments, gross to net calculations, tax withholdings and other parameters.



## How can Rizing help?

Rizing is a leading SAP services and solutions firm with deep human capital management, employee experience and total workforce management expertise. We help utilities organizations accelerate their digital transformation by providing best-practice HR technology based on SAP SuccessFactors, Qualtrics and Workforce Software solutions, which supports the end-to-end experience for employees and contingent workforces.

# Find out more

Interested in evolving your utilities organization's human resources technology? Request an assessment and industry benchmark from our expert team. Get in touch today or visit <https://rizing.com/rizing-complete-utilities/> to learn more.



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