FORTIS BC™ CELEBRATES SERVICE SUCCESS WITH AUTOMATED BILLING

Canada's largest private utility makes its customer experience exponentially faster, better and more cost effective with billing process automation.

KEY POINTS

◣ FortisBC needed to deliver hundreds of thousands of accurate bills consistently and ensure excellent customer service.

◣ The utility also needed to coordinate data collection from other agencies and update various SAP® parameters.

◣ SAP Business Process Automation (BPA) by Redwood, now automates and coordinates all meter-to cash processes.

◣ The morning after automation went live; FortisBC produced and sent 50,000 bills, each of them accurate and on-time.

◣ Since implementation, the utility has not missed a single billing deadline.

A METER-TO-CASH CHALLENGE

FortisBC is a North American utility company based in British Columbia, Canada. The company serves approximately 1.1 million customers in more than 135 communities.

In 2010, the natural gas division of FortisBC (at the time called Terasen Inc.) started the Customer Care Enhancement Project.

The aim was to repatriate the Customer Relationship and Billing (CR&B) process back in-house to provide improved customer service through two new contact centers in British Columbia.

Frans Luit, Manager Enterprise Applications for the company, explains: "With the criticality and complexity of the new CR&B process, we were looking into options to optimally schedule the meter-to-cash process chains as well as all other jobs in the environment."

Along with CR&B, FortisBC needed to automate and coordinate processes like updating SAP parameters, incorporating remits, checking bank files, uploading and downloading meter reads, invoicing, and compiling bills.

The utility had to bring in data from collection agencies; insurance companies, external metering systems and other sources, as well. At the same time, FortisBC brought in new applications for bill rendering, archiving, and data services (SAP Data Quality Management) for address validation. To be successful, this all had to work as a whole and seamlessly with the current FortisBC billing systems in place.

THE AUTOMATION ANSWER

To deliver hundreds of thousands of accurate bills consistently and ensure excellent customer service, FortisBC required powerful end-to-end automation.

"After our finance, IT and operations departments met with the Redwood consultants, we realized that they had the answers we needed. I requested that we work together to automate whatever we possibly could to support FortisBC's CR&B processes – and others," says Luit. "We looked at the process blueprint and recognized the need for enterprise-class automation, so we brought in the Redwood team to do the job.

Luit adds; "The fact is, from the beginning, we saw SAP BPA by Redwood as the business automation solution for our 65- plus internal and external interfaces. With SAP BPA we had the opportunity to implement a single enterprise solution that would connect and manage the information flow from end-to-end. And the advanced monitoring and notification modules and mobile application automatically push issues to us so we can act."

UTILITY UTOPIA

The CR&B project went live on January 3, 2012. All systems were up and running that day. The next morning, FortisBC produced and sent 50,000 bills, each of them accurate and on-time.

In the end, FortisBC could be sure that its goal – to make the customer experience exponentially faster, better and more cost effective – was met and then exceeded. "This was an immense effort involving innumerable applications and interfaces, and hundreds of people inside and outside FortisBC, but Redwood and BPA were definitely playing a very important role in enterprise automation," says Luit.

"Together we're delivering great value to the business as a whole. All recommendations brought to the table are being considered for the long term. We've learned a lot from Redwood and feel that they're working with us toward a common goal – our success."

> It's critical for stakeholders to trust that we will consistently meet our commitments, With Redwood we have not missed a single billing deadline. This is a phenomenal record.
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> — *Frans Luit, Manager Enterprise Applications, Fortis BC*