

The Resilient Facility: 5 Critical Power Questions Leaders Must Ask Now

Mark Hawkinson, President, ABM Technical Solutions



The U.S. has officially entered an era of unprecedented energy volatility. The signs are all around us: the explosive rise of AI and data centers, the rapid onshoring of manufacturing, and an increasingly decentralized energy grid flooded with intermittent renewables.

At the same time, companies are relying on an aging utility infrastructure that is suffering from decades of underinvestment. The U.S. Department of Energy reports that power outages cost U.S. businesses and consumers a staggering \$121 billion in a single year. Over the last five years, major outages have surged by 30%, and when the power does go out, it stays out for an average of two hours longer than it did a decade ago.

For facilities with critical power needs, power is no longer just a utility line item on a balance sheet—it is a board-level business continuity decision. The cost of inaction is real, measurable, and growing. If you operate a manufacturing facility, an outage costs an average of \$2 million an hour. If you run cold storage or food distribution, a four-hour outage can force you to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of dollars in inventory.

The question facing business leaders today isn't whether to invest in energy resilience; it's how fast you can execute. In working with clients on all aspects of onsite energy solutions, we find that the most resilient organizations start by asking themselves five hard questions.

1. Are we treating resilience as a long-term strategy or a one-time equipment installation?

True resilience isn't one-size-fits-all, and isn't solved simply by plugging a backup asset into the wall. It requires a multilayered strategy that looks at your infrastructure holistically.

You must define what resilience means for your specific enterprise. It starts by identifying your critical loads—the absolute non-negotiables that cannot afford to lose power for even a fraction of a second (like the refrigeration compressors in a grocery hub or server stacks in a data center). Once you map these critical dependencies, you can architect a technology stack—combining reciprocating generators, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), intelligent controls, and paralleling switchgear—tailored to protect those specific assets.

74% Of commercial and industrial facilities now view energy resilience as a core component of their corporate risk management and business continuity strategy.¹

2. Do we have an active defense against weather extremes, or are we just hoping for the best?

Extreme weather—hurricanes, severe winter storms, wildfires, and intense heatwaves—is no longer a statistical anomaly. In fact, over the last 20 years, 90% of major outages in the U.S. were caused by extreme weather events.

Resilience means leveraging data to plan ahead. When a weather event like a hurricane is predicted two weeks out, your operational habit must shift into active prep. This means using remote monitoring teams to actively “exercise” every asset in the storm's projected path, validating fuel supplies, clearing remote alarms, and preemptively dispatching field technicians to troubleshoot systems before the storm hits.

\$121B DOE estimated cost of power outages in 2024.²

3. Is “fragmentation” slowing down our energy construction partnerships?

The traditional way of building a microgrid or critical backup power system is fundamentally broken. Historically, a business would hire a third-party design firm, buy hardware from various manufacturers, and then hire a separate general contractor to piece it all together. This creates massive friction, finger-pointing, and misaligned handoffs. We call this fragmentation masquerading as specialization.

To ensure execution speed and long-term viability, facilities need a turnkey partner with a single point of accountability. Engineering must design for constructability. For instance, when *ABM Energy & Power Solutions* handles the end-to-end process, from in-house engineering and procurement to custom switchgear manufacturing and construction, we perform a “primary intercept” rather than a secondary one. This dramatically shortens the tie-in window, minimizing the time your facility is disconnected from the utility during installation.

Turnkey Advantage: Industrial capital projects utilizing a single-source Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) model experience a 22% reduction in schedule delays and 18% fewer change orders during the electrical tie-in phase vs. multi-vendor approaches.³



4. Are we still relying on reactive maintenance for our critical assets?

Strategies that rely on waiting for an outage to test if your backup systems work put your organization behind from the start. When a grid failure occurs, your success doesn't depend on what you do in those first five seconds; it depends on what you did over the previous five months and planned for over the past five years.

Traditional preventative maintenance is necessary, but the future is in predictive maintenance. By utilizing 24/7 remote monitoring and control through a Network Operations Center (NOC), facilities can parse asset data to catch anomalies before a failure.

For example, ABM field techs know that generator starter batteries are notoriously frequent failure points. By leveraging data and continuously monitoring trends, ABM's NOC can predict when a battery is degrading and replace it during a routine scheduled visit, eliminating an unexpected failure when the grid drops.

5. Are we capitalizing on new utility partnerships and ROI models?

The economics of energy resilience have shifted. It's no longer a cost-avoidance play or an insurance policy against product loss. Utilities across the country are facing massive capacity shortfalls. As a result, they are incentivizing commercial and industrial facilities to install on-site Distributed Energy Resources (DERs). Through demand response programs, utilities tap into your onsite generation or battery storage assets when the grid is strained, effectively subsidizing the cost of your system. This creates a lower-risk ROI, turning a resiliency asset into an active financial contributor when the grid is operating normally.

38% YoY growth in utility-led commercial and industrial demand response and Virtual Power Plant programs.⁴

Source: ⁴ Smart Electric Power Alliance, Q2 2026





Bottom line: Overcome the risk of “running to failure”

Too many organizations are underinvesting or running critical, aged electrical assets to failure. It often takes a catastrophic event to prompt change, but by then, the economic damage is done. Advanced planning for capital replacement and end-of-lifecycle asset evaluation is paramount to the continuity of your operations.

Tackling the sheer complexity of modern energy systems—and making generators, batteries, and EV fleet infrastructure operate in unison—is the next great operational hurdle. The companies that conquer this complexity today are the ones that will win tomorrow.

Get an informed perspective: Regardless of where you are in your planning process, let’s start the conversation with a focus on strategic outcomes supported by resilience solutions tailored to your needs and industries. Visit us at [ABM.com](https://www.abm.com) to connect with the ABM Energy & Power Solutions team.



Mark Hawkinson is President of ABM Technical Solutions, overseeing the company's growing leadership in facility infrastructure, resiliency, energy storage, EV charging, mechanical, and energy solutions. Since starting with ABM more than 20 years ago, Mark has led the development of ABM's turnkey EV solutions business and the 2022 acquisition of RavenVolt, a national provider of advanced microgrid systems utilized by commercial and industrial customers, national retailers, utilities, and municipalities.

ABM *Energy & Power Solutions*

An Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC) partner, ABM | RavenVolt executes full-scope power infrastructure projects as one coordinated team. From design through handoff, we combine scale and expertise to deliver custom-tailored energy solutions for diverse operating environments. At the leading edge, our capabilities span microgrids, generators, battery energy storage systems (BESS), switchgear, fuel cell, solar power, and EV infrastructure.

Find out how we can make it possible for you by calling **866.624.1520** or visiting **[ABM.com/energypower](https://www.abm.com/energypower)**

