

# Empowering the Workforce



**Despite utilities having been through more than a decade of RPI-X regulation and growing competition, the main business drivers remain; improving service, efficiency and business performance.**

Mike Duggan, Business development director at AMT-SYBEX was recently invited by Utility Week to comment on the challenges facing the Utility industries.

*"In reality the pressures associated with these drivers will increase as the UK heads into a period of challenging economic pressures and world energy prices remain at historic highs",* said Mike.

*"It is vital that there is a clear data strategy in place in terms of effectively managing the asset infrastructure. We are actively involved in making sure the way data is collected and utilised provides information and improved knowledge on the condition and performance of the assets. This allows the UK Network companies across all sectors to prioritise and optimise their ever increasing investment programmes both in Capex and Opex."*

In the last five years, fieldforce mobilisation has been a focus for network operators and water companies keen to improve both productivity and customer service. AMT-SYBEX has built a strong reputation as a leading provider in the area of mobility and while most companies have been through at least one generation of fieldforce mobilisation, the next phase is aimed at improving information on asset condition and service to the end user.

*"The technology is well proven"* said Mike *"and the priority now is to align the technology to the business process."*

*"The accepted cross sector issue of resource and skills shortages have not gone away however, and making best use of the workforce remains a strong driver."*

*"One way to optimise field resources is to make sure they are fully empowered and have all the information they need. Capturing the knowledge experienced field engineers have about assets and putting it into workable processes and empowering front line resources is critical."*

***"The frontline guys should be involved in what the company is trying to achieve as a business. This is a cultural issue that many other industries manage very effectively."***

*"AMT-SYBEX's greatest added value is our know-how and knowledge of the industry and its needs" continued Mike. "We try to stay on the leading edge of regulatory developments so we understand tomorrow's issues rather than deal with historic problems. Our goal is to provide best practice solutions and services that support essential industries in meeting their business challenges going forward."*

In considering the key challenges of the future, climate change and the need to both conserve and reduce energy consumption will be significant factors in determining investment priorities.

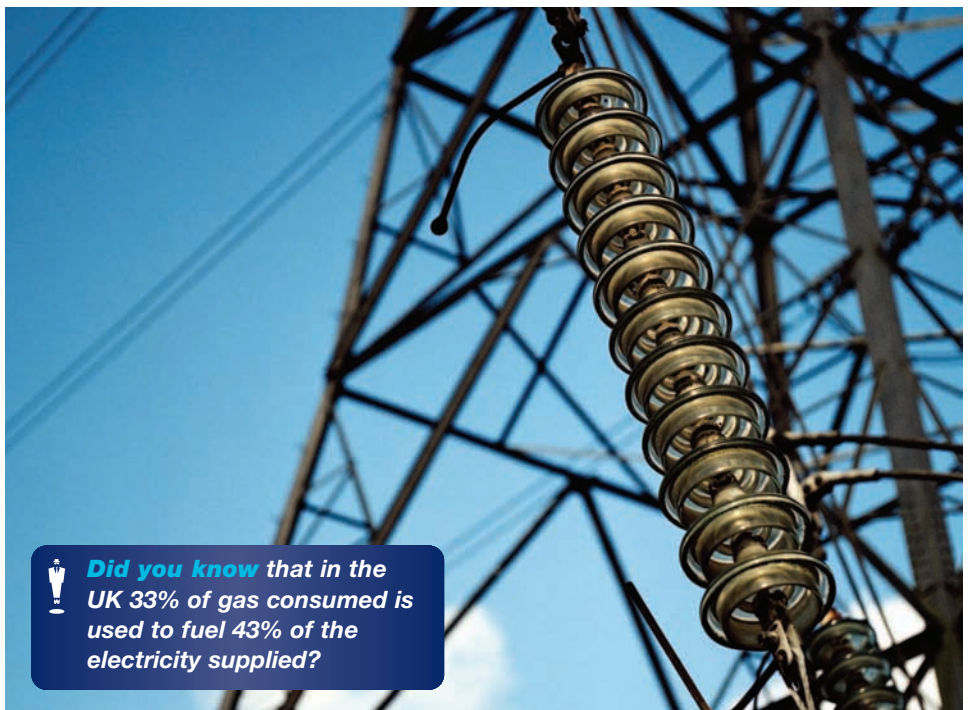
***"The advent of smart energy meters will have a significant beneficial impact on client usage and billing, and we expect some significant movement during 2009. Energy retailers also continue to invest in systems to meet the challenges of market competition allowing customers to switch supplier smoothly and competition is now likely to be on the radar for the water companies too."***



Based on AMT-SYBEX's clear experience in the energy sector in providing recognised innovative solutions in the area of data management to support customer choice, Duggan's advice to water companies preparing for retail competition would be 'know your customer'.

Mike concluded ***"The basic element is to have accurate information on who and where the customer is and the patterns of consumption. That implies a rapid increase in domestic metering and the water industry would benefit from investing in some sort of smart meters."***

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***Did you know that in the UK 33% of gas consumed is used to fuel 43% of the electricity supplied?***