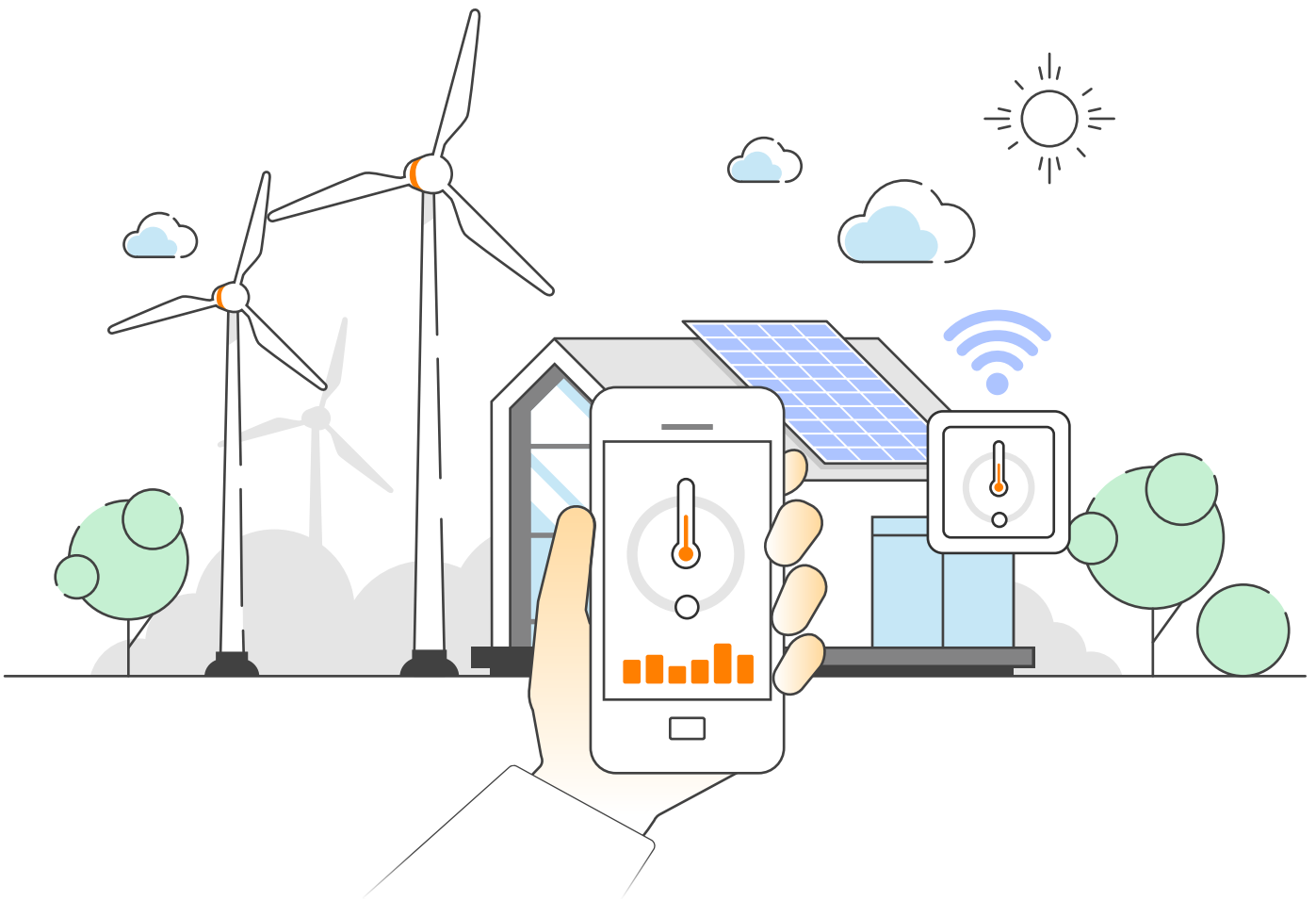




merixstudio

Improving CX:

Customer Platforms for Solar Manufacturers



Why Solar Manufacturers Should Value Customer Experience
and How Technology Can Help to Manage It

Key insights:

Customer Experience:

The new driving force of digitalization

58%

More than half of companies consider improved customer experience to be the most significant motivator to invest in digitalization.

50%

Digital transformation focused on customer experience can increase revenue by up to 50%.

30%

Leveraging digitalization to enhance customer satisfaction can result in a 30% improvement in CX.

Solar Market:

Influenced by disruption yet ready to face it through digitalization

1st

The energy sector faces disruptive forces most intensively among all surveyed in The AlixPartners Disruption Index 2023.

97%

Within the energy industry, 97% of firms have developed smart products and services.

