A utility provider upgrades its customer information and billing system to improve customer service

How PwC helped a utility company modernize its customer information system (CIS) and billing technology to meet its business goals.

Client’s challenge

A US utility company’s 35-year-old customer information system (CIS) made it nearly impossible for the organization to meet current and evolving customer and regulatory needs. The outdated system, which was heavily reliant on manual processes and could not accommodate process automation, created challenges including:

- A lack of visibility into information needed to make business decisions.
- An inability to provide customers with self-service account management options.
- An inability to accommodate anticipated rate changes.

Additionally, maintenance costs for the system were rising due to diminishing resources. Although the company realized it was time for a drastic change, it was wary of implementing new technologies because of failed experiences in the past. The company wanted to adopt a modern CIS and billing technology system that would help it:

- Improve productivity through automated business processes.
- Provide superior customer service.
- Enable data analytics, including management reporting capabilities.
- Replace aging technology with a scalable and flexible technology platform.
- Achieve enterprise-wide application integration.

The company chose PwC because of our business-oriented approach and our change management and business process transformation experience. They knew that we help our clients select technology solutions that meet business needs, and that work well with existing processes.
PwC’s Advisory solution

Our team set out to help the client address the following issues:

- Align business operations to the company’s new applications.
- Inform customers of upcoming changes.
- Implement an infrastructure to support the new applications.
- Ensure the applications supported business processes and customer interaction.

The company chose to purchase Oracle Customer Care and Billing (CC&B), Oracle BI Publisher for Reporting, and Oracle database licenses. We provided overall project management using Transform, PwC’s five-step methodology for business transformation, to help the client adopt these new technologies.

Our first step was to help the client define objectives and assess existing capabilities through a pilot enterprise integration tool. We then established a project management office (PMO) to manage risk, quality, and operational control; facilitate communications (e.g., status reporting); and manage resources and budgets.

Next, we evaluated the client’s 2,500 technical and functional requirements against the Oracle software packages. Based on this analysis, we scoped implementation needs by functional area, such as enhancements necessary to meet regulatory requirements. The analysis also helped prepare to reengineer business processes to complement the software’s capabilities, reducing the need for significant customization.

Next, our team configured the applications, which included data conversion, interface configuration and enhancements, business process and policy development, and new governance, roles, and responsibilities definition.

The team thoroughly tested business procedures within the applications. We used an enterprise application integration structure to ensure proper interaction between the system and other business applications, and to improve communications with vendor systems. Once we successfully completed testing, we worked with the client to perform user training, and developed an extensive marketing campaign to communicate changes to the company’s employees and customers.
**Impact on client’s business**

Our team delivered the client solution one month early and under budget. We also implemented the new software, using 98% of its out-of-the-box functionality. By customizing only 2% of the functionality, we lowered the company’s risk during testing and training. Our efforts also make it easier to upgrade the applications when new capabilities become available.

The new Oracle systems made it possible for the company to meet its original goals:

- Enhance customer service through online bill payment and interactive voice response systems.
- Expedite customer response time through improving real-time records available to customer service representatives.
- Reduce manual processes, mitigating errors.
- Improve the integration platform to enable communication between applications.
- Provide easy-to-use, flexible and scalable CIS, which facilitates training.
- Provide data analytics for reporting and improved decision making.

**For more information, please visit**

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