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UTC Strategic Plan 2019-2021

The Utilities Technology Council (UTC) is a global trade association dedicated to serving electric, gas and water providers in their deployment and management of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) networks to help ensure the safe, reliable delivery of their critical services.

Utility ICT networks are the foundation for some of the most significant shifts in the industry in decades. The first major shift within the global utility industry was the addition of remote industrial control systems such as Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) to utility infrastructure to provide greater situational awareness of operations. SCADA and similar systems optimize these essential energy and water services through ICT networks. The industry's second major shift, also known as the utility of the future, or "utility 2.0," employs ICT networks to enable customers to interact with their utility providers in a much more granular way, given the advent of viable distributed energy resources, battery storage and other "edge of the grid" technologies. The latter is also predicated on robust ICT networks managed by the utilities themselves. Finally, the increased risk posed by deploying ICT networks has created the "new normal" of ongoing cybersecurity management for utilities.

As the global association representing the interests of diverse electric, gas, and water utilities on their ICT networks, UTC provides a critical platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, joint advocacy, research, and education on these increasingly important systems.

These historic shifts in the utility industry, along with UTC's cross-cutting mission and diverse membership, compel us to periodically step back and review where we are headed as compared to where we **should** be headed. Therefore, the UTC Board of Directors, joined by executive and programmatic staff (collectively referred to as "leadership"), engage every three years in strategic planning. In July 2018, the leadership completed a robust dialogue about the direction and focus of UTC for the coming three years (2019-2021) based on feedback from the 2017 UTC membership survey (which focused on utilities' needs from UTC), budgetary goals, available resources, and advocacy goals. The planning was facilitated by Meredith Persily-Lamel of Aspire at Work.





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The group figuratively built a house comprised of the elements of the UTC strategic plan (see Figure 1).

The foundation of the house includes the values we hold as UTC members and staff: member-driven; competent; agile, acting with integrity; and providing trusted representation. The roof of the house comprises the UTC mission--what we do--and vision--what we aspire to do.

Note: The mission and vision were changed three years ago, and the leadership decided they still resonated for the next three years. They are:

- **Mission:** UTC shapes the future of utility mission critical technologies by driving innovation, fostering collaboration and influencing public policy.
- **Vision:** UTC is the trusted advisor to utilities and other critical infrastructure providers globally. The Council serves as the source and resource for our members to deploy technologies and solutions that deliver secure, reliable and affordable mission critical services.

The pillars of the house are the key priority areas on which the leadership identified for UTC to focus its limited resources. They are:

- Membership
- Advocacy

- Finance and Operations
- Content

UTC leadership further refined these pillars to create actionable, measurable goals and initiatives for the next three years. Below, we will describe these goals. The graphic depiction of the UTC “house” above (Figure 1) simply synthesizes the 2019-2021 strategic plan and can serve as a quick reference. Also, at this point it is the pillars and goals that are most important to the plan; these will be evaluated on an annual basis in terms of progress made to achieve the three-year strategic target. The specific initiatives and tactics supporting the goals are subject to change if better ways to achieve goals are identified. These specifics, therefore, should be viewed as flexible. The UTC leadership will convene annually to review the status of the goals and to further refine the three-year plan if needed.

The rest of this document describes in detail the four pillars of the UTC house and the goals associated with them. Leadership will use these descriptions to govern and measure progress over the next three years.

Membership

Like any trade association, membership is the lifeblood of UTC. In order to broaden and retain core utility membership, the UTC leadership set three goals as a guide. The leadership believes that the key context for achieving these goals include: bringing relevant issues to utility members’ decisionmakers and executive leadership to provide additional context for the utility of the future, grid resilience, and, most importantly, the need for UTC; growing member engagement efforts for better retention over time; continuing new member recruitment, particularly with the new dues restructuring providing additional avenues for umbrella organizations to participate; and engaging “younger” people (defined by the group as under 50 years old) in UTC to help with member retention, continuity, and new ideas for content.

Specifically, UTC leadership has set the following membership goals:

Goal: Retain 91-93% of current (2018) core members over the next three years

UTC will reach this goal through the following initiatives:

- Outreach – complete a personal, member-to-member, customer satisfaction survey (update with baseline from 2017 membership survey)
- Service to Members -- staff should engage in excellent customer service/meeting member needs based on our mission

- Enhanced Member Engagement—better utilize the Board of Directors, UTC committees and divisions, and UTC's online platform NetWorks to communicate with and among members
- Thought Leadership—increase UTC's relevance and awareness by expanding speaking opportunities, participating in key industry events, expanding our social media presence, and publishing articles in internal and external publications, among other opportunities
- Improve Educational Offerings—bolster UTC's annual conference and regional meetings' attendance by using analytics to deliver quality education

Goal: Increase core utility membership by 15 percent by 12/31/21 (NOTE: In refining this metric, UTC leadership will look at small, medium and large members separately)

UTC will reach this goal through the following initiatives:

- Member outreach—utilizing the UTC membership to identify the appropriate contacts at utility nonmembers and encouraging them to join. This will take into consideration utility size and ownership structure, and indicia the UTC leadership will continue refining. Some of this is already coming to fruition with the adoption of the umbrella policy for utility membership.
- Expand Upon Virtual Membership Opportunities—NetWorks, conference calls, webinars, Continuing Education Units (CEUs) through webinars (note that CEUs are available through other means as well, notably conference attendance), online membership packets and resources
- Personal visits
- Consider individual memberships
- Create student/young member-level UTC committee and potential award for “rising stars”
- Outreach to technology based, non-telecommunications organizations to increase, diversify associate membership

Goal: Increase the total number of core member participants attending in-person events by 5-7% by 12/31/21. Content is an important factor in spurring this participation.