68%

Approximately 68% of companies in the energy sector extensively utilize data in the creation of digital ecosystems

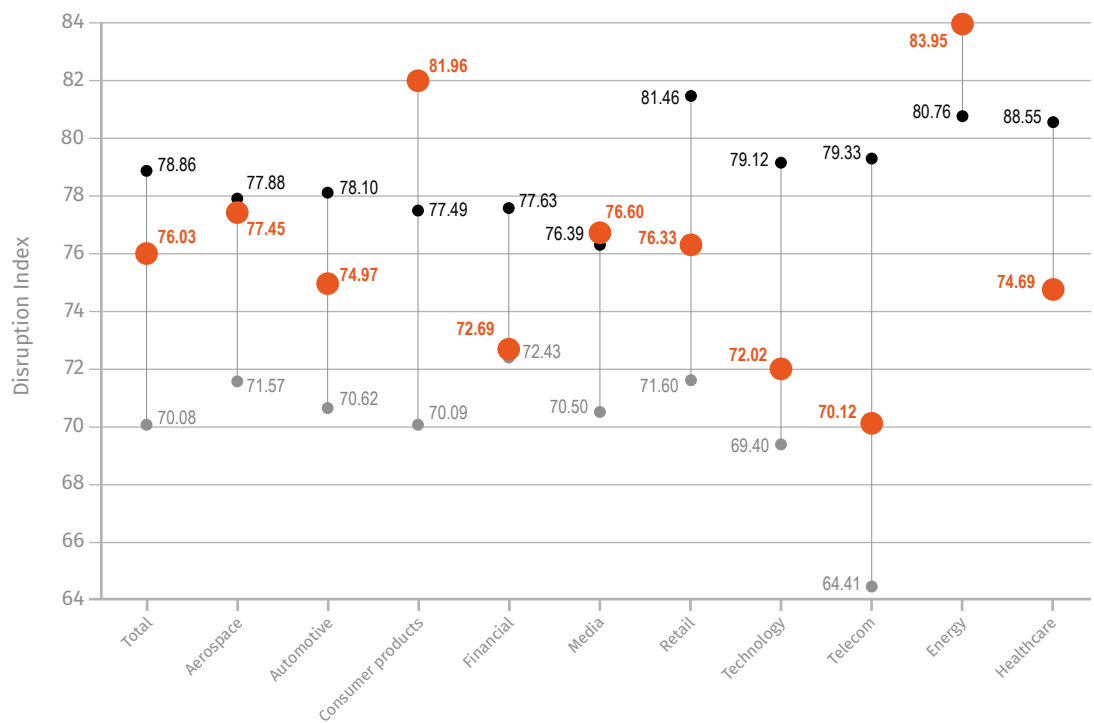
How customer experience became the new catalyst for business digitalization

The convergence of recent global challenges, such as COVID-19 lockdowns, inflation, the escalation of interest rates, and more and more evident effects of climate change, has emerged as the most significant catalyst for digitalization in enterprises.

According to the 2023 [AlixPartners Disruption Index](#), disruptions affect companies across all industries and scales, but the energy sector seems to bear the brunt of these dynamic changes. At the same time, it is also among [the fastest industries to adapt](#), with digitalization identified as the principal solution in a rapidly transforming world.

By industries

- 2021
- 2022
- 2023

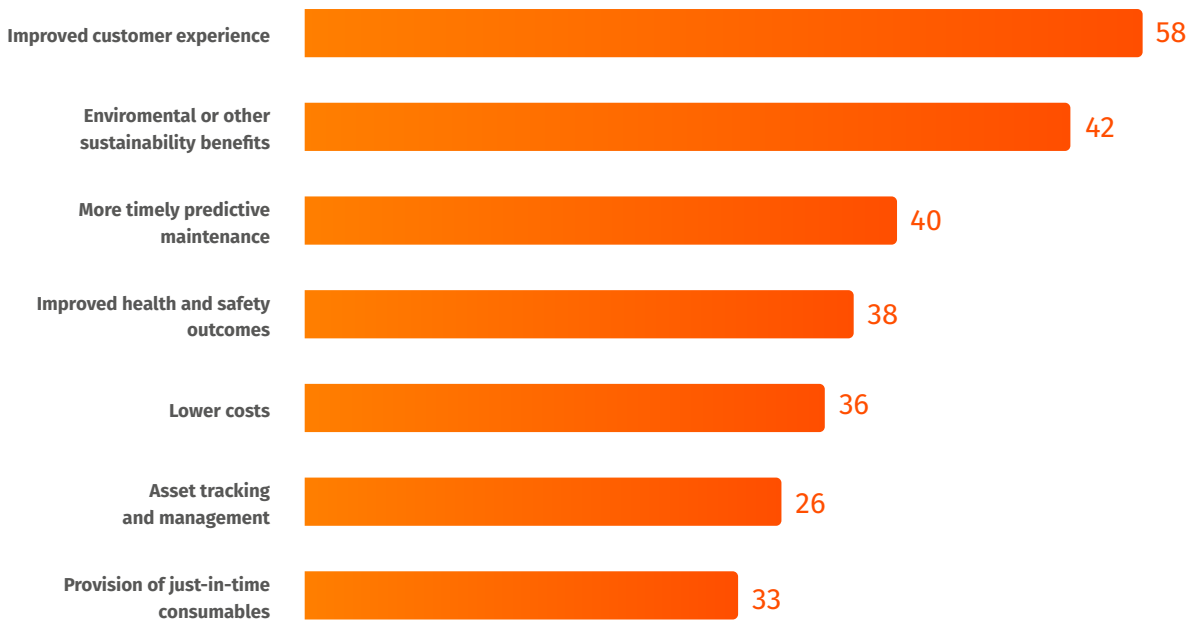


Source: [AlixPartners Disruption Index 2023](#)

Meanwhile, the primary driving force behind the transition to digital is increasingly shifting toward enhancing customer experience (CX) for products and services. [Almost 60% of companies](#) acknowledge this as the strongest motivator for investing in digital transformation.

