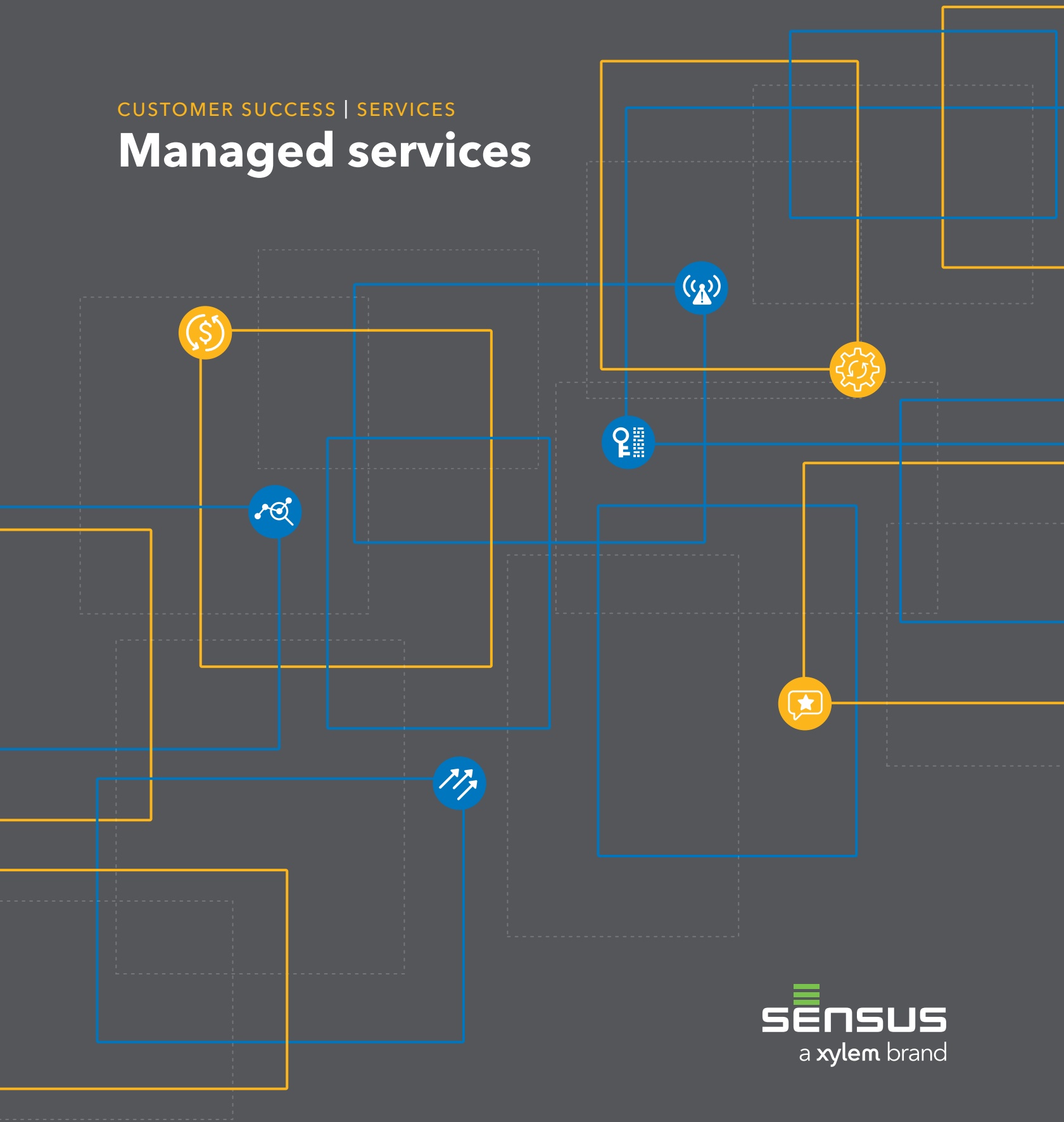


Nothing's out of reach.



CUSTOMER SUCCESS | SERVICES

Managed services





"With managed services, customers aren't buying a service. They're buying results."

JEFF WOODY

Vice president, customer success
at Sensus

As a Service, at your service

As much as professionals in every industry strive to do it all, and to do it all well, there are some aspects of business that require employing outside experts. Initiated with the role of "consultant" around the time of the Industrial Revolution, business and service advisors became increasingly specialized and customized over time. The cost of this expertise also surged accordingly. Then came "as-a-service" offerings, which resulted primarily from the rapid growth of IT throughout every industry. After all, technology was a foreign language to most business professionals, and every company had its onsite or offsite "IT guy" to fix our every computer issue.

"Although as-a-service has been around for a long time, it's relatively new in the utility industry," explains Jeff Woody, vice president, customer success at Sensus. These consulting services across industries have become more standardized over time. Now a set of services can be provided right out of the box—so it's scalable, repeatable and predictable for customers.

