THE MISSING INGREDIENT FOR ACHIEVING NET ZERO

JAIME CRAWFORD SAYS UTILITIES' PLANS FOR ACHIEVING NET ZERO WILL FALL FLAT WITHOUT ONE CRITICAL INGREDIENT: LOCATION INTELLIGENCE

I love to bake, and if you know anyone who loves to bake, you know this: bakers are great at using baking metaphors for everything in life. Cake isn't sweet enough? That's a metaphor for embracing bittersweet moments in life. Short on flour? That's a metaphor about how to make the best of what you have in scrappy resourceful ways. And so on.

What does that have to do with sustainability in the utilities industry? I'm about to do exactly that kind of baker philosophising about Net Zero: Most utilities don't realise it yet, but their recipe for achieving Net Zero is missing a critical ingredient. Without it, these initiatives will fall flatter than a cake without baking powder. The missing ingredient is location intelligence, which most utilities don't realise is so critical to so many aspects of their Net-Zero efforts.

Location intelligence isn't just a nice-to-have for achieving Net Zero – it is an indispensable must-have. Without location intelligence, planning, implementing and measuring all the programmes in a Net-Zero initiative is much more difficult if not impossible to execute, including:

● Deploying and managing renewable energy assets and infrastructure in real-time
● Building and managing microgrids
● Upgrading infrastructure to enable smart grid features
● Conducting capacity planning to incorporate renewables, microgrids and other decarbonisation assets
● Expanding smart meter programmes at scale with residential and commercial customers
● Using power storage assets such as commercial and residential batteries
● Mapping and measuring carbon offsets
● Gathering critical data from massive sensor networks that enable decarbonisation efforts
● Supporting mobile applications used by work crews, customers, etc.
● Measuring and reporting progress toward Net-Zero

For people in the utilities industry who are familiar with the long history of geospatial in their industry, this indispensable role in Net Zero may raise some eyebrows. After all, geospatial teams have traditionally had vital but niche roles in utilities. Their work has always been important, but the impact of it has been limited to certain operational functions because of the complexity of the necessary analysis.

But we have reached a moment in the evolution of geospatial technology that removes that limitation and no industry will benefit more from the timing of this than utilities.

A new generation of location intelligence software makes the technology usable by a much broader set of users without advanced geospatial degrees. The role of geospatial departments will be more important than ever, but the software is democratising access to far more users thanks to simpler interfaces and powerful AI engines that automate the analysis of location-based data and deliver ready-to-use insights. This enables users across an organisation to put location intelligence to work to manage renewables, launch new decarbonisation programmes, upgrade infrastructure to be greener, and so many other aspects of Net-Zero initiatives.

The technology is ready to play this critical role. And there are proven models for effective location intelligence strategies for utilities. The utilities that understand the importance of this missing ingredient will be much more successful achieving their Net-Zero goals. It's the baking powder for this cake. It's the yeast for this bread. You don't have to be an avid baker to know what happens if you leave those out.

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