



CASE STUDY

For a publicly-traded company that serves well over 650,000 customers, maximizing operational efficiency is essential. To achieve this, Sapere works closely with one of the nation's major energy providers to streamline its hydro and thermal generation and production processes. Over the last two years, Sapere has helped its client redesign its project management structure, redefining both the day-to-day responsibilities of its managers and the larger-scale vision of the department as a whole.

"An extra level of sophistication"

According to one of the client's Senior Managers, working with Sapere had a positive impact from the very beginning. The manager explained, as early as the first project they assisted on, the Sapere team "showed exactly what they could offer: an extra level of sophistication, scheduling and attention to detail."

When asked why his company's relationship with Sapere was able to succeed so quickly, the Senior Manager cited a commitment on behalf of the Sapere team to dive in and fully understand what makes their business tick.

"They have not just worked with our department, but have also shown interest in how our IT department works and how our executive level works," he said. As a result, "we don't have to bring them up to speed on those aspects when we're brainstorming or talking about potential projects."

Since that first project, the utility has leveraged Sapere's expertise to augment a number of other individual initiatives, as well as to assist in a department-wide redesign that universalized the insights it gained working with Sapere.

In another early project involving a hydroelectric plant, Sapere suggested the utility's project manager contract the work in an entirely new way. "Without that expertise," explained the Senior Manager, "I don't think we would have been successful trying to move forward with what ended up being a completely different approach."

"It was an eye opener," he continued. "They delivered real value there."



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Designing for operational excellence

While much of Sapere's work with the utility centers around managing specific large capital projects, the two companies have also worked together to restructure the project management process for generation and production as a whole. Initially, the engineers who designed certain projects would end up taking on the responsibility of a project manager as well. After deciding he needed to define the project manager role more sharply, especially in terms of the way it would interact with the engineers, designers and operational staff, the Senior Manager was left with a few challenging questions.

"How do we plan work? How does it get initiated? At what point does it go from engineering to project management?"

By helping to answer these questions, Sapere proved it could marry on-the-ground expertise with high-level planning to assist in rebuilding the utility's project delivery strategy from the ground up.

According to the manager, the key to maintaining the relationship throughout the entire process was Sapere's commitment to the company, whether they were on contract or not.

"Whenever our paths would cross, the Sapere team has always taken the time to let us know an invitation is open to check in. It is that presence on a regular basis, that's not just predicated on what projects or work we have going on, that feels like they have a sincere interest in our business."

