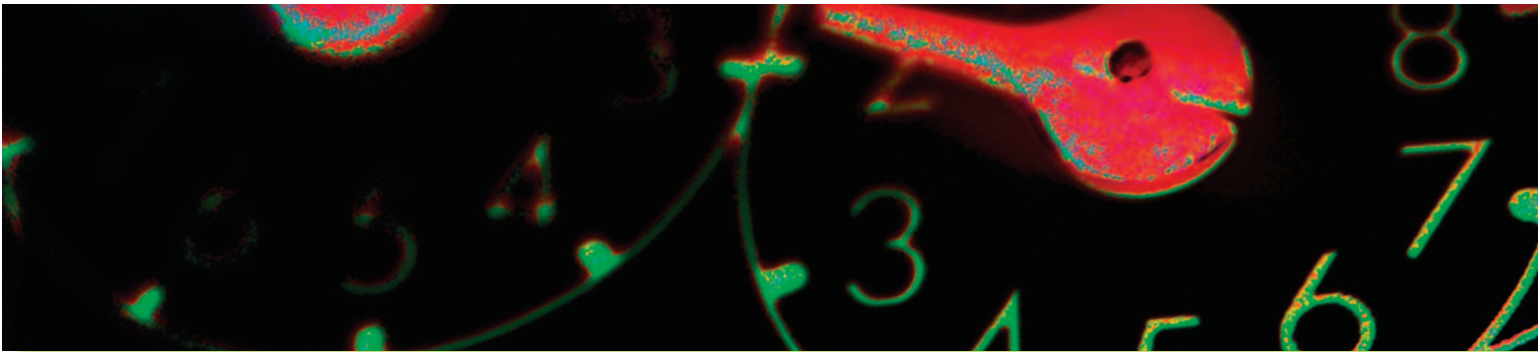


Planning the Right Smart Metering Combinations



The Age of Smart Meters

The mandates from public utility commissions – and even consumers – to utility companies are clear: Help consumers manage demand better. Improve customer service. Provide more rate choices.

To meet those requirements, the industry is increasing its installation and use of smart meters, a rapidly evolving array of equipment on a network that automatically collects data from energy meters. Data from smart meters can be transferred to a central database over common network and communications media, providing the utility with more data about customer usage than ever before. Smart meters help quantify demand habits so that utilities can better predict their base and peak loads and enable advanced capabilities, like pre-paid metering, distribution SCADA, outage detection and restoration, and smart meter agents. Smart meters can be the gateway to devices in the home, or the backbone of new tariff programs. They can, in fact, provide data to over 80 functional areas in a utility. Yet, most utilities focus their business cases on just three or four of these benefits. Companies with mature deployments are leading the way in expanding the use of smart meter data -- in some cases they are constrained by what they installed both in the field and in the central office, forcing hard choices about which pieces to keep, as they determine their own long-term benefits from smart metering.

As the technologies continue their advance, smart meters continue to gain functionality even while the price per meter decreases, giving utility companies more choices and economic incentive to deploy them.

Smart Meter Challenges

Utilities that view smart meter implementation as part of their future face many challenges. First, there are the choices among so many different types of smart meter communication protocols. Then there's the problem of integration with the pilot programs of the past. And because regulators know about the capabilities of smart meters and their ability to help with total load management and customer service, they will require utility companies to create programs that let consumers benefit from participation in voluntary shutdowns during times of peak demand, so as to help with the management of the entire grid. Ultimately, smart meter data will aid utility companies in engineering their entire network, to quantify how electricity is most effectively generated, transported and delivered.

