Fulcrum

Case study
Electric utility

Southern California Edison (SCE)

Leading with technology: Southern California Edison's strategic use of Fulcrum

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Holly Palmer
Senior Specialist Data Analytics

Challenges

Internal restructuring and rapid growth of staff and contractors were difficult to quickly scale with existing data collection methods

Introduction of new wildfire programs and complex data sets from LiDAR brought new requirements

Emergency management during storm-induced outages required quick adaptation and data access

Key Outcomes

Fulcrum facilitated the quick setup and management of an expanded workforce, streamlining operations despite the scale increase

Fulcrum effectively incorporates large LiDAR data sets and supports new regulatory compliance programs with quick data processing and integration

Fulcrum allows for real-time data partitioning and rapid team mobilization, enhancing SCE's response to emergencies

About SCE

Southern California Edison (SCE), a subsidiary of Edison International, is an investor-owned utility that has been providing electricity to central and southern California for over 135 years. It ranks among the largest electric utilities in the United States, serving 15 million people across 50,000 square miles. SCE manages and maintains 125,000 miles of distribution and bulk transmission lines, 91,375 distribution miles, and 1.4 million electric poles.

Holly Palmer, Senior Specialist Data Analytics, admires SCE for its commitment to constant innovation. "What I love most about Edison is its goal of continual improvement," says Palmer. "I've been on the contractor side and now with SCE itself, and I've seen so many changes. SCE is always seeking to enhance and improve its systems."

Palmer is also a fan of SCE's supportive work culture. "At SCE, we're always checking in on each other and helping each other out. This approach helps to create a collaborative and productive work environment," she explains.

Before Fulcrum

Project Manager Chuck Dykes outlines the challenges SCE faced amid internal restructuring and increased regulatory pressures. "We were restructuring while expanding our contractor base to nearly a thousand," he explains. This growth, coupled with tighter regulations due to wildfire risks in the utility sector, underscored the urgency for a solution that could both manage extensive data and be rapidly implemented.

"We needed a system that could be deployed quickly without extensive training," says Dykes. "It was crucial that we could move data across various parts of our operation, including invoicing, work execution, inspection, and quality control, and integrate the LiDAR data we were collecting. One of our internal team members was familiar with Fulcrum from a previous job, so we decided to give it a try. Fulcrum turned out to be exactly what we needed."

Using Fulcrum

Transitioning to Fulcrum marked a significant shift in how SCE managed its field operations and data collection processes. From simplifying app creation

to integrating advanced FieldTech tools, Fulcrum has enabled SCE to enhance its operational efficiency and adaptability, reshaping the utility's approach to project management, regulatory compliance, and emergency response.

Simple app creation

Chuck Dykes highlights the efficiency and flexibility of using Fulcrum. He says, "There are always new programs we need to pilot, and it's incredibly convenient to integrate them into Fulcrum without extensive development time. Fulcrum allows us to add new elements as standalone solutions."

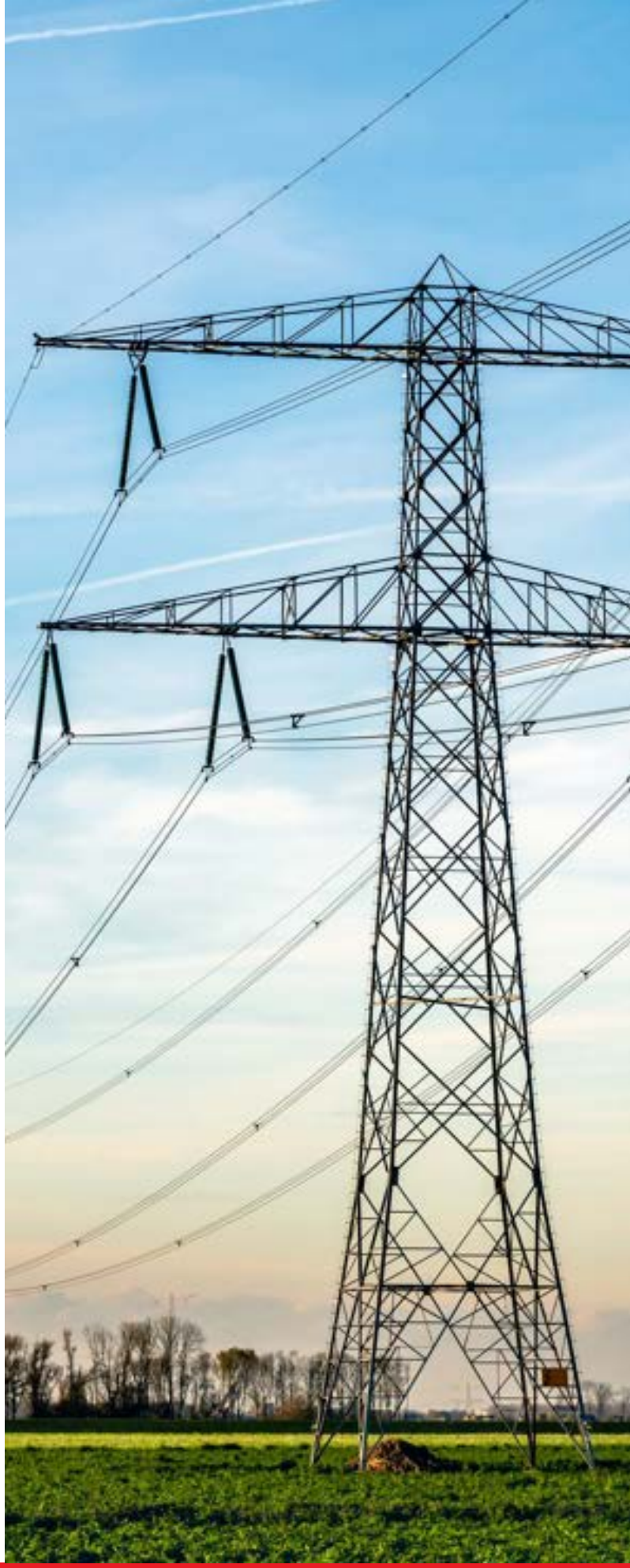
Ease of use in the field

Holly Palmer recalls her first time using Fulcrum as an SCE contractor. "Prior to coming to Edison, I was part of a tree management contractor that worked with Edison, and we used Fulcrum in the field," says Palmer. "We found Fulcrum to be really easy to work with. From the user side, it was always one of our favorite apps, if not **the** favorite."

