

Speed, but with a focus on flexibility

By Bob Vavra, *CFE Media*

With manufacturing growth accelerating, system integrators are confronted with new projects that seemingly needed to go on line yesterday. But fast implementation is just one challenge facing integrators today.

“Schedules are tighter, with much less time for planning. Changes and change orders are more prevalent,” said Louis Cusato, key customer team leader for Integrity Integration Resources (I²R), a systems integrator working in multiple industries. “There is more dependence on our project managers to maintain and adjust schedules.”

The effort to increase production capacity and improve data management means the best Integrators have to help customers pinpoint those areas of the project that may get overlooked. “Things are moving faster, and customers don’t always have time to create full requests for proposals,” Cusato noted. “We are writing more functional specifications up front that define systems and requirements for the customer ahead of quoting.”

One area of expertise for I²R is panel building, and Cusato cited four important areas of expertise when choosing a panel builder:

1. Design and build capabilities

“A company that can both design and build panels can make things smoother and timelier for customers, especially UL Listed panels. Changes along the way are much easier if both drawings and panels can be updated together,” Cusato said.

2. Process management

“The shop should have a repeatable process to bring parts, labor,

and documentation together. They should know their Key Process Indicators, such as Shipped-On-Time statistics,” Cusato said, “and you should see accurate red-lined drawings produced at the end.”

3. Testing

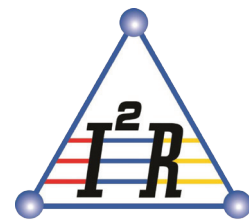
Cusato asserted that the panel builder’s testing department should be well familiar with NEC and UL standards and requirements. A full testing report should be visible.

4. A variety of experience

“Customers are also looking for recommendations for panel specifications and appropriateness of parts based on availability and reliability,” Cusato said. “Some customers are looking for completely custom panels, and these need experience in design and fab. Some customers seek builders for OEM/volume panels, and these need a well-refined process to keep the price down.”

The opportunity for manufacturers to take advantage of market and tax conditions and expend operations means that more projects are in the pipeline today than in recent years. Each individual project needs specific attention, and that’s where experienced SIs can provide an edge. “Customers often look to move costs to capital budgets, which can be amortized, and away from internal expenses,” Cusato said.

“Customers also are looking to manage risk, so contracts have clauses to address delay due to suppliers,” he added. “A system integrator must be able to execute the customer’s vision. Helping the customer choose a level of automation, breaking projects into phases, and training are more important than ever.”



A Cates Company

Integrity Integration Resources (I²R) is a system integrator with in-house engineering, panel fabrication, and onsite project management for electrical and mechanical installation. I²R stands out as a Systems Integrator who collaborates with customers to provide on-time and on-budget project completion. As a member and Certified CSIA Integrator, the I²R project management team works with our customers to coordinate all aspects of a successful integration project.

www.i2r.com

Key statistics:

In the first six months of 2018, I²R achievements include:

- Working more than 3,400 hours per month on panel assemblies.
- Shipping 220 panels per month.
- Consuming 377,451 ft of wire That equals almost 72 miles of wire.
- 94% of engineering projects were completed under budget.
- 97% of engineering projects were on schedule.
- Engineering staff increased 50%.

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