



Why it is Important to Get a Communications Assessment

What makes Twin Eagle Consulting different from our competitors is that our management team used to be in the same position that our customers are today. I started out as a technician and worked my way up to be the director of Telecommunications for Kinder Morgan. My partner at TEC, Brian Kovarik, worked for me at KMI and took over what I was doing when I left in 1999. We now address the same issues with our customers that we addressed when we were on the front lines of the corporate empire.

Back in those days, we had already built a high-speed microwave system between our Denver and Houston Corporate offices. SCADA was being monitored with 202T 12000 baud modems and the old Motorola Darcom and MDS 1000 MAS radio systems. Spread Spectrum radios were just coming out. So low speed satellite was the choice to backhaul remote data from places like Canadian Texas and Malta Montana. Things have changed or improved a lot from those days.

What has also changed is the requirements for high speed reliable data to provide communications to and from every IIOT asset in the field. Unfortunately, most energy companies don't have the infrastructure to provide the reliable networks that are required to make the information flow that is so desperately needed today. Those that have an adequate network, whether leased or owned, enjoy the benefits of their data being available at a moment's notice. Most companies are still struggling along with the old licensed MAS working at 9600 Baud, unlicensed Spread Spectrum and satellite. A few companies have good cell LTE service, but even that has issues, limited bandwidth and over subscription can make the data network slow and can even drop the network at critical times.

So, what can a manager, director or even CIO do to improve an aging or inadequate network without making a monumental and costly mistake in technology. The easiest and most reliable way is to hire a consulting company to assess the existing field networks and provide solutions for immediate and future requirements of the company. TEC is a solutions company first, we are always assessing the requirements before making recommendations. It doesn't make sense to install a system today that barely meets the requirements of the company. It's always better to right size the comms with enough margin for future growth. Build it and they will come mentality.

Back in the days of KMI, our team would assess what we needed to move natural gas from Texas to Chicago for example. A highspeed microwave system was required for immediate communications back to our gas control in Lakewood Colorado. A loss of communications would be devastating to our commitment to deliver this gas. But it started way before the gas left Texas. All our upstream assets needed to be communicated with also. We had a cradle to grave mentality that allowed us to monitor produced gas, purchased gas, transported gas and what we sold downstream.

TEC can do the same type of assessment for companies today. Maybe all that is needed is the upstream communications. The oil pad, tank battery and interconnects to a gathering system, (the cash register), are what's important. But the company needs to know what's going on in each stage of the process. Knowing each stage immediately is important to ensure the company is efficient and profitable. Added benefits are Security, Video and Audio analytics, Wi-Fi on the pad to make employees more efficient and informed, SCADA RTU and PLC monitoring and management and many other applications that haven't even been thought of yet for the digital oilfield and IIOT. They all require reliable communications. And a telecommunications assessment is money well spent to get you to where you need to be today and in the future.

TEC is a qualified solutions company with many years of experience in the energy industry doing communication systems for upstream, midstream and downstream companies across North America.

Written by Kip Greenstreet
CEO and Managing Partner
Twin Eagle Consulting, LLC