How to help business customers get started with fleet electrification

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Most utilities have relatively little experience with fleet electrification because it's not where early EV markets developed. Globally, there are roughly 10 times more private passenger EVs on the roads than fleet vehicles, and the majority are in China. We have a long way to go to electrify all vehicles, but as business fleets begin to phase in EVs, the implications for utility distribution and capacity planning are significant and immediate.

Shift gears on fleet electrification

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

We've been working on a series of reports intended to help utilities start and scale fleet electrification programs. Members of the E Source Mobility or Distributed Energy Resource Strategy Services can read the first two reports in the series:

- Helping business customers get started with fleet electrification
- Mapping a course for fleet electrification

The third report, "Moving toward scaled fleet electrification and advisory programs," is coming soon.

The reports focus on customer engagement, customer needs, effective communications, working with trade allies, and other topics. We've gathered highlights from each to help get you started.

Where to start when you're not sure where to start

We've spoken with dozens of utilities across the US and Canada about the general lack of market data and customer information around fleet electrification. Many utilities came to us in the past year asking

questions like:

- Which customers are electrifying?
- Are different businesses electrifying faster than others?
- How are they integrating EVs into their fleets?
- What are their charging needs?
- What are fleet operators' informational, financial, and technical gaps?

Without conducting in-depth market research in each utility service area, it can be difficult to answer these types of questions with certainty. But our general market research suggests that you should get started with infrastructure planning and learn by doing. You should begin by working with just a few invested (friendly) fleets.

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Our initial interviews with utilities' business customers suggest they're somewhat knowledgeable about changing policies and legislation favoring EVs. And they're eager to learn more about technical and financial support and related programs, but they have no idea how to start a pilot or who to talk to about getting their fleet electrified. All of these observations seem to point to significant pent-up demand for utility fleet advisory and financial incentive programs.

Besides needing more information and technical support, fleet operators also point to incremental vehicle costs and model availability as big hurdles to fleet electrification.

To discover how to build up your fleet electrification program portfolio and more, read Helping business customers get started with fleet electrification. Not a member but interested in reading? Contact us for more information.

Mapping a course for fleet electrification

If you're confused about where to start with fleet electrification, where to prioritize your efforts, how to grow or scale your programs, or why your current efforts aren't as effective as desired, there's a good chance you would benefit from mapping out your programs and processes. Or maybe you're ready to overhaul your existing maps.

Planning maps come in many forms, but there are a few specific types that work well in support of utility electrification initiatives and portfolios:

- Customer journey maps
- Product roadmaps
- Hosting capacity maps

Let's say you're creating a new program, working with a new type of customer, partnering with new trade allies, engaging in a fast-moving or highly technical market, or collaborating across disparate groups within or outside your organization. Maps can help you keep your priorities straight and your teams moving in the same direction at a steady pace.

E Source selected to design, build, and operate New York's Integrated Energy Data Resource platform

New York's Integrated Energy Data Resource platform is hot off the press, helping the state achieve its goal of being a global climate leader. E Source is spearheading the development of the platform, which provides stakeholders with easy access to a wide variety of energy data and builds key partnership models with utilities, the state commission, and others. The platform enables stakeholder success and helps them build a roadmap of value-driving use cases for distributed energy resources, grid reliability, and disadvantaged communities.

Learn more

We've been involved with several mapping efforts over the years, sometimes with mixed results. Maps can be hugely beneficial, like the EV roadmap (PDF) we helped deliver for the State of Colorado.

Occasionally, the maps become convoluted or outdated over time. And in a few cases, we've seen mapping exercises that are so bureaucratic and labor-intensive to maintain that they make matters worse.

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A map is only as useful as the mapmaking and mapreading skills of those who use it. And the value of a map can be easily undermined by shifting priorities and budgets. Mapping requires effort and a commitment to the process; it's not a magical cure, but it can make your work life easier if done well, helping you communicate priority and need more easily.

In the full report, we discuss the key elements of three common types of business planning maps and how you can apply them to fleet electrification planning and implementation:

- A customer journey map describes your fleet customers' experiences with electrification
- A product roadmap describes your organization's own journey in supporting fleet electrification
- A hosting capacity map describes your grid's ability to support new fleet charging

To dive deeper into these common types of business planning maps, read Mapping a course for fleet electrification. Not a member but interested in reading? Contact us for more information.

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