

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