Improved customer experience is the strongest motivator for businesses to invest in digital transformation.

% Business motivation for digital transformation



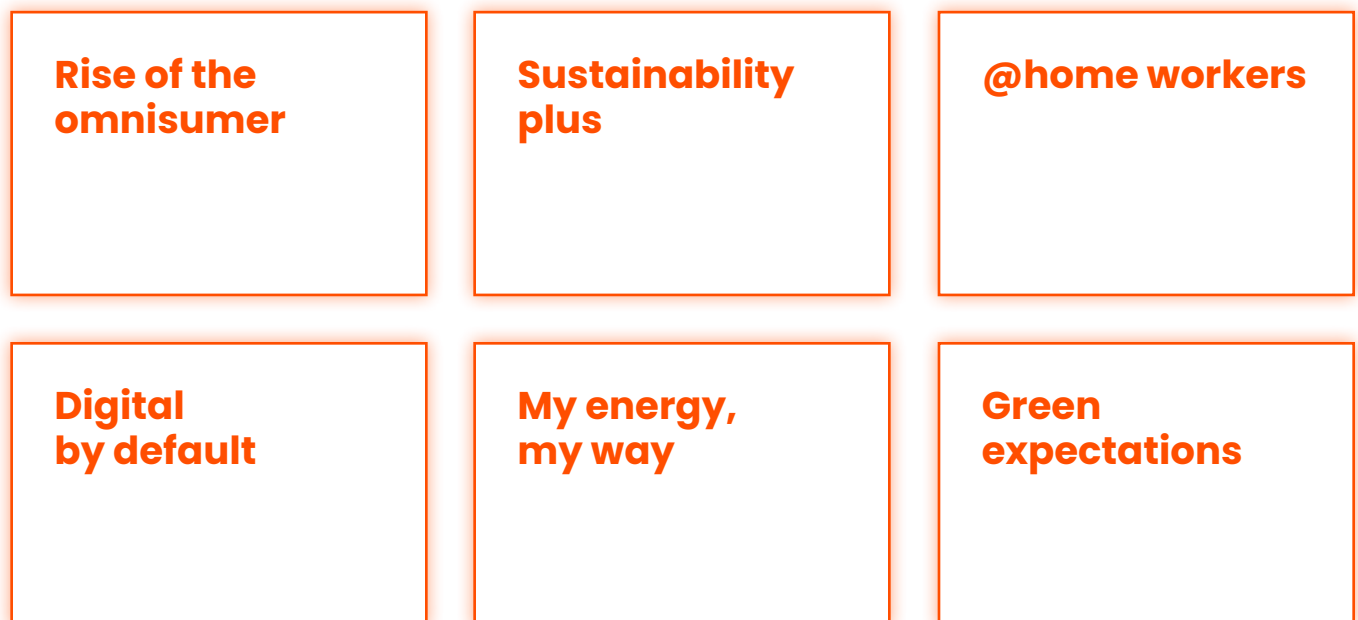
Today, technologies are designed not only to tackle challenges such as supply chain disruptions or surging costs but also to secure a competitive advantage and deliver unique value to the target demographic. This approach is proving beneficial - [McKinsey estimates](#) that concentrating on digital transformation for customer experience (CX) can elevate customer satisfaction by **30% and increase revenues by up to 50%**.

How can technologies support building strong relationships with new energy consumers?

Though significantly influenced by the Ukraine conflict and fuel delivery shortages from Russia, today's rapid digitalization in the energy sector is fundamentally tied to a wider global energy transformation. With a new **decentralized model** of energy production and delivery, companies, particularly those in renewables, are becoming an integral part of customers' daily lives.

This ground-up shift in the rules of the game has given rise to the concept of **"omnisumers"** – a new type of energy consumer actively seeking engagement, demanding control, and expecting personalized experiences. Their evolution from passive recipients to proactive energy participants is forcing businesses to **reimagine their client relationships**.

