

The GIS Advocacy Checklist for *Utility Professionals*

Proven steps to move GIS from the “mapping department” to a mission critical system - drawn from 16+ years of real world utility GIS leadership.

YOUR 3-PHASE ROADMAP

1 Listen First — Hold Stakeholder User Groups

Schedule quarterly meetings with every department that touches GIS data — operations, field crews, engineering, IT. Your goal is to hear unfiltered problems, not defend the current state.

2 Advocate Internally — Show Up Before You're Asked

Attend steering committees. Volunteer GIS as a solution when location data could help any business process. Position GIS proactively, not reactively.

3 Deliver & Repeat — Turn Requests into Projects

Convert stakeholder feedback into concrete enhancements, tools, and integrations. Document wins. Communicate outcomes back to the groups who raised them.

"Without users, you're maintaining a system for nothing. The trust of your users is what propels GIS into higher importance."

— David Miller, SSP Innovations

★ The Big Goal

Transform GIS from a passive "mapping system" into the information nexus for distribution, field operations, outage management, inspections, and beyond — the second most critical IT system in your utility.

YOUR 3-ACTION CHECKLIST

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Schedule first quarterly user group meeting within 30 days
- Invite representatives from operations, engineering, IT, and field crews
- Prepare open-ended questions — no defending, just listening
- Document all pain points and feature requests from each meeting
- Follow up with each group on actions taken from their feedback

INTERNAL ADVOCACY

- Identify 2–3 steering committees or leadership meetings to attend
- Build a one-slide "what GIS can do for us" overview for leadership
- Proactively volunteer GIS when any location-based problem is raised
- Share quick wins broadly — email, intranet, team meetings

SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

- Audit current GIS data quality — identify gaps and stale layers
- Prioritize top 3 enhancements based on stakeholder feedback
- Evaluate additional training needs for end users
- Identify 1 manual process GIS could digitize or improve
- Explore integrations: OMS, SCADA, CMMS, inspection workflows

MEASURE & COMMUNICATE VALUE

- Track GIS usage metrics quarter over quarter
- Document time/cost savings from each GIS-led improvement
- Present a GIS impact summary to leadership annually