"The utility industry has not only caught up," Woody continues, "but is also effectively building upon as-a-service offerings. There is pretty much 'Everything-as-a-Service' now. The key is to make it easy."

The managed services difference

A step above as-a-service offerings, managed services allows a company to offload an entire part or function of its business to a third party. Woody elaborates: "We not only sell a product to a customer, we help them use those products to run their business." Previously, the industry term was "staff augmentation"—and it was highly customized. In the utility industry, managed services has become a more standardized, widely accepted and readily understood offering.

And managed services plays an integral role in customer success—for both the utility provider and the end user. "In a managed services play, we (the product and service providers) become true partners, helping the utility run its operations. We are mutually responsible for success," Woody says. "In fact, with managed services, customers aren't buying a service. They're buying results."

With so many utility product, service and infrastructure providers jumping on the managed services bandwagon, the key is to ensure utilities and municipalities are entering into effective and efficient partnerships for successful outcomes. Here, success breeds success and creates next-level relationships.



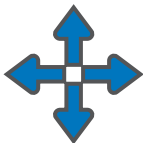
Consider the NaaS benefits



Security expertise



Predictable costs



Scalability



Core business focus



Guaranteed performance

The benefits of Network as a Service for AMI

A strategic managed service provided to utilities—particularly to those with or transitioning to Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)—is Network as a Service, or NaaS. And for utilities large and small, NaaS provides significant benefits with the right partner. “The key advantage of NaaS is CapEx savings, as the utility doesn’t have to purchase and manage the collectors (also called base stations) and network,” Woody explains. “The AMI solution becomes a predictable OpEx model, with predictable costs and—with the right partner—guaranteed performance.”

For those utilities and municipalities considering a managed services partner, the benefits are significant and make a strong case for NaaS.

SECURITY

The managed services provider should have the expertise and certifications to maintain and update security. The network should be monitored 24/7 with world-class security, and the provider should perform regular security audits.

PREDICTABLE COSTS

“Maintaining and monitoring a secure, reliable network consumes valuable resources that most utilities can ill afford to lose,” Woody says. With NaaS, capital expenditures for hardware or software are eliminated, providing predictable costs for budgetary planning. “Utilities also reduce IT and operational costs by leveraging the NaaS partner’s personnel to manage, monitor and maintain the network for the full useful lifecycle of assets.”

FUTURE-PROOFING THE NETWORK

The NaaS provider will maintain and update the network, so as technology advances, so does the customer’s infrastructure. The managed service provider should have a flexible multi-application network that is scalable for smart metering and more.

CORE BUSINESS FOCUS

Utilities can free their staffs to focus on their core business and business-critical initiatives while also leveraging the provider’s expertise. According to Woody, “There is a huge benefit to relying on the expertise of the provider, especially when it comes to peace of mind.”

GUARANTEED PERFORMANCE

The right NaaS provider should be able to promise a high percentage of reads—ideally 98-99%. “If network management is done in-house,” Woody explains, “reliable performance becomes the responsibility of the utility or municipality. But with experts monitoring, managing and maintaining the network, there is assurance you have full coverage in your service territory and that the network is operating at peak performance.”



Selecting the right NaaS partner

With a full list of potential benefits in mind, selecting the best NaaS solution shouldn't be too intimidating. But there are strategic decision-making factors every utility and municipality should consider when determining the optimal partner. Here are key questions to ask:

Does the potential partner have significant NaaS experience?

Is the potential partner's network reliable, secure and expandable/scalable?

What is the guaranteed performance level going to be?

Does the potential partner guarantee functioning and security at all times—even in a disaster or crisis?

What are the response/recovery times for events?

Making the case for NaaS

"When utility customers choose to move to AMI, they have to decide if they want to run everything themselves or want someone else to run it," says Woody. "They must find the optimal network first and then determine if NaaS will be the best choice."

The initial consideration, Woody explains, is the financial baseline: Will it be CapEx or OpEx?

Next comes the assessment of total cost of ownership. What are the year-over-year costs of owning infrastructure versus licensing it? And if the utility is the owner, what if there's a disaster? Is the capability there to successfully address it? With NaaS, matters of preventative maintenance, upgrades, etc., are an automatic part of the service, so it takes that stress off the utility.

"And then there's the priority issue of security," Woody explains. "With a NaaS partner, security is handled by certified experts 24/7. If that is the customer's responsibility, they're at the mercy of their IT security person—and what if he or she leaves?"

Finally, planning for the future is key to the decision-making process. Is there a five-year plan? A 20-year plan? According to Woody, "You really need a 20-year plan, because that's how long the devices last." Network technology and associated equipment, however, may not allow for a straightforward 20-year plan. "Like with phones, there's new technology annually—or even more frequently. And with NaaS, it's all taken care of," Woody says. Even spare parts are inventoried on the customer's behalf, which would be costly for the customer to manage separately.