Six consumer trends reshaping energy experience expectations

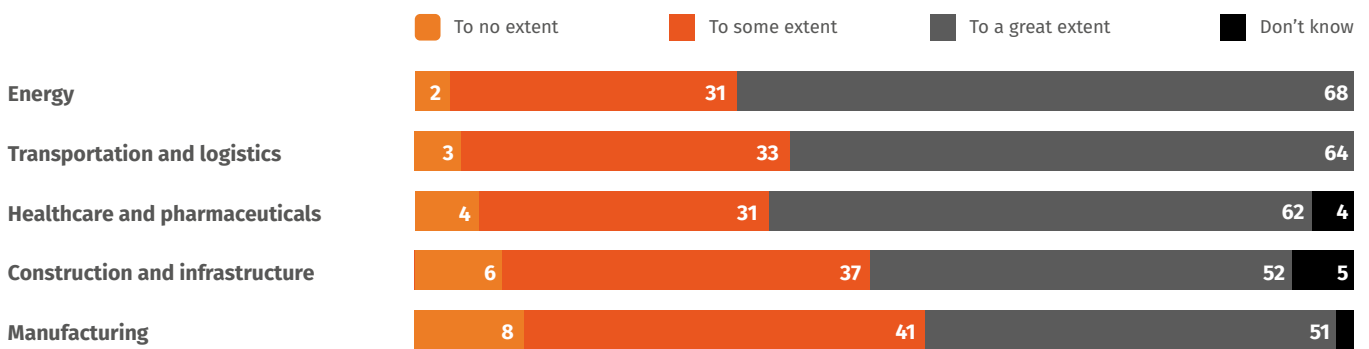


Source: [Navigating the Energy Transition Consumer Survey by EY](#)

Omnisumers, particularly ones producing power by themselves, have their **own unique home energy ecosystem** consisting of multiple devices, such as photovoltaic cells, batteries, EV charging stations, sensors, and semiconductors that monitor energy consumption. Effective management of this complex environment requires harnessing **data-driven and user-centric** technologies to simplify the process of cost optimization and contribute to omnisumers' sustainability efforts.

The energy sector uses data to create digital ecosystems to the greatest extent.

% the use of data to create digital ecosystems, by industry



Source: "Navigating the Energy Transition Consumer Survey" by EY

The user-friendly design of digital solutions empowers customers to interact with energy without needing extensive expertise. It facilitates informed decision-making and encourages responsible choices, putting the customer in control of their energy experience.

Omnisumer: New energy consumer

92%

have adopted at least one new energy product or service

84%

admit sustainability is important when making purchase decisions

86%

are interested in generating their own energy at home

20%

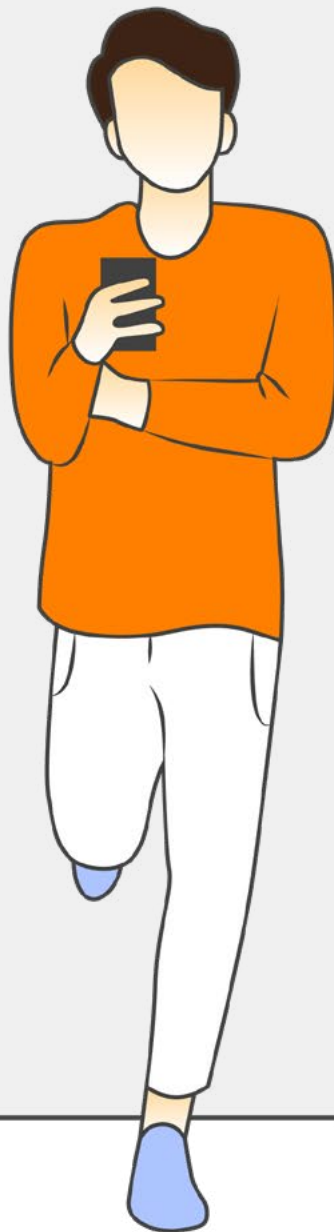
work or educate from home and 64% of them check their energy consumption at least once a month

8 out of 10

primary interactions with their energy provider are preferred to be made digitally

62%

of consumers have experienced some kind of problem using their energy provider's digital service

