



# Westar Energy schedules a business advantage



*"We always knew there were inefficiencies and under-utilized crews. Now we know exactly where they are and why."*

Jim Tyler,  
Project Manager and  
Schedule Group Leader  
Westar Energy

## ABOUT WESTAR ENERGY

Westar Energy is the largest electric energy provider in the state of Kansas. Headquartered in Topeka, Westar employs approximately 2,400 people. Its energy centers in eight Kansas cities generate more than 7,100 megawatts of electricity and serve more than 685,000 customers over 35,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines.

## WHAT WESTAR ENERGY NEEDED

A company reorganization required significant business process changes to Operations functions. To accomplish this, the Power Delivery business unit created a Planning & Scheduling group as a single seamless business function between its transmission, distribution, and substation units. The group defined future state processes, optimized manual procedures, and led an effort to review and implement new scheduling technology.

An integrated Power Delivery organization was reorganized to oversee design, installation, operation, and maintenance of all Westar Energy Power Delivery assets. Therefore, any scheduling solution would have to:

- interface with multiple existing systems
- auto-schedule work based on rules developed by business units
- work in manual or automatic mode
- provide users with a quick, flexible, and user-friendly technology
- scale to include future service-order work volumes.

In addition, Westar Energy sought to gain a competitive advantage. Its goal was to improve efficiencies throughout the organization and reduce dependency on contractors.

## THE CHALLENGE

Westar Energy required a scheduling system to support a wide variety of work. Demand included high-volume, short-duration customer and maintenance orders as well as complex construction projects such as new asset installations and road moves.

The company's existing procedures created work in three separate systems: customer service, asset management, and work management. Most of its scheduling was manual, and the new Power Delivery organization included a variety of applications and numerous interfaces.

More importantly, Westar Energy's 15 field operation offices were all working independently. Several locations were utilizing contractors within their geographic area who were assigned to low-level maintenance jobs while waiting for the next major construction project.

## OUR ANSWER

Westar Energy created its scheduling work group to change the company's approach and allow business process optimization to drive the Power Delivery organization. A project team assessed viable scheduling technologies and evaluated four vendors.

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eliminated \$4 million in  
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Logica proposed that Westar Energy implement Asset & Resource Management (ARM) Scheduler because it supported business process change and:

- provided a view of the whole enterprise
- could separate large project and distribution work
- would schedule all of Westar Energy's work
- allowed for future growth.

## A SUCCESS STORY

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After a three-month vendor evaluation, Westar Energy chose Logica's ARM Scheduler. Today, the company has a global picture of its enterprise and is able to utilize its crews and contractors more efficiently.

In the first year of implementation, Westar Energy increased substation maintenance by 2%, improved completion of distribution work as scheduled by 9%, and immediately eliminated \$4 million in annual contractor costs. In addition, the scheduling group reduced roughly 45 scheduling-related processes to 20.

"Our view is more business-like," said Jim Tyler, Westar Energy's Project Manager and Scheduling Group Leader. "Our operations supervisors were spending a significant amount of time scheduling manually. We've taken that over with a global view of work. Now they spend more time in the field with their crews. We automated the process of identifying and prioritizing work, and effectively utilizing our crews. We changed our business culture."

Tyler said ARM Scheduler has helped Westar Energy optimize use of its own crews and tactically utilize contractors if needed. "We have a lot of rural territory, so travel time is a big deal for us. In areas where we have more crews than work, we'll now send crews an hour or two away in lieu of utilizing contractors. When our rural single-man trucks are not fully scheduled for the day, we reassign them to a crew or an urban area."

ARM Scheduler has also shown benefits in planning. Westar Energy now coordinates all scheduled maintenance to optimize planned outage times. Coordination of de-energized substation equipment is optimized as all related work is scheduled to a single outage rather than two or three.

Overall, Westar Energy has improved business processes and their operational culture with the scheduling implementation. The scheduling group has a global view of the work and resources. The company effectively achieves its operational work priorities and utilizes all employees in an optimal manner. Westar Energy now has its competitive advantage.

## WHY WORK WITH LOGICA?

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