

5 Critical Questions to Consider Before Outsourcing Your Smart Grid Initiatives



1 Will my Smart Grid Investment be Future-Proof?

Apex's Smart Grid team has the experience and expertise to help you design the right *technology path* solution for you—one that anticipates trends and future demands. Those utilities that have neglected to do this have ended up with *avoidable* 2nd and 3rd cycles of re-investment. At a time when technology vendors are pushing their own technologies, it's important for customers to understand the proper application of each technology. Apex is technology-agnostic and therefore able to objectively help you cut through the fog of these many technologies. We will strategically evaluate the right technologies for you and design a solution that actually works *now*. Apex recognizes that the best solution often requires a *mix of technologies* and that no single technology is a magic bullet, all-purpose solution—*despite what other vendors might want you to think!*

2 Do I have the Best Deployment Solution?

Meter replacements have been managed with everything from spreadsheets to sophisticated, general-purpose workforce management software. Apex's field asset management technology, ProField™, alone delivers 50% higher productivity, order of magnitude higher quality, and a complete audit trail in a variety of field applications. With ProField, field technicians are given *next-day quality feedback*. This drives quality up from day one, and avoids costly rework cycles. Other similar practical, down-to-earth functionality built into ProField avoids most of the pitfalls of other software. For instance, "batching" is simply not possible within ProField due to our "forced march" workflows. Real-time issue resolution avoids failed attempts and repeat visits.

3 Will I be Ready for the Oncoming Data Explosion?

The utility world is seeing an onslaught of information and data never experienced before. Many are experiencing a transition from 10–12 reads per meter per year to as many as *over 100 reads per meter per day!* All these reads provide a wealth of information, but it's hardly useful unless there's a clear direction and purpose for where and how this data migrates throughout new OMS, DA and DR systems. And what about GIS? Utilities that don't have that "precise to-the-meter snapshot" or worse, haven't updated GIS in the last several years, have no

means to fully utilize their OMS and thus, quickly turn back the “cash registers” of the company. Apex’s utility information integrators are experts at managing and making sense of the new data explosion associated with AMI. Along with our innovative platforms and robust GIS solutions, we enable our clients to make sense of and benefit from the full value of their data, as well as the optimized functionality of their new systems. Project management is a critical dimension of the outsourcing relationship. Apex’s success factors for project management include organizational alignment, senior management commitment, processes and systems for communications and knowledge management, and the potential to realize the benefits of a mutually profitable strategic relationship.

4 Will I be able to Control Project Costs and Schedules?

Too many utilities, good utilities, are seeing their AMI project costs skyrocket and their ROI plummet due to unanticipated delays, unplanned issues and/or lack of control with vendors. With the myriad stakeholders, risks, schedules and costs associated with AMI adoption, it’s imperative that utilities of all sizes have a partner with the experience and foresight to create and implement procedures, both internally and externally. A partner who will keep the project on schedule, hold vendors accountable, maximize efficiencies and further enhance the ROI. Combining proprietary technologies, experienced project management and innovative process engineering, Apex enables utility clients to reduce costs, mitigate risks, meet or beat deadlines and maximize the fiscal returns on AMI deployments. With solid, real-world experience in selecting, managing and commissioning nearly every type of AMI technology for a multitude of different and unique utilities, Apex’s team knows what to expect, how to address the unforeseen, and how to keep the project under budget and on time.

5 Will my Smart Grid System Leverage GIS?

Powerful advances in outage management, storm restoration, and operational efficiencies are possible if *granular* GIS data is combined with the rich meter data available in an MDM. Most utilities’ GIS systems stop at the distribution level; they do not model the secondary and service drops to the customer meters. With an investment in smart meters, utilities will have *data connectivity* down to the meter. If they also achieve *electrical connectivity* in their GIS systems, the two systems can be integrated to provide unprecedented capability to improve operations. Outage recognition and failure diagnosis can be done at a granular level. This means outage management can be done at a sub-feeder level—lowering restoration times and substantially reducing truck rolls. Customers can be notified proactively, improving customer satisfaction. With over twenty years experience in GIS—and integrating GIS with other engineering systems, Apex is uniquely positioned to help you realize a *hidden return on your smart grid investment through operational improvements*. We can collect GIS data from the field, validate your existing data, integrate GIS with other enterprise systems, and deliver a fully connected, electrically valid network model to power your GIS to the next level.



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