

Overcome your power struggles

How to choose the right electrical connection partner



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Discover the power of choice

Whether you're installing EV infrastructure, adding new equipment to your manufacturing plant, or upgrading your estate, sooner or later you're going to have to think about how to power your project.

Establishing a connection to the grid is an integral part of getting your job completed on time. But how often does it actually happen in the timely, cost-effective manner you would have anticipated?

If you have any experience in this area, you'll know it can be a process full of frustration and delays. And the worst part is, there's very little you can do about it. Or at least it can seem that way.

The main reason for this is that nine out of ten organisations directly approach the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) for their power needs. But there is another way – one that can provide more transparency, improved customer service, better scheduling, and even lower costs.

In this guide, we'll show you the advantages of using an Independent Connection Provider (ICP) for your power needs – and provide some top tips for choosing the right one.

An independent what?

The reason so many companies work directly with DNOs to connect them to the grid, is because it's not always clear that there's another choice. DNOs have long been the default option. But the energy landscape actually offers a lot more variety than that.

In 2000, Ofgem opened the market up to competition. This means that as well as the 14 licensed DNOs in the UK, there are now around 300 fully certified and accredited ICPs that can cater to a wide variety of power needs.

Competition in a market like this is a major plus, as it means that connection providers must deliver a quality service to be successful.

And that means lots of benefits for you...

Since 2000, ICPs that are accredited on Lloyd's National Electricity Registration Scheme (NERS) have been allowed to install new electrical installations

The major advantages of partnering with an ICP

When it comes to establishing your electrical connection, you want a flexible partner that is responsive to your needs, communicates well and consistently hits deadlines. But you're probably aware that this isn't always the case.

An ICP is set up with the sole purpose of making your connection experience easier. They'll manage all the hassle of liaising with a DNO on your behalf. And more importantly, they will take the time to know your company, your project and its specific needs.

Big savings

Essentially, ICPs offer a more personal touch. And as they compete in a more competitive market than DNOs, the quality of the service they provide is paramount to their success. This means there's far less risk of projects not meeting deadlines – because there are punitive repercussions when they're missed.

For you, that can mean huge savings. Especially when late delivery can lead to fines, affect production cycles, or even see you having to rely on expensive and polluting generators to maintain operations.

It's not the only way an ICP can save you money, though. While a DNO may simply be focused on getting through a backlog of requests, an ICP will take your specific needs into consideration and provide you with the exact connection that meets them – so no overprovisioning.

And, in some cases, they even can pass on the 'asset value' of a connection – a lump sum of money that is sometimes passed down from Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs) to ICPs.

Less hassle

You also save a lot of the one thing money can't buy – time. With an ICP, you're not getting tied up in red tape, negotiating over the phone and having to continually move the goal posts while you wait for your connection. All of the planning and negotiating is taken care of for you. Think of it as outsourcing a common cause of frustration.

Ultimately, with the right ICP, you're looking at better customer service, projects that are completed on time and lower costs from a partner who will bend over backwards to see that your needs are met.

But how do you choose the right ICP?





Three tips for choosing the right connection partner

1 Define your requirements



The first step to choosing the right connection partner is to define the requirements of your project and establish your electrical needs.

These can vary greatly depending on the use case. But it's also important to consider what your future requirements may be, and not just think about the short-term.

Of course, you need to consider factors like deadlines and available budgets, but you also need to take the broader picture into account. For instance, some ICPs have specialist areas, and while most will be suited to a one-off project at a single site, larger projects across multiple sites may require specific capabilities, knowledge, and experience.

If you're struggling to get a clear picture of your requirements, you may want to find an ICP that offers a consultancy service. That way, it can help you identify the best-fit solutions for your needs.

This will ensure you get the most suitable connection point to the grid, and help you avoid things like costly reinforcements, or paying for more than you need.



2 Discuss your requirements with ICPs



Once you know what you need, the next step is to discuss your requirements with different providers.

If you've used an ICP for consultancy, then your objectives will probably already be aligned to a solution. If not, you need to establish the basics: Can the companies you're talking to offer a service in line with your project priorities? For instance, can they respond within the timeframe and budgets you've put in place?

These are the basic practical considerations. But you may also want to think about the topics that often come up when discussing your company's associate brands and partners. Take account of things like shared values, ESG and sustainability efforts, and whether your chosen ICP has a true understanding of what's important to you.

3 Establish the breadth of their capabilities



The final step is to establish the extent to which your chosen ICP can manage things on your behalf.

A good connection partner will deal with all the red tape and frustration a project like this can throw up. That means liaising with local councils, gaining the required permits and handling every aspect of the installation – from the initial strategy to site management and contracting.

However, not all ICPs will have the full spectrum of capabilities. For that reason, it's important to look at the experience each company has in different environments and the specialisms they offer.

A broad spectrum of capabilities, evidence of consistently proven success, and happy clients can be a good indicator of a dependable connection partner.

Your business is our business

As an Independent Connections Provider with over 10 years' experience, Rock Power Connections, a Mitie company, designs and builds electrical infrastructure solutions across the UK. We bring high voltage power to the places it's needed and help our customers to grow their business operations.

With over 80 expert electrical engineers, and Lloyds accreditation as part of the National Electricity Registration Scheme, we can oversee every part of your project, from the initial consultancy to the installation and connection.

To talk to us about your power connection needs, email emma@rockpowerconnections.co.uk or call 01905 456 384

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