

I. SESSION NAME

Profitable Partnerships in a Decentralized Utility Landscape

Utility 360 Collaborative, Beyond the Meter, Center of Excellence Meeting (part of U2030's Energy Transition Center of Excellence)

II. MEETING RECORDING

[Listen to the recording](#)

II. SESSION DESCRIPTION

Discover how Southern Company's strategic partnerships are bolstering the advancement of the utility sector. This session explores how collaboration, customer-centric innovation, and regulatory engagement can drive market leadership, sustainability, and longevity in a decentralized energy landscape.

III. PRESENTER

Robin Lanier, Director of New Ventures, Southern Company



IV. DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

1. Key Challenges Discussed

Adapting to the Evolving Energy Ecosystem:

Energy Transition Complexity: Utilities must navigate the significant transition towards renewables such as solar, wind, and storage, while ensuring reliability and addressing the retirement of traditional fossil fuels like coal.

Customer Expectations: Due to increased awareness and technology adoption, customers demand personalized experiences, clean energy options, and digital interfaces, necessitating a re-evaluation of utility-customer relationships.

Competitive Landscape: In addition to traditional competitors, utilities may now face competition from untraditional mega-entities such as Google, given their significant resources and data capabilities; to keep up, utilities need to prioritize data management and customer engagement strategies.

2. Best Practices/Solutions

Leveraging Collaborative Innovation:

Strategic Partnerships: Southern Company's utilities are leveraging partnerships with venture capital firms, tech companies, and startups to drive innovation and address evolving customer needs; their collaboration with Energy Impact Partners enables their utilities to explore emerging technologies and business models effectively.

Customer-Centric Innovation: Utilities are investing in solutions like predictive AI analytics for damage prevention, zero-emission mobile battery energy storage, and ultra-high-efficiency appliances to meet customer demands, sustainability goals, and remain competitive in the decentralized landscape.

Agile Regulatory Engagement: Utilities must advocate for proactive regulatory frameworks that support the adoption of new technologies and business models while ensuring compliance and consumer protection, as it is conducive to innovation and profitability.

V. RESULTS/ROI

Priming Utilities for Longevity:

Revenue Diversification: Successful partnerships and customer-focused advancement enable utilities to diversify revenue streams beyond traditional energy sales, with investments in renewable energy and emerging technologies contributing to long-term sustainability and profitability.

Enhanced Customer Value: Utilities that prioritize customer-centric development deliver enhanced value to customers through personalized experiences, clean energy options, and industry-novel services, fostering improved customer satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term success.

Market Leadership: Utilities embracing profitable partnerships position themselves as leaders in the decentralized utility landscape, setting the standard for industry innovation and sustainability through growth, profitability, and competitive advantage.

VI. NOTABLE SPEAKER QUOTES

"Data is going to be the way of the future. I'm concerned that Google and others have lots of data and lots of money. We need to control the data as much as possible... so that we can be their energy partner, and not some of the other app and device providers. Right now, there is a lot of pressure to protect reliability. We recently testified in DC to protect coal and natural gas because the threat of blackouts is real. If the utility does not have the baseline to provide service, this will become a big issue."

"As we are trying to drive those solutions that are innovative for our customers, that help our infrastructure be more and more valuable to our customers - and we continue to seek solutions to provide more of a personalized experience for our customers - we know that that landscape, the energy landscape, is getting so complex that we just can't do it alone."

"Partnerships are a critical solution for utilities in the evolving and increasingly complex energy landscape. I think there's more than enough to go around, and think that the answer lies, in most parts, with partnerships, to build the future of energy."

VII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Southern Company's New Ventures partners with emerging companies on decarbonization](#) (18:28, Slide 17)

[How Southern Company Is Investing in the Future of Energy](#) (23:37, Slide 20)

VIII. CONTACT

Mike Smith

msmith@utility2030.org

916.990.5229