

Choosing the Right Rooftop Solar EPC Partner

Today, in the perfect market, when all companies and technologies in the solar sector look similar, selecting a solar EPC partner purely based on price seems smart. However the truth is that not all companies or technologies are the same, if their long-term worth's are compared.

Interacting with a solar partner can help us understand the industry thoroughly and find an ideal solar PV solution that suits our needs. One must check for the following aspects in a partner:

- Regulatory & sector know-how
- Project finance expertise
- Improved solar technologies

One must also assess the partner's business stability, additional services, market presence, etc. to evaluate and finalize a Solar EPC partner who can take care of your system in the long run. Solar energy isn't simply a substitute for electric-cost stability today; it's a multi-year investment prospect for your organization's energy future.



Vital Solar Partner Traits

Well-Informed on Regulatory and Industry front: - Having a solar partner with profound competence of relevant policies in the solar industry is necessary.

A solar partner should be conversant about:

- Constantly-changing national, state, municipal (location-specific) and utility policies, incentives, and rebates
- Licenses and authorizations needed for a solar installation in a given state or municipality
- Permitting rules and environmental laws
- Utility interconnection prerequisites and rate structures

Expert Project funding: - With the various financing options available for Solar today, it's important that our Solar EPC partner understands all of them and utilizes according to our requirement.

One can know more about the financing expertise of Solar EPC Partners by asking them more about:

- The total size of projects (in Megawatts/ Gig watts) they have financed.
- Their experience in setting up deals, leases, PPAs, loans, etc.
- Network of the Solar EPC partner

Superior Technology: - Solar PV plant components vary in quality and design based on the quality / sourcing of their raw materials and technology used in manufacturing them. Lower the quality of components, lower the power output of the system which, in turn, will impact the willingness of the financier to take risk. Simply put the superior the technology, the worthy will the solar PV plant be of investments.

One can understand the superiority of the technology by figuring out the following:

- How long has the technology been in use?
- What quality of raw materials has been used?
- What is the purity of doping used in the semiconductors?
- How much generation does the system guarantee?
- For how many years does the manufacturer give warranties?
- What is the degradation rate of the panel?
- How can I ensure that I am getting what I have paid for?
- How many man-hours does it take to install a system?

Ensuring reliability and long-term partnership: - You would want your Solar Partner to be reliable and last for a minimum of twenty five years to protect a solar investment. As a result, it is essential to review a company's monetary stability, market presence, its O&M capabilities, etc. too. Without the Solar manufacturer and installer, workmanship and product warranties are insignificant. The following questions will help one verify the company's financial strength:

- Age of the company in its business?
- Total size of projects in hand with the company?
- For how many more years, can the company sustain itself in the industry?
- Are they backed by any other strong company?
- Any Investments/ Mergers/ acquisitions anticipated in future?
- How profitable is the Solar Company?
- The company's history of solar projects?
- Performance guarantees provided?
- Product and workmanship warranties provided?

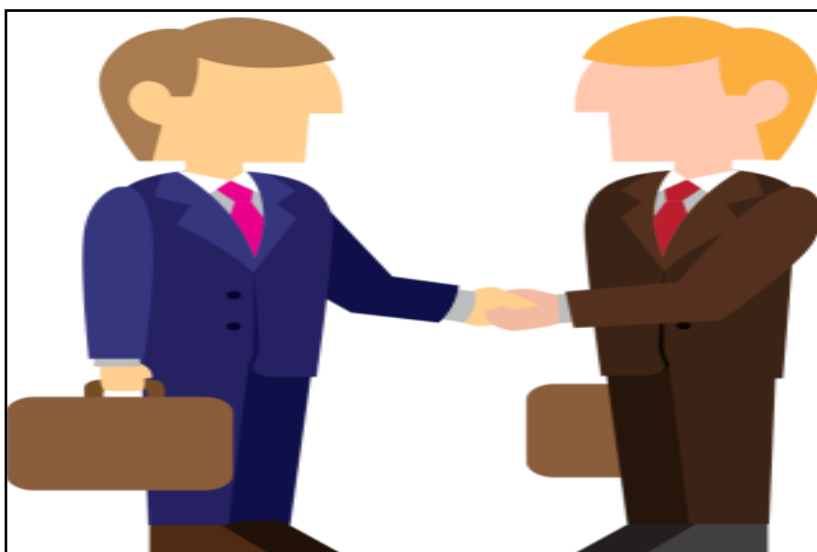


Diversified Market Presence – Because of perpetually dynamic government policies, a solar partner overly focused on one regional market is at threat. A residential market may be heating up at one region, while a commercial market is cooling down elsewhere. A global company with diversified business is in a stronger financial position to resist these changes. Key parts to be checked:

- International footprint and varied market presence
- Presence in multiple segments, such as
 - Residential,
 - Commercial,
 - Government,
 - Utility etc.

Exceptional References: - Finally, it's always good for the company to have strong references. One must find out what other customers say about the Solar EPC partner and its peers.

A long-lasting Investment: - With this data in hand, one should be able to choose the right Solar partner and maximize the worth of the solar PV system for decades to come.



Source:

https://us.sunpower.com/sites/sunpower/files/sp-how-to-choose-solar-partner-may-2015_0.pdf

<http://www.solarmango.com/sourcing/epc-selection>

http://pvsavvy.com/s2/epc_selection.php