

Meeting the Demands of the Utilities Market

HOUSTON-BASED CONSULTING FIRM PROVIDES KEY WEB SERVICE SOLUTIONS TO ENABLE I.T. SUCCESS FOR UTILITY COMPANIES

TechStone Technology Partners, LLC provides consulting services that emphasize enterprise utility solutions. The software that TechStone deploys and customizes embraces the latest new movement to transitioning markets and solves utility related issues such as customer care and billing integration for business accountability and automation. TechStone provides small but highly specialized consulting teams that leverage proven architectures, reusable processes and customizable methodologies to deliver technology solutions that solve tough utility process problems. TechStone also leverages its already established partnership with the best of breed software provider in Oracle.

A Moving Target

Over the last ten years there's been revolutionary change in the utility market deregulation process and evolution. New markets are spawn with new opportunities and revenue streams. As well, the rapidly expanding customer base for most utility companies places more demand on the processes and systems to adapt.

"Gartner - Companies that continue to operate without truly integrated systems and processes will perish in the new millenium"

With this constant change there's an increasing need for integrated and flexible systems. Regional authorities and customer bases expect sweeping changes with the times from their utilities and to constantly evolve with deregulation in services. Competition has greatly increased as new utilities enter markets and deplete market shares. Utilities are now tasked with not only continuing to manage costs but to also adapt to the competition and seek new revenue markets.

Bringing Everything Together

TechStone enables utilities to leverage technology in meeting new market shifts and demands as well as manage down costs. Utility companies generally use a number of software applications. These include such applications as CRM, Billing, ERP and Meter Reading. SPL is usually the largest application as the industry leading billing application. Utilities will use middleware such as webMethods or TIBCO software to integrate these applications. Many utilities are currently deciding to upgrade some of their existing business systems and replace them with newer and more modern industry focused systems with the largest being SPL. The upgrade of these applications has included the upgrade of integration platforms as well.

TechStone provides a Road Map and Architectural guidelines for the upgrade of the integration platforms and create high-level architectural designs for the new integration points to the newly installed business systems. TechStone provides detailed interface designs for integration points and business processes between SPL and third party vendors as well as other related business systems. TechStone helps integrate business processes that are extremely flexible and enable demand-side management and demand-response programs.

Oracle and SPL

The Oracle acquisition in 2006 of SPL WorldGroup has greatly expanded the ability for utility companies to leverage integrated technology. Oracle's Utilities Customer Care and Billing has been enhanced and more robust functionality is now available for the utility client. Oracle continuously improves the quality of customer care that helps shorten billing cycles and compete in deregulated markets. Cost containment is extremely important to the utility company and can be driven in a variety of ways. Reducing data collection and billing errors with Oracle can contain costs as well as streamlining call center activities. Field service tasks can also be automated through a number of ways including; automating service order initiation, enabling rapid service order dispatch and uploading data to a centralized and integrated database to access in real time.

Integration with Utility Applications

More than ever before, today's leading utility solutions can integrate with premiere enterprise applications. This includes processes such as; payment uploading from third party vendors, payment processing, GL integration, call center and account data recognition, outage reporting and automated field service tasks.

- TechStone helps utility companies with uploading interfaces that allow for payment notification
- TechStone configures SPL to address account structures
- TechStone integrates separate GL systems to ERP
- TechStone provides outage reporting and OMS configuration and integration with automated field service tasks

The 'FastTrak' Approach

This custom designed program specifically for the utility companies planning integration projects leverages the above attributes into a cost effective solution. In just 5 weeks your company will have the essential foundation to move forward into an integrated and more automated world.

The program provides the following:

- Scalable & repeatable processes
- Project review & planning
- Vendor selection & technology evaluation
- Project Plan presentation
- Resource planning recommendations
- Architecture design

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