

# GETTING STARTED IN IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

## Reprinted from Carowitz on Marketing

Interested in implementing an irrigation monitoring and management service in your irrigation company?

Industry consultant  
Jeff Carowitz helps the  
industry's top firms.

Connect with him at  
[StrategicForceMarketing.com](http://StrategicForceMarketing.com)  
or 760-532-7034

## The Opportunity

Back in the 1980s, irrigation manufacturers introduced the first central control systems to manage and monitor irrigation on large sites. The goal was simple: better management of the system to reduce water waste and eliminate customer complaints.

*Fast forward to today.* New WiFi internet-connected residential irrigation controllers make it economically viable to monitor and manage even the smallest irrigation system from a central office.

*Your office!*

**Savvy irrigation contractors spot a rare transformative business opportunity: to convert the customers seen only once or twice per year into managed accounts whose systems are monitored real-time.**

A monitoring service yields a steady revenue stream. Plus better managed systems generate more service visits to make repairs and fine-tune equipment.

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## Client Partnerships Nurtured

Remote management creates a partnership of real value between the contractor and the client:

### **Watering based on need, not relying on an old-fashioned time clock.**

The irrigation controller's schedule can be adjusted in real-time, using weather data and double-checked by the contractor. In Houston, application of this technology on commercial sites has shown savings of up to 50% of water use versus a "set once and forget" schedule.

Customers enjoy knowing their landscapes are watered properly and sustainably, without waste.

**Alerts before issues become real problems.** By providing a daily check for issues, alerts and alarms, problems are spotted before they result in a brown lawn, dead plants or water spraying into the street.

**Immediate response.** The contractor can immediately communicate with the property owner when problems are detected and dispatch a technician when required.

**Water usage analysis.** Even the simpler systems provide real-time dashboards and downloadable reporting to track water use and alarms.

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## Developing a Business Plan

But like all new services, your company will need a marketing plan to successfully educate and sign up your clients. Here are some things your plan should include:

**A pricing strategy.** How will the client pay for installation of the new controller and sensors needed to make the system work? How will you charge for the monitoring service – by month or by season, for example? Techniques like bundling and pricing tiers will be essential.

**An education strategy.** The rookie will try to convince the customer on the basis of “the product” (usually by talking up the manufacturer’s product brochure). The savvy marketer will build a full presentation of benefits, detailing exactly how the monitoring service will deliver savings and increased peace-of-mind for the customer. How will your first-impression close the sale?

**A sales forecast.** Understanding the revenue opportunity will convince the savvy contractor of the need to build a strategic business plan.

With a benefit of a forecast to guide investment, the business leader won’t be tempted to cut corners on marketing materials or sales training for his service technicians.