

## Selecting a SCADA System

In the last five or ten years, SCADA has become a well-known term in the energy industry as companies search for solutions to the challenges of aging personnel and equipment and a looming shortage of expertise.

However, the current market for SCADA is incredibly difficult to navigate, due in large part to a lack of standardization. With no market-level pricing, costs are truly all over the map. Licensing is another challenge, with varied and confusing approaches that make side-by-side price comparisons difficult.

Product features also vary widely. Unbundling the products' components is often simply not offered. Some software providers provide integration services, while others do not, relying upon third-party integrators. To further complicate matters, most software companies list "oil and gas" as a market segment, but their familiarity with the industry is often poor or non-existent.

All of these issues make an in-house competitive market analysis for SCADA software incredibly challenging and time consuming. It can be a dizzying process for a SCADA manager to choose the best solution when he can't be sure he is comparing apples to apples.

As a result, SCADA managers often pick a provider based on their personal experience, which may or may not be the best solution for their fields' needs. Fortunately, GlobaLogix has a much broader pool of experience to work from. By first casting a wide net, and then creating a rating system based on your priorities and needs and assigning grades to each contender, we can assist you in identifying the best SCADA solution for your current and future requirements.

Here is GlobaLogix' best-practices approach to choosing a SCADA provider:

### **Clearly Define Your Information Requirements**

Our team begins by spending time with you to understand your specific operations, data and information requirements, including conducting interviews with management, measurement and operations. Requirements should also reflect an understanding of your corporate IT architecture and security requirements. Then, we help you develop a specific definition of SCADA. Our team may include specialists in field operations, network design, IT security and SCADA integration, depending on your requirements.

### **Create a List**

GlobaLogix then identifies a list of SCADA software companies to consider, taking into account any software already installed, as well as including other software products with which your key stakeholders may have some familiarity. We then add in other providers until we have a representative cross-section of the market.

### **Define the “Spec”**

Then, we create a “spec” based on your geographic profile, type of field equipment and the relative size of your polling base of field equipment. This spec will be comprehensive to the point of identifying the key variables that can be used to compare each software company. With this spec in place, we develop a price point comparison.

### **Create a Rating System**

Creating a rating system helps objectively compare each software provider based on its cost, licensing options and features.

We develop a list of qualifying questions based on what is most important to you. We have used as many as 106 questions for one client and as few as eight for another. This subjective measurement is based on the complexity of your application. We then assign a “weighting factor” to prioritize the importance of each aspect to your operation.

### **Begin RFP Process**

GlobaLogix contacts each software company to alert them that their product is under consideration and invite them to participate in the proposal process, giving them 10 days to respond.

During that period, we meet with each vendor to review and explain each question, solicit detailed product information, provide clarification and review responses for completeness.

### **Evaluate Proposals**

Once the proposals are submitted, our team meets to jointly evaluate each response, comparing the proposals in a matrix. Each vendor response is given a score for completeness and for appropriateness to your requirements. These scores are multiplied by the weighting factor to reach a final numeric score.

The three companies with the highest scores are invited to make a presentation on their offering, which you’ll typically attend.

### **Make the Selection**

After the presentations, GlobaLogix will provide a final recommendation and present a detailed spec based on your requirements.

We can also create SCADA standards related to your specific requirements and in compliance with API 1165 & 1167. These standards become the design bases for the integration phase, and can be accompanied by a full scope of work, design spec and system architecture design.

SCADA evaluations can typically be completed in 30-60 days, depending on the level of involvement you’d like to have.

Evaluating SCADA systems can become a large-scale distraction from your real job, and your efforts may not identify the best solution. Our experience with a broad, deep pool of SCADA providers, paired with extensive knowledge of the energy industry’s unique requirements,

makes us an ideal partner for helping you identify the SCADA system that will best meet your needs now, and in the future.

*Jim Fererro is a co-founder and vice president of GloboLogix, a Houston-based oilfield automation company that helps oil and gas companies achieve greater efficiency, productivity and accuracy in their oilfield operations by providing access not just to data, but to the right information at the right time. For more information, visit [www.globlx.com](http://www.globlx.com).*