5 reasons utilities should hire consultants to tackle challenging projects

By Mark Hatfield
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When faced with a huge project—especially one that requires the sourcing and implementation of new technologies—there are a few ways utilities can tackle the challenge. One is hiring a consultant to guide you through each step of the process. But some utilities hesitate to do so due to various reasons, including limited budgets, confidence in internal skills and experience, and anxiety over not being in the driver's seat for big decisions.

Have a challenging project coming up? E Source can help!

Fill out this short form to start a conversation about your needs and how we can help.

But there are lots of benefits to hiring consultants, especially for helping you tackle challenging projects.

A consultant will guide you from start to finish

A good consultant knows the ins and outs of implementing new technology and follows their proven process to provide a fruitful and smooth experience. It may be one project for you, but it might be your consultant's 100th. So why guess what your next move should be when there are experts available who know the next step, and the next, and the next …

A consultant will do the work you don't have time for

Utility employees wear many hats, juggling a variety of priorities every day. It can be challenging to tackle a comprehensive project such as a smart meter implementation or a customer information system transformation on top of their current workload. There's not enough time in the day to do it all and the skills required for these projects aren't always available in-house. Hiring a consultant to help you navigate the process can alleviate a lot of headaches.

The decisions around technology to use, integration methodology to follow, and more are yours to make, but a consultant will provide the pros and cons of each option so you can make an informed decision.

A consultant will always put your needs first

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There are times when a vendor's focus is on delivering the product and not on ensuring the product best fits within the utility environment, which can make you feel like one of the many checkboxes on their to-do list. But by working with a consultant, you'll always be treated as a unique customer, an Audience of One. Consultants will keep your needs at the top of the priority list which will help prevent critical mistakes during the procurement process and implementation.

A consultant will get you the best deal with vendors

Negotiating with vendors can be difficult and time consuming, and sometimes it can be the most stressful part of an implementation. Don't navigate that headache alone!

Consultants negotiate with vendors regularly and are experts at it. And vendors may be more likely to give consultants a good deal in the hopes that the consultant will bring them future clients. Oftentimes the money saved through good negotiating can pay for a large portion of a consultant's services.

A consultant will give you an external perspective

Consultants know how to tackle many of the challenges that come with a technology implementation. As a third party, they can also help identify areas of opportunity in existing processes that can go unnoticed by internal stakeholders busy juggling their day-to-day.

At E Source, we've heard from countless utilities that if they had to do their project over again, they would have hired outside experts to help them through it. We hope our list has encouraged you to let a consultant be your guide the next time you kick off a new implementation project.

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