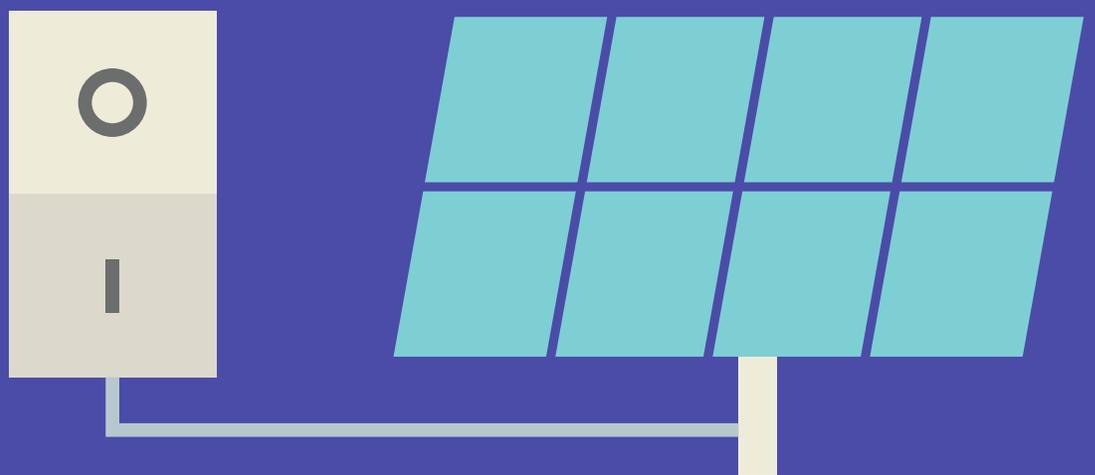


SOLAR SCADA SERIES

3 Ways to Ensure a Successful Launch





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The Challenge

A significant milestone for any new PV project is initial sync. It's a moment of truth, months or years of hard work finally reaches its pinnacle. A failed startup can destabilise the grid, damage equipment, and damage reputations. Expenses balloon when the production schedule is delayed, and the system needs to be repaired or re-engineered.

Firms can and do cut corners to save money. These firms fail to design rugged and reliable systems, limit testing, and ultimately fail to meet the expectations of the client. Without a full understanding of the requirements, proper testing, commissioning and troubleshooting become a tangled mess. A sinkhole for time and resources when they're at their most costly.

A thorough and complete SCADA integration requires a complete investment of time and effort; Attention to detail throughout the project prevents costly flops .

1. Open and Frequent Communication

Success begins early in the project with good communication. Expectation, milestones and requirements from the off-taker, regulator and client are completely understood. Customers should not be afraid to over-communicate. There is no amount of consultation which won't be dwarfed by the expenses of a misunderstanding gone un-noticed until the big day. All parties should act as a unified team, and every

member of the team should feel like no question has gone unasked, or unanswered.

2. Have a Factory Acceptance Test

Before the SCADA system leaves the development environment, a Factory Acceptance Test (FAT) is performed to demonstrate, for the client, all aspects of the system. Functionality is scrutinised against the client specifications with special attention to critical details such as safety interlocks, controls and alarms.

The key to a flawless FAT comes from an understanding of all possible scenarios that might arise. Predicting and testing how a system will function during a normal day is just as important as how it will react to an alarm or equipment malfunction. Being able to envision these scenarios to test them out in advance is the mark of a good integrator who has gained an understanding of the big picture through a meticulous examination of the SCADA and control system. (The best kind of FAT also comes with a free lunch!)

3. Insist on Full Site Acceptance Testing

When the system is ready for commissioning, the SCADA team will perform final site acceptance testing (SAT). SCADA spills over into every technological aspect of the plant, a good SCADA integrator needs to coordinate with other contractors to ensure each piece of equipment and software is checked out. The functionality which was simulated in the FAT is tested live, with real data. A great firm assigns the same dedicated team for both the FAT and SAT. This consistency keeps things moving swiftly, the team

performing the SAT has essentially performed the dress rehearsal for the big day. This also ensures the commissioning team has a complete understanding of the scope of the project.

The Bottom Line

A great SCADA integrator maintains open communication throughout the project. Performs thorough testing of the system before it gets to site. This ensures that the system delivered matches the clients requirements and exceeds their quality expectations. When the big day comes, there are no surprises, only smiles because you've selected a top notch firm, like NLS Engineering.