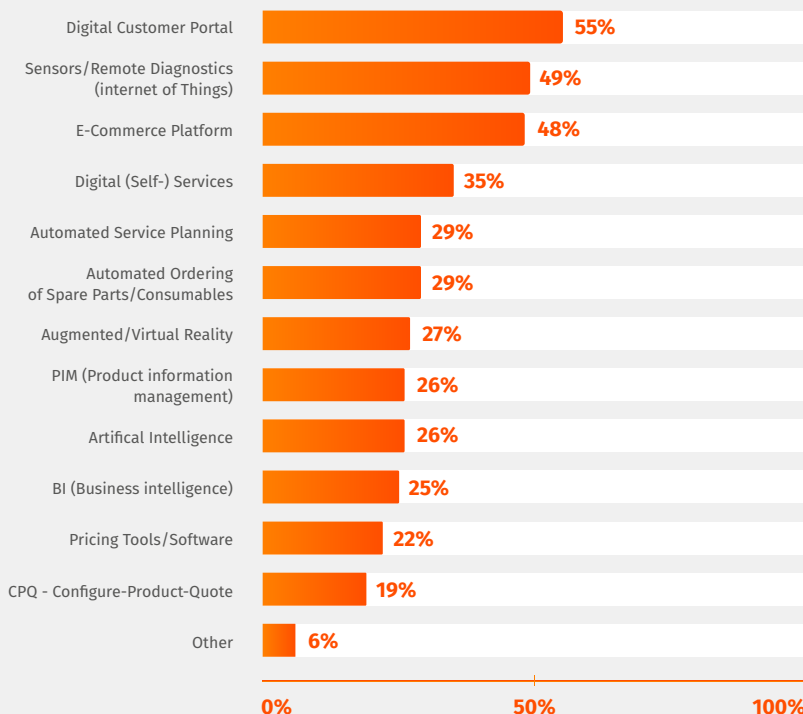


Source: "Navigating the Energy Transition Consumer Survey" by EY

Customer platforms as the heart of energy ecosystems for omniumers

With people at the center of the energy system, industry players must embrace digitalization to meet the ever-evolving expectations and preferences of consumers, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the market. By prioritizing the customer experience, companies can deliver highly tailored products and services at an industrial scale, **aligning their offerings with the unique consumption patterns of omniumers.**

One of the most significant and typically the first to adopt digital solutions focused on customer experience (CX) are **customer platforms**, which often evolve from simple websites into the core of an advanced energy ecosystem. These platforms serve multiple functions, from maintaining continuous communication with the audience and disseminating information to providing education and personalizing customer experiences. They also play a pivotal role in achieving “**servitization**,” (“outcome-as-a-service”) - a model where companies offer not only products but also value-added services to complement them.



With this in mind, it's no wonder that **55% of manufacturers intend to focus their investments on digital customer portals** in the next 12 months, as revealed in [The State of Digital Innovation within Manufacturing Report](#). Now, the question arises:

Source: The State of Digital Innovation within Manufacturing

What specific features should a solar manufacturer incorporate into such a platform?

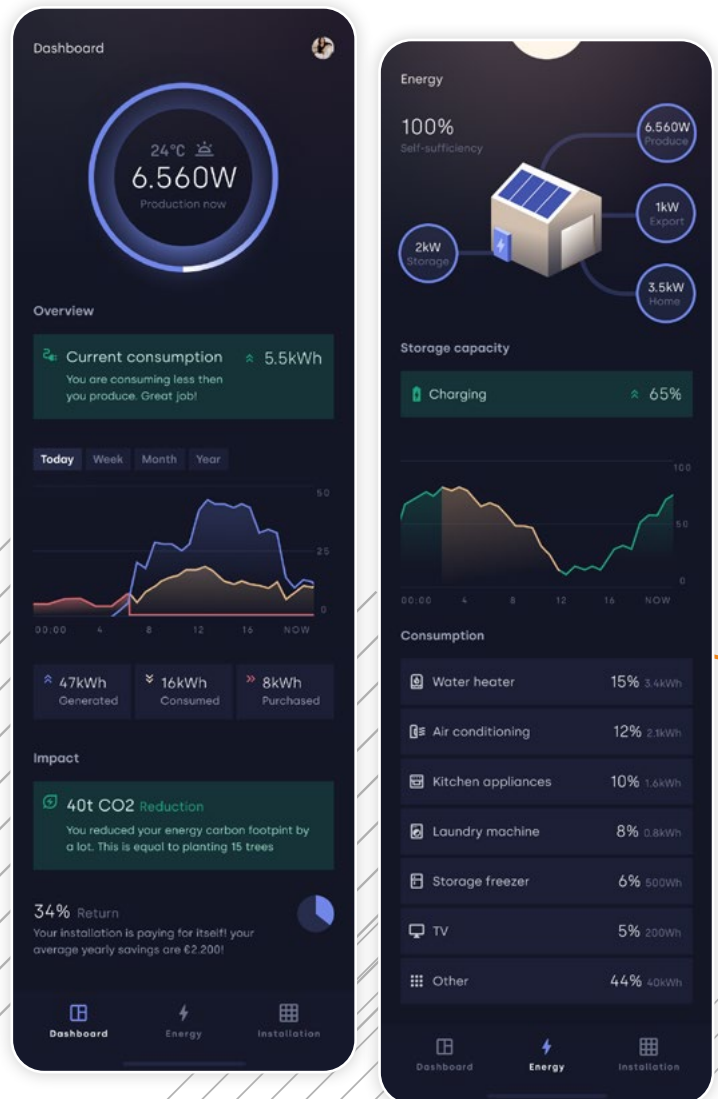
Key features of customer platforms in solar energy

Worldwide digital transformation investments will reach \$3.4 trillion in 2026. To ensure your organization is among the leaders utilizing digitalization to its full potential, explore the key features of sales-boosting software.

1

Energy Management Systems (EMS)

Real-time monitoring of solar energy production and consumption, enabling users to track their energy generation and usage patterns. This can lead to significant cost savings, with potential reductions of nearly 9%, helping to offset the current rapid growth in energy prices.



2

Data analytics and visualizations

Advanced analytics tools that offer insights into energy production, consumption, and areas for potential optimization. Clear visualizations simplify data understanding.

