

TELECOM AND CONTACT CENTER ASSESSMENT AND ROADMAP

By David Tilson

A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT AND ROADMAP HELPS A UTILITY PLAN FOR BUILDING A RELIABLE, SCALABLE CONTACT CENTER OF THE FUTURE.

A 500,000-meter Midwestern utility, in the process of implementing significant Smart Grid initiatives, wanted to ensure it had sufficient voice technology and customer call center services to support peak loads during major outages. The utility hired West Monroe Partners to assess its current operations and infrastructure and provide an action-ready, cost-quantified roadmap that would support its voice telephony and contact center needs for the next five years.

ENSURING ADEQUATE PHONE SUPPORT FOR OUTAGES.

A 500,000-meter Midwestern utility has embarked on a significant initiative to implement Smart Grid technologies throughout its 6,000-mile territory over the next four to seven years. This effort includes the addition of a new facility to support operations, as well as added customer interaction channels.

At the same time, the utility wanted to address its disaster recovery and business continuity plans. The company wanted to ensure that its contact center was equipped to handle the increased volume of inbound and outbound calls during a significant outage in service.

To address these needs, the utility hired West Monroe Partners to develop a future state vision and roadmap. Each element of the roadmap would need to address:

- ◆ Impact on minimum compliance standards
- ◆ Service reliability
- ◆ Customer satisfaction
- ◆ Operating budget impacts
- ◆ Scalability

West Monroe Partners assembled a team of infrastructure and contact center subject matter experts. With its combination of operational and technical know-how, as well as its institutional knowledge of Smart Grid initiatives,

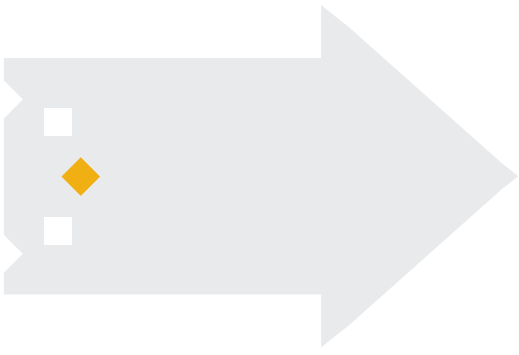
West Monroe Partners could articulate recommendations that would provide synergies among all of the initiative's moving parts: the network set up, the voice technology, and the applications to support the utility's contact center of the future.

ASSESSING STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND THREATS.

West Monroe Partners conducted 12 discovery interviews with key telecom, IT, and contact center staff and reviewed events during a previous major service outage due to a windstorm that left hundreds of thousands of customers without power. In addition, the project team reviewed internal metrics and budgets. Current-state topics included:

- ◆ Applications and back-end data structures
- ◆ IVR and call flow design
- ◆ Evaluation of existing networking and telephony, including the Nortel PBX
- ◆ Contact center workforce and quality monitoring
- ◆ Customer service persona

Once it completed the discovery process, West Monroe Partners created a current-state assessment with key strengths, weaknesses, and threats to each organization. The project team identified future initiatives to address each of these areas as part of the roadmap.



CUSTOMER & TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

BUILDING THE ROADMAP TO SUPPORT SERVICE CHANGES.

The project culminated with the delivery of a roadmap that quantified the costs, actions and timing necessary to achieve its future vision. The project team presented two voice technology strategies and three roadmap options. Each roadmap option projected:

- ◆ Impacts on minimum standards
- ◆ Call volume and handling time
- ◆ Staffing
- ◆ Key functionality

With a clear vision, the utility now can tackle the projects that will prepare it for upcoming service changes that are part of its Smart Grid technology deployments.

By working with West Monroe Partners, the utility has:

- ◆ A clear set of action steps and recommendations that address peak load and call flow issues during major outages.
- ◆ A prioritized list of initiatives that will have a positive impact on current call volumes and call lengths.
- ◆ Financial projections for implementing the roadmap over three- and five-year time horizons.
- ◆ A vision and strategy for how the organization will deploy voice technology going forward.
- ◆ Governance recommendations that will align the organization's telecom, IT, and contact center organizations more effectively and improve the utility's service delivery.

West Monroe Partners is an international, full-service business and technology consulting firm focused on guiding organizations through projects that fundamentally transform their business. With the experience to create the most ambitious visions as well as the skills to implement the smallest details of our clients' most critical projects, West Monroe Partners is a proven provider of growth and efficiency to large enterprises, as well as more nimble middle-market organizations. Our more than 300 consulting professionals drive better business results by harnessing our collective experience across a range of industries, serving clients out of offices across the United States and Canada.