

Is your business ready to profit from smart meters?

There have been many news reports and expert commentaries regarding the use and efficiency of the smart meter.

However, discussions have mainly revolved around how they can help owner-occupiers and renters in the residential sector. This means that, in the main, the advantages smart meters can offer small businesses to keep tabs on their [commercial gas](#) and electricity usage has been pushed aside. So, what can installing smart meters do for your company?

The rise of the smart meter

The increasing availability and rising popularity of the smart meter have been relatively quick, so what's the latest news? The government has set electricity and [mains gas suppliers](#) the target of making smart meter technology available to every home in England, Scotland and Wales by 2020 — that's 26 million households in total.

Why the drive towards smart meters in the first place? This push towards smart meters is designed to help phase out imprecise estimated readings in favour of up-to-the-minute digital energy usage recordings. These measurements are then sent directly to energy suppliers and used to generate fully accurate bills, based on actual usage.

While many homeowners are now getting used to their new smart meters, some people forget that businesses are also eligible. Run a small company with fewer than ten employees? Chances are that you're entitled to a smart meter too. If in doubt, simply ask your energy supplier or broker. If your energy bills are included in the rent you pay for your commercial premises, it's the bill payer who needs to make the request for your smart meter — so ask your landlord.

How can your business benefit from smart meters?

Research suggests that smart meters can offer you more precise energy bills, but what about other advantages? Here are a few:

- **Elimination of shock bills**

Gone are estimated bills; with a smart meter, you have a greater idea of the final bill. This makes managing your overheads a lot easier — a big plus for small businesses.

- **Meter readings are gone**

Were physical meter readings a pain? Smart meters eradicate this necessity.

- **Shrewder use of energy**

With a smart meter, you get a clear display of the connection between habit and use of energy. Are those 3pm office tea rounds causing a spike in usage as the kettle goes into overdrive? Is your business wasting energy outside of normal working hours because computers are being left on overnight? These are issues a smart meter can help you identify and, more importantly, act on — whether that means investing in a hot water urn or reminding employees to switch off their machines at night. Developing a heightened awareness and understanding of your energy usage also makes you more likely to make smarter money and energy-saving decisions across your business.

- **A modern outlook**

The future of energy in the UK is going to be very different to how we see it now. Put simply, the long-term plan is to create a fully integrated smart grid linking different hardware, communications and other technologies together in something of an internet for gas and electricity. Smart meters are a crucial step towards this vision, which will eventually serve homes and businesses alike with greener, more efficient, less wasteful and more cost-effective energy.

- **Quicker response to power cuts**

Worry that a power cut will lose your business money? As Britain's energy network upgrades in line with the mass rollout of smart meters, energy suppliers will be able to respond quicker to power cuts in turn.

- **Advanced energy tariffs**

You can also identify usage patterns with a smart meter. This is the kind of information that suppliers need to develop new, innovative and increasingly competitive tariffs.

Keen to get a smart meter? Here's how...

If you're busy running your business but fancy a smart meter, you'll be glad to learn that you barely have to do anything to get one fitted. Once you've made the initial move of speaking to your [energy supplier](#) or broker (or your landlord, in the case of rented premises), here's what will happen:

1. Date and time of installation agreed

Firstly, your energy supplier will arrange a convenient time to install your new smart meter. They will work with you to ensure this is a time that works for both parties, and causes minimal disruption to the running of your business.

2. Allow your supplier access on installation day

At the agreed time, your trained installer will visit your business premises to fit your smart meter — make sure someone can let them in!

3. Getting your smart meter up-and-running

As soon as it's fitted, the installer will explain to you and your staff how your new smart meter works. You can also ask them any questions at this point.

And that's it! As soon as your smart meter is in, your business can start reaping the benefits.

What do other smart meter owners say?

It's always good to get real feedback when it comes to a business change. According to post-installation surveys, there have been high levels of satisfaction from customers with smart meters. For example, the Smart Meter Customer Experience Study carried out in August 2017 by the government's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy revealed that 80% of those surveyed were satisfied with the technology itself, while 89% were pleased with the installation visit.



Keen to get a smart meter installed? Talk to your supplier today, or visit www.smartenergygb.org for more information.