3

CMS / Information hub

A content management system and information hub providing access to promotional and educational materials such as manuals, how-to guides, tutorials, and a blog with valuable knowledge related to solar energy and system usage.

4

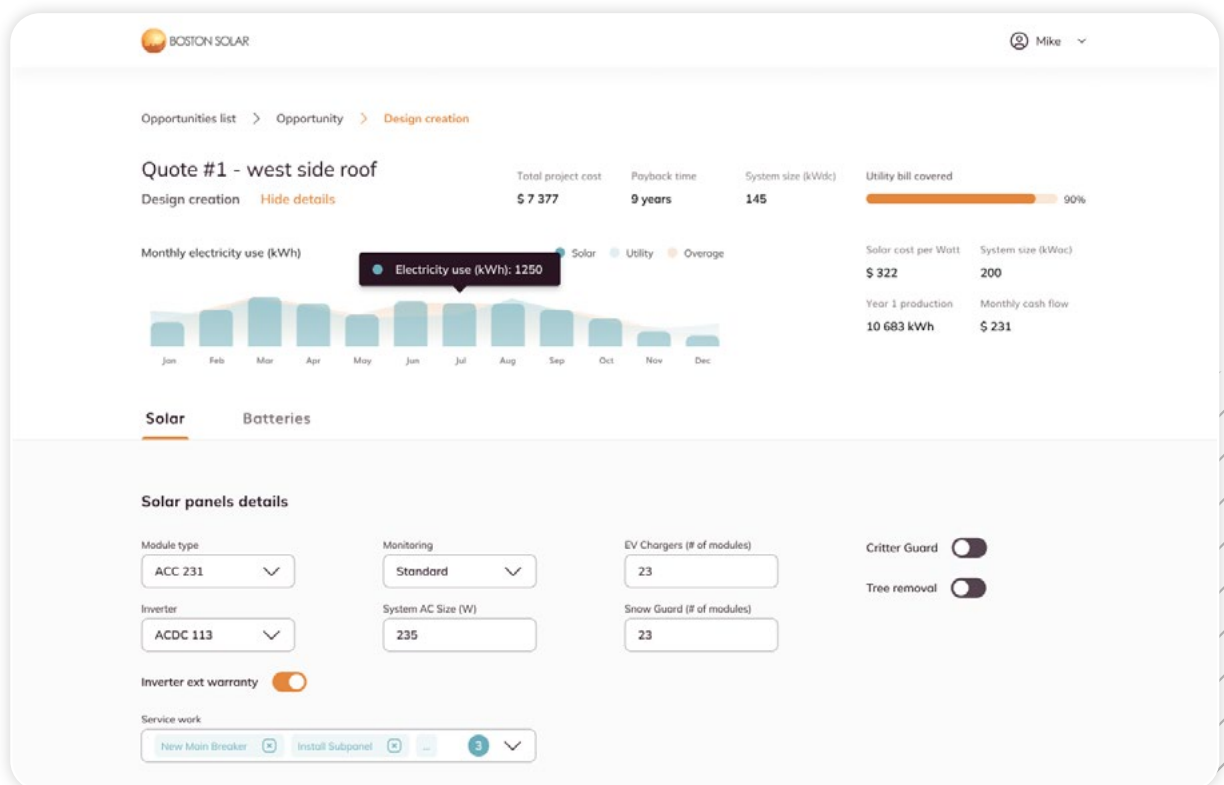
E-commerce module

Integration of an e-commerce module that enables the direct purchase of solar-related products and services through the platform.

5

Configurators & calculators

Tools that allow users to estimate costs, compare prices, and calculate the return on investment (ROI) for solar energy-related products.



6

API integrations

Depending on the platform's goals and type, it should be open to integration with systems like CRM, weather widgets, and smart home devices (e.g., thermostats and appliances) for enhanced energy management.

7

Customer Support

Customer support and service features to address technical issues or questions related to solar energy systems.

8

Energy Market Integration

Integration with energy markets or grid management systems to participate in demand response programs or sell excess energy.

9

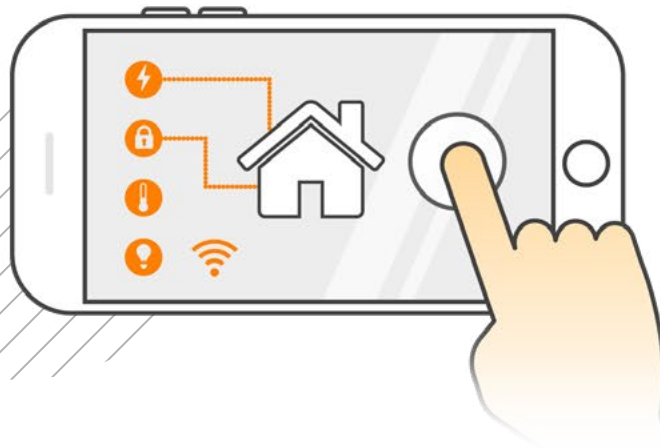
Environmental Impact Information

Information on the environmental impact and carbon footprint reduction achieved through solar energy consumption.

