

The five must-haves for the perfect utility mobile app

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We live in a digital world with an abundance of information and resources available at our fingertips. According to the Pew Research Center's [Mobile Fact Sheet](#), roughly one in five American adults are smartphone-only internet users, meaning they own a smartphone and prefer using it over a traditional method such as a desktop computer or laptop to access the internet. After all, there's an app for nearly everything these days!

Laura Gousha, vice president of engagement at [Mindgrub](#), the technology consulting firm that created Exelon Corp.'s award-winning suite of mobile apps, authored [Why Every Utility Needs a Mobile Application](#). According to Gousha, mobile apps are the most effective channel for driving satisfaction among utility customers because they:

- Improve the customer experience by allowing for a more-personalized experience
- Boost awareness of self-service offerings
- Make transactions easy by using mobile-pay abilities and making billing information readily available
- Reduce contact center costs by offering on-demand communication and the ability to report or check the status of outages or emergencies

Developing a responsive website is a great step toward setting up a mobile presence, but it isn't enough. Utility mobile apps outperform utility websites in overall customer satisfaction, according to the J.D. Power press release [Utilities Struggle to Find Right Digital Self-Service Formula, J.D. Power Finds](#).

What makes a great utility mobile app?

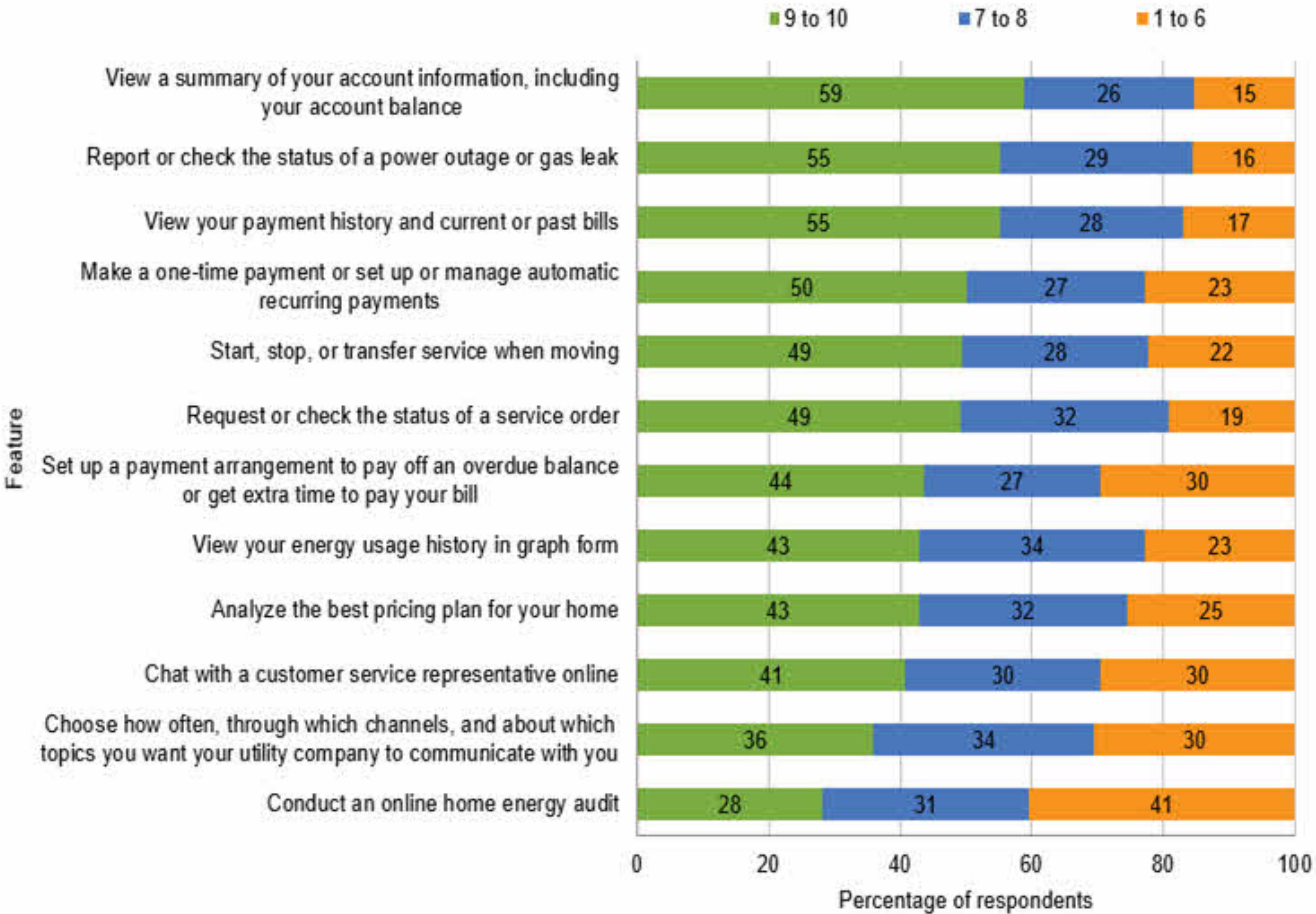
Now that you've learned the importance of having an app, you're probably wondering what a successful app looks like and what features it includes. Fear not! We've pulled together the five most essential elements needed for the perfect utility mobile app to help get you started.

Ultimately, your mobile app should help customers do three things: complete tasks, find important information, and interact with you. According to data from the 2019 [E Source Residential Utility Customer Survey](#), the top five features customers need to see on their utility’s website or mobile app to achieve those three things are (**figure 1**):

- A summary of their account information, including account balance
- An ability to report or check the status of a power outage or gas leak
- Records of payment history, including current and past bills
- Payment options such as one-time payment or automatic/reoccurring payments
- The option to start, stop, or transfer service when moving

Figure 1: Features customers want on their utility’s website or mobile app

Customers rate viewing a summary of their account information, reporting or checking the status of a power outage or gas leak, and viewing their payment history as the most important tasks they expect to complete on their utility’s website or mobile app when using their phone or a tablet.



Base: Residential utility customers who use a mobile phone or tablet to access the internet (n = 1,668). **Question S3_6:** On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means not at all important and 10 means extremely important, how important is it to you to be able to do the following on your energy provider’s website or mobile app when using your mobile phone or tablet device? © E Source (2019 Residential Utility Customer Survey)

What it all comes down to is this: customers want quick and easy access to the essentials, including utility contact information, payment and billing options, and pricing options. Instead of a bulky and hard-to-follow website, they prefer a mobile app that's convenient and easy to use. Customers want the flexibility to access their account and make changes from virtually anywhere.

What does a successful app look like?

We provide a list of the best-reviewed utility apps in our report [Utility mobile apps: 2019 industry scan](#), available to members of the [E Source E-Channel Service](#). In it, we ranked 122 utility apps by average customer reviews found in the Apple App Store (for iOS devices) and Google Play (for Android devices). Con Edison's mobile app received the best average reviews in both stores (**figure 2**). Customers often mention the ease and speed of the bill-pay experience in reviews.

Figure 1: Con Edison's top-ranked mobile app

Con Edison customers can get a breakdown of their bill, view detailed energy usage, update their account, and report and track outages in the mobile app.