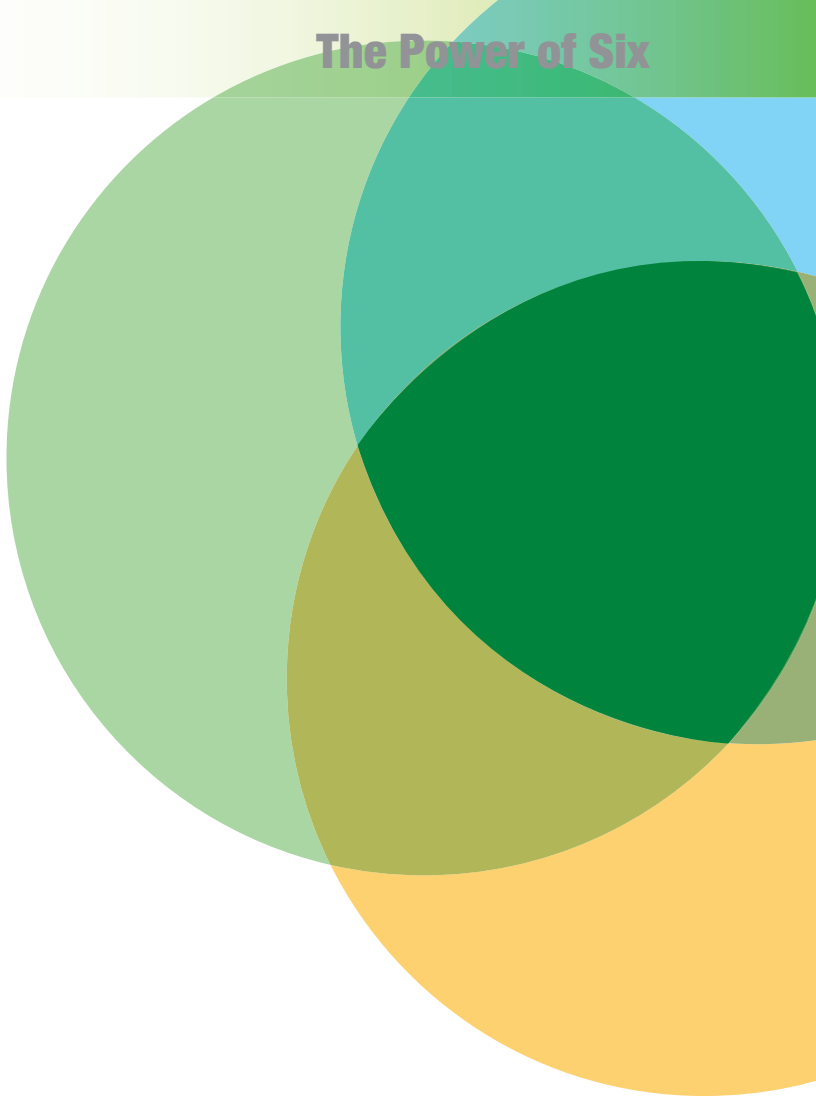
With all these expectations for smart meters, and the simultaneous need for smart meter data to integrate with information systems, how does the utility procure and deploy the most cost effective systems?

Accomplishing Now

The Smart Energy Alliance™ (SEA™), comprised of six of the world's leading technology companies, was created in 2006 to help utilities turn such operational planning challenges into opportunities to transform the entire utility organization.

The SEA believes that there are over 80 processes and functions which benefit – in terms of savings and cost avoidance – by installing a smart metering system. Some of them include: billing and customer service; metering; collections; settlement; demand management; system control; outage restoration; standards and construction; asset management; field work management; load forecasting; and, tariff and regulatory. Even vegetation management and safety can be improved with smart meter data.

The problem is that a utility company should not be required to become an expert on all the equipment and software options available to it to achieve those benefits. The Smart Energy Alliance has the right mix of deep industry experience coupled with a broad understanding of the technology solutions needed for tomorrow's utility. The members of SEA have all the equipment, information systems and know-how that create an integrated solution, within the unique infrastructure framework of each utility and the strengths of each product. The SEA has a defined process for engaging with a utility to understand its current legacy systems, its goals and tolerances for change, and its investment limitations. Using a collaborative process with the utility and the six SEA members – Capgemini, Cisco, GE Energy, HP, Intel, and Oracle Corporation – there is a proven methodology for creating a smart metering system that makes sense.



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The Smart Energy Alliance combines deep industry experience with a broad understanding of technology solutions from Capgemini, Cisco Systems, GE Energy, Hewlett-Packard Company, Intel and Oracle Corporation to accelerate adoption of new technologies in the utility industry worldwide.

For more information on the Smart Energy Alliance, visit <http://www.smart-energy-alliance.com>.

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