10

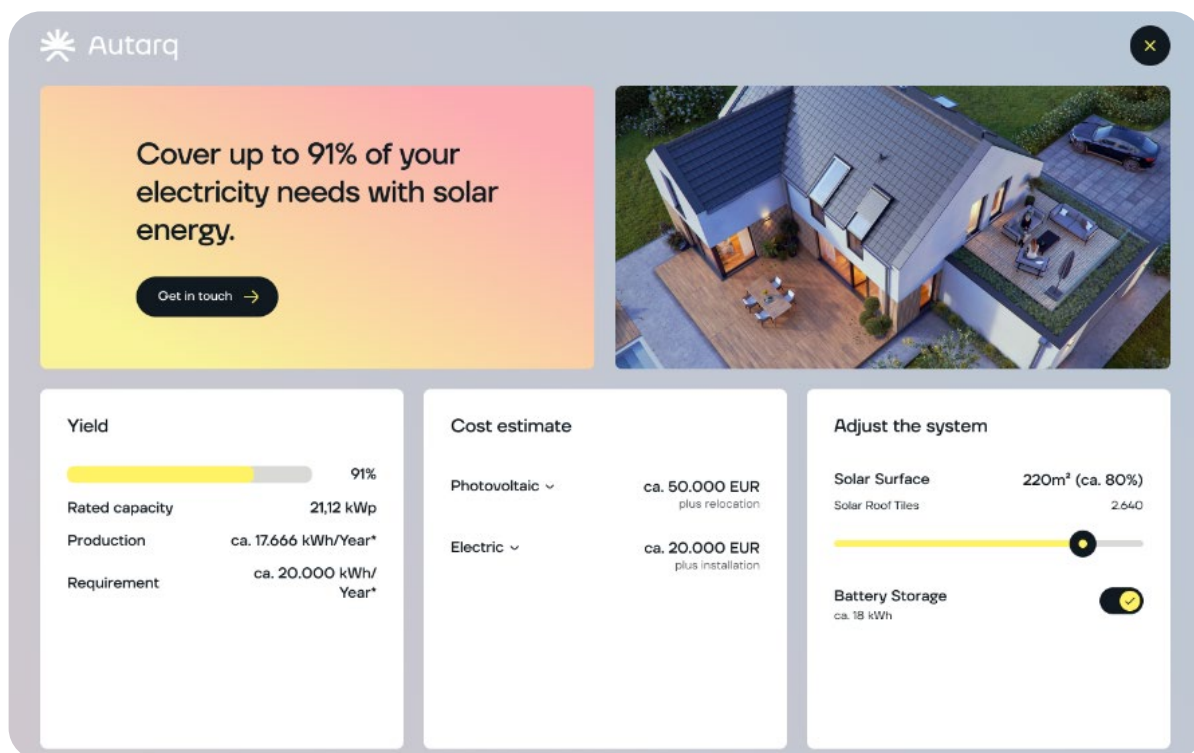
Remote Control

Capabilities for managing solar energy systems, including the ability to turn panels on or off and adjust settings.