UTC will reach this goal through the following initiatives:

- Develop innovative rate structures for attendance at UTC in-person events, including a corporate rate for the annual conference based on the amount of attendees and a first-time attendee rate for new and diverse attendees, including representatives from gas and water utilities, non-traditional technology partners, and non-telecom job titles
- Continue to seek to locate in-person events (Telecom & Technology, regional meetings) in locations that are easy to reach and relatively inexpensive in order to reduce unnecessary travel costs for attendees



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Advocacy

While membership is the lifeblood of any association, advocacy is the heart as to why associations exist in the first place. Effective associations must be able to clearly and demonstrably advocate on their members' behalf on policy issues that impact how members function. In order to ensure the UTC staff is focused on the policy matters of most interest to its members, the goals below are meant to provide the membership appropriate input into the association's advocacy efforts.

Goal: Over the next three years, UTC will support its members by achieving favorable utility information and communications technology (ICT) policies through increased advocacy efforts in Congress, the Administration, and the media.

UTC will reach this goal through the following initiatives:

- Annual Analysis--on an annual basis, UTC will conduct a risk/reward analysis on the impact—be it financial, operational, regulatory, or other—that certain federal policies will have on our members. Based on the priorities identified, UTC will develop a roadmap to achieve mileposts to favorably assist our members; this roadmap will be assessed annually. With the roadmap, UTC will develop campaigns to achieve the mileposts/successes on the roadmap.
 - Sample priorities: FCC/FERC meetings; 6 GHz; 406-420 MHz; pole attachments; broadband; grid resilience

Finance and Operations

Any organization must be financially stable; UTC is no exception. Financial stability ensures that UTC can recruit and retain top-tier staff and provide ongoing value to its members. Stability also allows UTC to implement adequate administrative and technological support necessary to allow staff and leadership to carry out the association's mission. Transparency is a key element to this, as it provides confidence in UTC's financial management.

Goal: Achieve range of 5% (acceptable), 10% (preferred), or 15% (exceeding expectations) revenue growth by 12/31/2021

UTC will reach this goal through the following initiatives:

- Implement dues restructuring and consider additional restructuring of international dues
- Improve spectrum services processes, marketing, pricing
- Introduce new vendor packages and review existing offerings
- Increase training and educational opportunities

- Growth in membership (see membership goals above)

Goal: Generate 10% of designated total reserve fund by 12/31/2021

UTC will reach this goal through the following initiatives:

- Develop strategic investment plan for reserve fund
 - Increase the reserve fund budget line item by 10% of our reserve by 12/31/2021 in effort to establish reserve fund with five months of operating expenses

Goal: Increase our bottom line (annual net gain) by 10 (acceptable), 15 (preferred), 20% (exceeding expectations) by 12/31/2021

UTC will reach this goal through the following initiatives:

- Complete ongoing assessments of overall operations including technology, staff, office, internal and external resources
- Optimize our structure and financial relationships with domestic and international regions to create efficiency and enhance revenue
- Explore federal grant opportunities and other strategic partnerships (training, conferences, workshops) to enhance revenue opportunities

Content

For an association to expertly serve its members and advocate on their behalf, it must provide smart, timely, and adequate content to inform and educate. Developing content across different platforms increases engagement and allows members to proactively participate and lead discussions. In addition, appropriate content can be used to educate and attract new members from sectors outside the traditional electric utility member. Content can inform and entice potential members from water and gas utilities, for examples, to consider UTC membership.

Goal: Improve engagement by diversifying topics to strengthen UTC reach

UTC will reach this goal through the following initiatives:

- Broaden content beyond traditional utility/telecom issues by including resilience, smart technologies, security
- Keep content focused on member needs by surveying members formally and informally on a regular basis

Goal: Broaden our messaging to reach different audiences in different ways

UTC will reach this goal through the following initiatives:

- Target messaging to specific audiences and only add to an existing communication tool when necessary

Goal: Strengthen subject matter expert engagement by increasing involvement and diversifying pool of experts

UTC will reach this goal through the following initiatives:



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- Develop a UTC subject-matter expert (SME) resource tool or list to use as a resource for proposing speakers at a conference, writing articles for the UTC Journal or external publications, speaking on webinars, etc.
- Recruit new voices within the membership to represent UTC in different platforms

Conclusion

As mentioned above, this 2019-2021 plan will be reviewed annually by the full UTC leadership in July, with annual calendar-year workplans developed by staff and approved by the Board of Directors to implement the pieces of the plan targeted for that given year. Staff will create metrics documents for both the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors to review progress on the plan at each of their meetings throughout the year (note: The Executive Committee and Board of Directors each meet four times annually). These activities will be calibrated and refined based on our available resources as determined through our annual budget process – a process culminating in a calendar year budget that also must be approved by the UTC Board of Directors.