Once a decision is made to go with a NaaS solution partnership, utilities shouldn't have to worry about the implementation process at all. "It should be a turnkey process," Woody says. "But more than that, it should be white-glove service."

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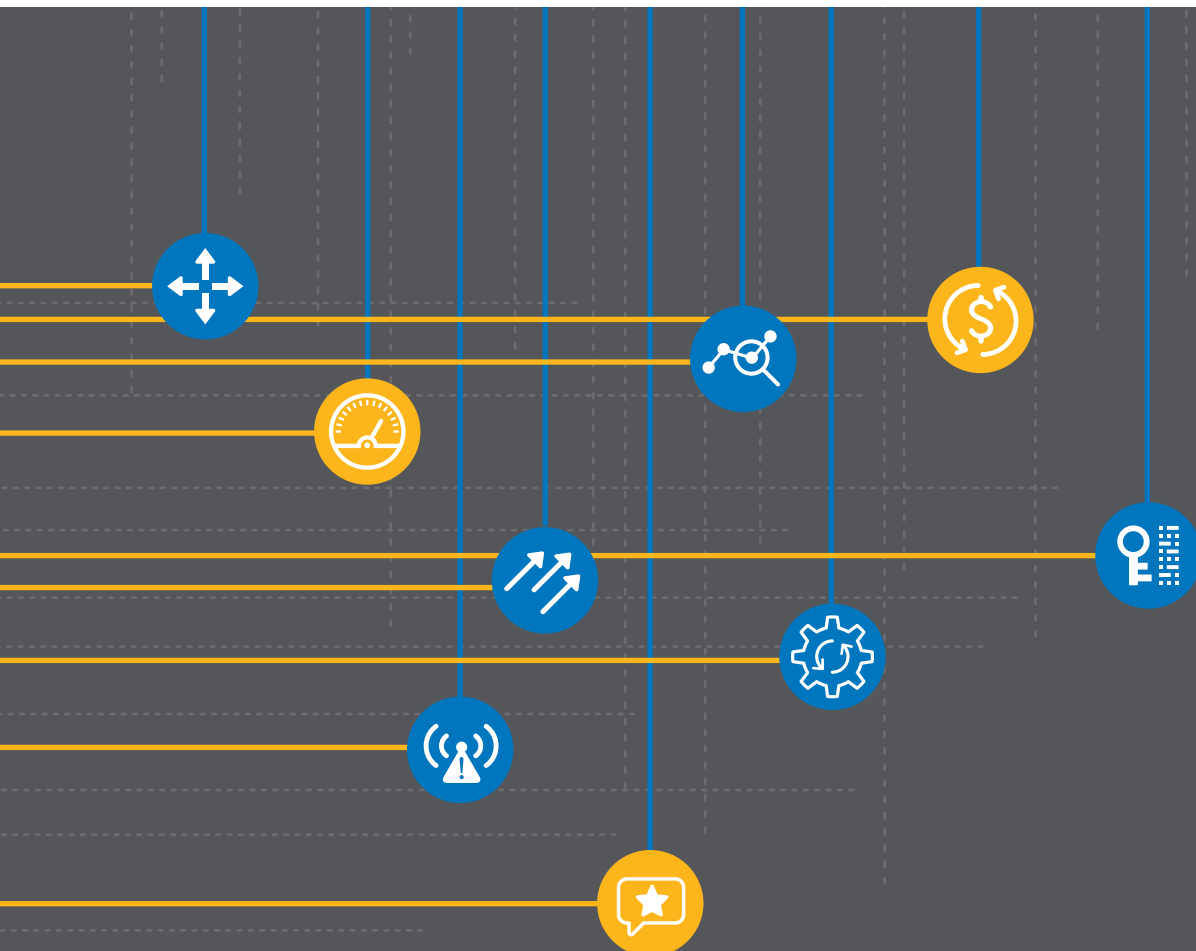
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A smart decision for a smarter future

When utilities and municipalities have AMI, especially with NaaS, they are already prepared for smart city solutions. “At that point, smart becomes all about the devices,” Woody says. “With the right network in place, it’s basically plug-and-play.”

As the foundation is set for smart city applications across utility verticals, the future of managed services seems boundless. Utilities will most likely push the envelope on as-a-service solutions, asking what else can be offloaded for the sake of efficiency. According to Woody, “Even those functions that have been ‘sacred’ to the utilities will go into the realm of managed services. Offerings will continue to be standardized, making them simpler, more scalable and better able to leverage all the collective utility information for turnkey service.”





About Sensus

Sensus, a Xylem brand, helps a wide range of public service providers—from utilities to cities to industrial complexes and campuses—do more with their infrastructure to improve quality of life in their communities. We enable our customers to reach farther through the application of technology and data-driven insights that deliver efficiency and responsiveness. We partner with them to anticipate and respond to evolving business needs with innovation in sensing and communications technologies, data analytics and services. Learn more at sensus.com and follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter through @sensusglobal.

Sensus by the numbers

