



Case Study: Utility Partnership Ltd (UPL)

Many organisations are taking steps to minimise energy usage and reduce their carbon footprints, but all too often there is a lot of energy used and carbon generated in the setup phase. This is because of the need to visit many sites and install appropriate equipment.

One company, Utility Partnership Limited (UPL) of Cardiff has tackled this problem and taken effective action which has also brought cost and efficiency benefits. UPL specialises in Smart Metering, also known as AMR (Automatic Meter Reading). This shows what and when gas, water and electricity has been used. The solution to creating efficient and low energy work plans was to use vehicle routing and scheduling software from DPS International to plan the routes for the engineers fitting their Smart Meters.

The company works with three out of the four major mobile phone companies, fitting and monitoring Smart Meters at phone masts, and with many major retailers checking the energy usage at stores and facilities 365 days a year.



Smart Metering solution works by attaching an AMR device to an existing meter. This device picks up the meter's 'pulse'. The AMR device can record how much energy has passed through the meter as frequently as every hour. The information is then sent via mobile communications to the energy supplier's systems. Smart Metering gives accurate and detailed information on the energy used enabling better management of energy usage.

Rhys Wynne, Director and co-founder of UPL, believes that the usage of Smart Metering is becoming more important on the grounds of cost and the environment.

"Metering not only gives the usage but by constant monitoring you can find out when something is wrong and action can be taken to avoid wasted energy or water. To establish Smart Metering, it is necessary to swap current meters for smart ones and there is a lot of work involved because there are large numbers of sites involved all over mainland UK" Mr Wynne says.

"When we first started we were able to use manual route and work scheduling, but now we are fitting 200 sites a week and it is simply not feasible to produce efficient plans manually. One of the big challenges is that the addresses are new every time - it is not like a logistics business where deliveries are to the same addresses every day or week."

Another problem faced by UPL is the fact that most of the meters are in remote places - postcodes are not a planning option for the Smart Metering industry.

Explaining the impact that the use of LogiX from DPS has had, Mr Wynne said:

"With LogiX we can now produce robust schedules and manage customers' expectations regarding time and service. We simply could not do this job without LogiX. We are able to pinpoint remote sites using Ordnance Survey grid references to within one metre."

"The Smart Metering market is very competitive and price-sensitive and we can now provide high volume project management - using DPS LogiX when pitching to customers"