

# Build stronger connections with C&I customers



“Working through a strategic Account Based Marketing framework with ICF has given us incredible data-driven insights on our business customers. The new target lists and researched personas put us on a fast-track to exceeding goals and customer expectations. We went from missing goals year-over-year to **achieving 118% of our goal** in 2021 and are on track to do the same in 2022. Any utility looking for deeper connections with business customers should absolutely make this investment.” –Josh McClelland, Senior Manager, Washington Gas

For more information, contact:

Kelly Zonderwyk

Marketing Account Director

[kelly.zonderwyk@icf.com](mailto:kelly.zonderwyk@icf.com)

Learn more at [icf.com/energy](https://icf.com/energy)

## About ICF

ICF (NASDAQ:ICFI) is a global consulting and digital services company with approximately 8,000 full- and part-time employees, but we are not your typical consultants. At ICF, business analysts and policy specialists work together with digital strategists, data scientists and creatives. We combine unmatched industry expertise with cutting-edge engagement capabilities to help organizations solve their most complex challenges. Since 1969, public and private sector clients have worked with ICF to navigate change and shape the future.

## Business customers are humans too

The old rational, logical, and impersonal approach to business-to-business marketing and outreach is dying. Driven by a new generation of business decision-makers, who value strong relationships with their providers, utilities must connect with business customers to achieve goals in new ways.

ICF uses a human-centered, data-driven approach to **fuel deeper connectedness** between utilities and their business customers. This strategic framework offers utilities:



**Greater ROI** as utility teams become aligned and coordinated in targeting key customers



**A more accurate and manageable pipeline** of customer projects by virtue of better understanding customers' complex journeys



**Faster, more efficient participation** by target businesses thanks to the ability to be in touch at the most impactful times



**Happy and more satisfied customers** who will be more receptive to your cross-selling and up-selling efforts in the future

Today's business leaders have new expectations for their service providers and products—including utilities. This desire for deeper, digital, consumer-like experiences is what sets them apart from prior generations. Add to that the changed business operations landscape and the rapidly transforming energy industry, and it's clear that utilities who prioritize deeper relationships will be well positioned to engage and influence a business customer's energy journey—today *and* tomorrow.

## Data-driven customer insights

Before utilities can scale and optimize efforts to connect in a meaningful way, they must start with detailed and properly organized business customer data. ICF works with utility data to **cleanse and enrich account details into useable business customer insights and prioritized target lists**. This includes mapping accounts to parent companies, identifying business types, understanding past participation and next best offers, and identifying decision-maker contact details.

To humanize these data-driven insights, ICF then conducts research and develops personas that allows marketing, sales, outreach, and adjacent teams to understand motivators, barriers, influencers and more for the different job functions and roles of the decision-makers. The result is personalized, relevant, and well-timed value propositions.

### Account-based marketing

One way to think about achieving connectedness with business customers is called [account-based marketing \(ABM\)](#). Utilities are using ABM not just at the program level to drive savings but also for corporate goals around loyalty, retention, growth, and acquisition. ABM is a strategic framework to align your marketing and outreach teams around a discrete set of target customers and then collect the right intelligence across interactions to identify and predict the next best moments to engage.

ABM is not a replacement for general awareness, demand generation, or lead generation efforts. Rather, it is an added layer that allows you to hyper-target at a sector, sub-sector, and/or 1:1 level. The result is all teams working in coordination for the greatest return on investment and customer experience.

### Getting started

To achieve succesful deeper relationships with C&I customers, utilities need an implementor who can:

- Inform targeting using a customer platform like [ICF's Sightline Analytics](#) and data-driven insights
- Research and create buyer personas for personalized marketing and outreach
- Provide third-party tools and lead generation tactics to find decision-makers
- Improve knowledge of local markets, [customer experience](#), and customer satisfaction scores
- Develop [creative](#) campaigns with [deeper layers of content](#) and hyper-targeted outreach
- Picture progress and deliver optimized campaigns in real-time with the support of data visualization

ICF has defined [eight key components of a succesful ABM strategy](#) for utilities. If your utility is not yet using or exploring ABM, it's important to have a clear sense of what it is and is not. [Contact us to learn how an ABM framework could benefit your utility.](#)