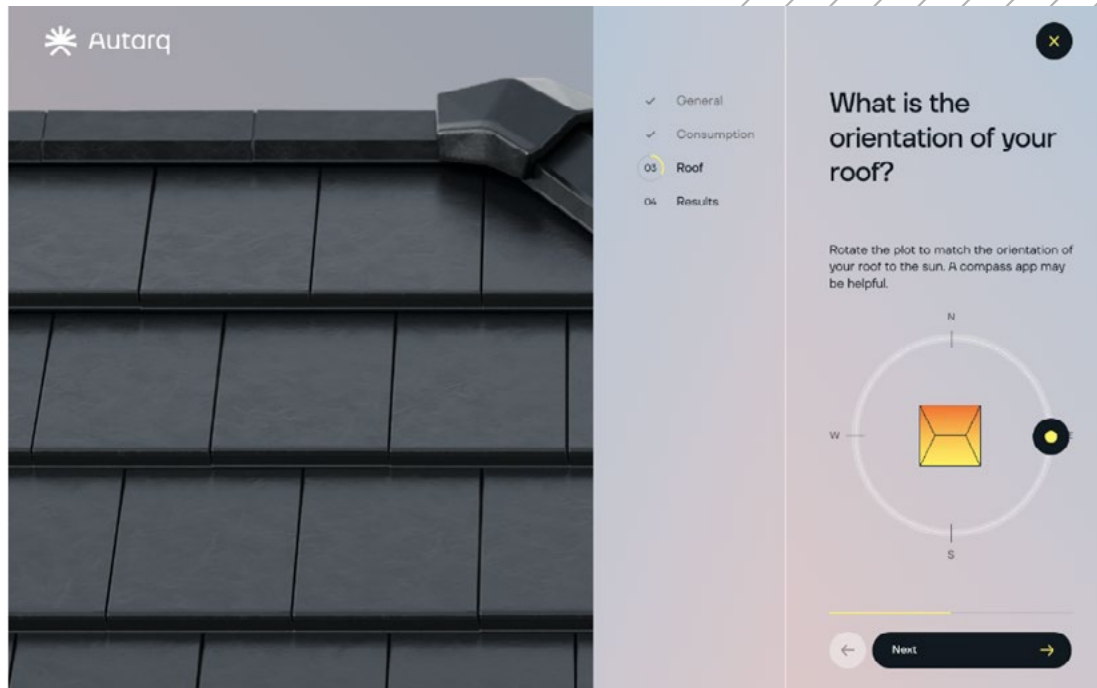


Customer web platform for innovative solar product: Autarq success story

Autarq, a German manufacturer of solar tiles, caters to homeowners who wish to transform their rooftops into self-sustaining power sources **without compromising aesthetics**. With a strong focus on enhancing the customer experience as well as the ambition to expand its presence to a wider audience and play a more significant role in the solar revolution, the company has embarked on the development of a **bespoke customer web platform**.

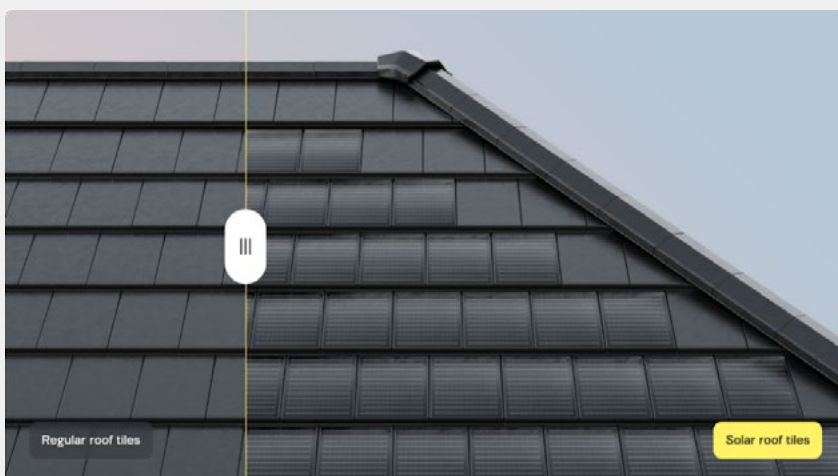


The goal was to create a solution that supports sales efforts, disseminates information about the innovative product, and enhances the overall customer experience. It is also intended to serve as an educational hub for three primary groups: homeowners, roofing professionals, and architects. Recognizing the importance of comprehensive digitalization, Autarq envisions this solution as the **central component of a broader digital ecosystem**, streamlining the management of the entire home energy infrastructure.



In the initial phase of platform development, **the roof configurator** emerged as a critical component. This fully digitalized quotation tool empowers users to receive estimates for their future solar rooftop installations in just a few simple steps. Acknowledging the significance of educational content within the platform's objectives, a reliable **Content Management System (CMS)** was essential. Merixstudio, the technology partner responsible for this digital solution, selected the scalable and user-friendly CMS Strapi, which will facilitate the creation and expansion of content, such as within the Autarq Academy Online for roofing professionals.

As aesthetics are fundamental to Autarq's vision, the platform's design and usability needed to mirror this commitment. It incorporates captivating animations and interactive components that present their groundbreaking products in an appealing manner.



Aesthetic.

Get the look and the function.

Autarq solar roof tiles look just like regular roof tiles and integrate seamlessly into the design of your roof. Good to know: The weight of our solar roof tiles is similar to that of the original tiles, so the roof's load-bearing capacity is not affected.

Given Autarq operates within the renewable energy sector, their dedication to **sustainability** is natural. Reflecting this resolve, they host their cloud infrastructure with Hetzner Online AG, powered entirely by green electricity. What's more, the platform attains a perfect score of 100/100 on the Lighthouse accessibility scale, ensuring an **inclusive experience for all**.

The joint efforts of Autarq and Merixstudio in delivering a high-quality platform and an exceptional user experience have translated into **strong and swiftly noticeable business outcomes**:

- ✓ **>30% increase in sales.**
- ✓ **50% reduction in the sales cycle length.**
- ✓ **30% decrease in total lead time.**
- ✓ **10x increase in the win rate/conversion rate.**
- ✓ **A profound enhancement of both customer and employee experiences.**

What's more, the development of the platform took only **two months**, due to the high-seniority team with a tech leader at the helm and the division into two units working collaboratively. The adoption of the Scrum methodology, alongside a **Product Owner-Scrum Master** setup, ensured an efficient and effective execution. The successful collaboration throughout the project has resulted in a commendable average Net Promoter Score (NPS) of **9/10 from all stakeholders**.

Want to learn more about this project?

[Explore the Autarq case study.](#)





We transform solar energy companies into digital-first businesses. Contact us for your digitalization plan.

www.merixstudio.com

✉ contact@merixstudio.com

☎ +48 570 001 928



Clutch