



Innovating for Field Safety in Utilities

SKYLLFUL CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Positive impact on the business:

Our customer was at the beginning of their field safety innovation journey but had an aggressive mandate to create a working process and lab to provide innovative and risk-reducing technologies for its emergency responders.

THE RESULTS OF OUR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS WERE:



A foundation for reducing risk and eliminating property loss or damage:

Our customer's employees, contractors, and customers are its greatest asset; improving their safety was the number one priority and the ultimate objective of the field safety innovation initiative.



The ability to effectively evaluate and test emerging technology in five core field safety innovation areas: Our customer instituted a working methodology to assess emerging technology for remote detection of hazardous gas situations in enclosed structures; remote monitoring of gas levels; remote support for on-site emergency responders; remote protection for health and exposure monitoring for employees; and in-home detection for proactive notification of potentially dangerous/hazardous gas levels.



The creation of a working innovation lab: Together we created a structure for the people, processes, and technology to advance ideas from research into working proofs-of-concept to field-ready production solutions. The customer target was to deliver six proofs-of-concept by mid-2018.

About the Customer

Our customer is one of the largest regulated utility companies in the United States, serving over 3 million natural gas and electric customers across several states.

In mid-2017, they created a Field Safety Technologies team to improve safety for their customers and emergency responders using emerging technology.

The impetus for change

The company believed one of its core missions was to become the utilities industry leader in safety. Severe accidents from hazardous gas leaks were uncommon but high-impact events generally accepted as an inherent risk of operating energy delivery systems. However, the CFO considered the change a critical necessity that could be accelerated with emerging technology. The goal was to eliminate or substantially reduce safety risks for employees, contractors, customers, and communities. As a new initiative within the organization, the customer needed to address gaps in organizational structure, process, and culture to:

SPECIFICALLY, THE NEW SOLUTION HAD TO



Create a field safety innovation team that evaluated technology solutions to eliminate unknown gas level risks, keep customers safe, and protect and support employees. Our customer had established a small but strong team that needed assistance to maximize its limited resources.



Develop innovation capabilities that allowed for rapid prototyping and promoted a fail-fast mentality. A culture of experimentation and rapid development was a departure from the norm, as it is for many established large enterprises.



Build a bridge between the IT organization and OT organization – in this case, Field Operations – to collaborate and execute for success; there needed to be a mechanism for IT to engage in “non-traditional” IT projects for the field operations business to facilitate experimentation and lab projects.

About Skyllful

At Skyllful, we believe emerging technologies will continue to change the way work gets done, and our passion is helping customers solve pressing business problems by applying technology the right way. Skyllful helps business leaders and their most critical workers use technology to make their work easier, better, and safer.

Skyllful provides the brainpower and processes to create, run, and refresh digital experiences where mobile workers connect with the physical world. By bridging the divide between IT and line-of-business demands, Skyllful balances the mobile worker experience and secure, reliable enterprise technology requirements to accomplish business goals and improve customer outcomes.

The Skyllful Solution

Skyllful worked closely with the customer to understand the core safety challenges that needed addressing and the constraints of people, processes, and technology.

Establish a culture of innovation: Skyllful established a set of guiding principles to create a successful innovation culture within the broader organization. Together, we also crafted a mission and charter for the Field Safety Technologies team to research, evaluate, pilot, and recommend new tools and technologies to reduce or eliminate emergency response risks.

Create a working structure for the Core Innovation Team & Lab: Skyllful helped create a team structure and “sandbox” approach to execute the field safety technology mission. Key roles within the team included dedicated technical and operations resources to bridge the IT/OT divide, and the sandbox approach allowed the Lab to isolate experimental projects from existing IT infrastructure to promote rapid development.

Institute a detailed methodology & process for execution: Most important for our customer was the ability to move rapidly from ideas and concepts to working solutions for field safety personnel. We worked together to create a highly detailed iterative process that spanned a cycle of research & discovery, lab testing, field trials, operational pilots, and production solutions. Skyllful also created a tool that allowed the customer to track and estimate resources and/or skills required to advance projects through the innovation process.

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