Integrating FieldTech tools

Chuck Dykes discusses the integration of LiDAR technology with Fulcrum at SCE, highlighting the significant advantages of this collaboration in managing and processing large data sets. "LiDAR produces a vast amount of data. We were able to compress this data and effectively integrate it into Fulcrum, unlike other applications that struggled to handle it. The way Fulcrum was able to consume and manage this data was much more efficient than other systems."

Elaborating on the application of this technology, Dykes describes how SCE utilizes LiDAR and satellite data within Fulcrum for pilot programs. "The early applications of our LiDAR technology serve as a guide to direct field personnel to specific areas in need of inspection. For example, they might receive a notification about a 'red dot' on their route, indicating a point identified by our LiDAR data as requiring review for compliance."



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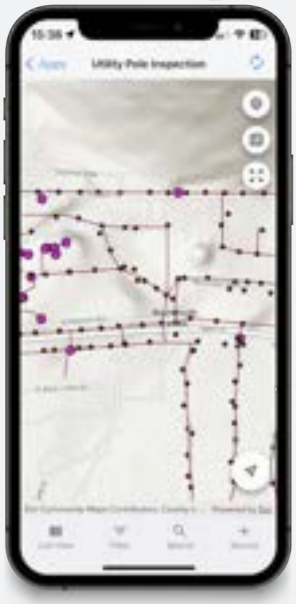
Chuck Dykes
Project Manager



Dykes also reflects on the broader potential of LiDAR and satellite technologies at SCE. "This integration is not just about handling large data sets; it's about the flexibility to quickly set up and deploy applications that can pivot based on our immediate needs. Whether it's tracking traffic control, tree replacements, or other specific projects, Fulcrum allows us to experiment and determine the best approach before integrating these innovations into our main system of record."

Streamlined emergency operations

Chuck Dykes emphasizes the crucial role Fulcrum plays in SCE's emergency management, particularly during storm-induced outages. "In the event of a storm, the sheer size of our data set requires us to partition it, allowing specific contractors access to certain sections. This process can be really tedious," he explains. He then illustrates how Fulcrum streamlines this process: "If an area is affected, I can determine that I need 400 people in that section by tomorrow, and I can have all those people set up in Fulcrum by this afternoon. This ability to manage access outside our IT system provides significant flexibility, allowing us to rapidly adapt to changing conditions."

Dykes continues: "With Fulcrum, we can swiftly onboard temporary users. For example, if someone has an iPhone and a company email, we can set them up as a temporary user for the next 30 days and they can start work the following morning. The simplicity of the application allows for quick setup with minimal technical training, making it invaluable during crises when rapid deployment is essential."

Getting data in and out

The efficiency of Fulcrum stands out compared to other programs SCE has used in the past. As Dykes notes, "We can drill down into the data with Fulcrum and get the information they want really quickly. With Fulcrum, every application is for a single use case, dedicated to one very specific work type, and we can spit the data out. There's nothing that's going to intermingle with the data that makes it difficult to provide only the information that's requested.

Responsive cybersecurity

Chuck Dykes reflects on the dynamic collaboration between SCE and Fulcrum, particularly in enhancing cybersecurity measures within the Fulcrum platform. He notes, "Fulcrum works with us to tailor

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Project Manager

the Fulcrum platform to meet SCE's evolving needs. For example, when we identified new cybersecurity concerns, Fulcrum's responsiveness and ability to quickly pivot and make adjustments were outstanding. From the beginning, it felt like a close partnership, working alongside the Fulcrum team to navigate challenges together."

Going forward with Fulcrum

In conclusion, Fulcrum has been transformative for Southern California Edison, fundamentally enhancing the way the utility manages its complex and varied workflows. As a pivotal component of SCE's operational toolkit, Fulcrum provides the necessary agility and efficiency required to handle both routine operations and the unique challenges that arise. Chuck Dykes highlights this adaptability, noting, "Since SCE's adoption of Fulcrum in 2020, the platform has been a piece of SCE's work management process. Anything that we need to set up quickly, or that doesn't fit into our current work management system, we turn to Fulcrum." This statement encapsulates the critical role Fulcrum plays in enabling SCE to swiftly adapt to changing operational needs.

The strategic integration of Fulcrum has not only improved SCE's ability to respond to emergencies and manage large-scale projects but also supports ongoing innovation and efficiency improvements. Through its use of Fulcrum, SCE reinforces its commitment to safety, reliability, and customer satisfaction, ensuring that it remains at the forefront of technological advancement in the utility sector.

Ready to enhance your operational efficiency?

Are you facing similar challenges in managing complex workflows or adapting to fast-paced operational demands? Discover how the Fulcrum field data collection and process management platform can streamline your operations, improve responsiveness, and boost efficiency. Schedule a no-obligation consultation today and take the first step towards transforming your field data management processes.