

5 Clear signs it's time to break up with your outdated Customer Information System (CIS)



When a room full of utility leaders overwhelmingly agree with the statement, “Everybody expects more from their CIS,” you know there’s widespread frustration with legacy systems. But why? Why is there such friction among leaders and their CIS, the heart of your utility business?

At SpryPoint, we believe utilities should expect more from their technology and platform vendors. For the past decade, we’ve focused on architecting a new generation of customer service and operations software to empower utilities to contend with the rapid pace of change.

We’ve found that utility leaders face five common pitfalls and challenges from their outdated CIS platforms, preventing them from meeting increasing customer demands, navigating the complexity of their meter-to-cash process, and achieving efficiency goals.

1. Costly, disruptive, and resource-intensive upgrades

Legacy CIS technology – whether on-premise or hosted – has locked you into processes and workflows that make it difficult to innovate at the speed of your business. To stay on a currently supported software version requires costly, disruptive, and resource-intensive upgrades. On the flip side, waiting to upgrade your CIS means knowingly missing out on efficiency and productivity gains that help your staff operate more effectively. Technology is not slowing down, so upgrades to your CIS will, unfortunately, continue into the foreseeable future.

Solution: Move from software upgrades to continuous updates, delivering incremental, compounding value with each release without the resource-consuming preparation, testing, retraining, and interruption that comes with the legacy upgrade paradigm.

2. Heavily customized software fails to move at the speed of your business

Utility providers must innovate to excel in today’s dynamic utility landscape. But heavily customized legacy technology locks you into processes and workflows that no longer meet your changing needs and customer demands. Instead of helping you streamline and accelerate your business, legacy vendors hamper your business processes and innovation.

Solution: Go from software customization to configuration. Configurability management must be built into your CIS to provide the flexibility to innovate your business processes while ensuring consistency, reliability, and efficiency in an increasingly complex meter-to-cash lifecycle.

3. Limited interoperability between core systems

Interoperability between your IT and OT systems is paramount for today's interconnected utility operation. But legacy CIS technology was not built with integrations in mind, requiring you to use 3rd party system integrators to build bespoke integrations that introduce security gaps, and reliability and availability issues.

Solution: Your CIS vendor must prioritize interoperability between your IT and OT systems with an API-first approach to give you the flexibility to seamlessly integrate your core systems to enable data flow for informed decision-making.

4. Security is an afterthought

The threat of cyberattacks against utilities is greater than ever, which means security is likely at the forefront of your mind. And the unintended consequence of interoperability is the risk of greater security threats. With the sensitive customer information in your CIS, investing in technology that proactively addresses security requirements is non-negotiable. But when any new fix or security feature requires a costly and resource-intensive upgrade, it might give you pause as you balance the benefits with the risks.

Solution: You need a CIS partner with a security-first approach, prioritizing and proactively considering potential threats as an integral part of the decision-making process for every deployment and update to safeguard your data.

5. Outdated user experiences

As your experienced staff considers their next stage of life and retirement, the institutional knowledge of your systems and processes goes with them. And as a new generation of staff enters, you'll need intuitive tools that increase productivity and shorten the learning curve as you evolve your business. Unfortunately, most legacy technologies are notoriously complex and inefficient, requiring workarounds and causing staff dissatisfaction.

Solution: Move from an outdated to a user-centric, intuitive interface that eliminates multiple tabs and pages, replaced with automated processes and a few simple clicks, increasing productivity and employee satisfaction while reducing training time.

SpryCIS

If you're part of that group who agrees with the statement, "Everybody expects more from their CIS," let SpryPoint share with you and your team a better way. We've applied our deep domain expertise and process-focused design to build a new generation of customer service and operations software that streamlines how your teams work across the meter-to-cash lifecycle, reducing friction and frustration from the field to the back office.

Schedule a demo and see for yourself why hundreds of utility teams are making the move to SpryPoint.

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