



LIGHTING UP THE CASH BOOKS, WITH AUTOMATION

Abstract

When a large electric utility in the US faced loss of revenue due to inefficient billing processes, Jordan Lester, Senior Manager, Billing & Revenue Protection, reached out to long-time transformation partner Infosys BPM for help. This case lays out how the resulting automation brought about significant impact not just on revenues but also on customer satisfaction.



When calculating bills takes a toll

Jordan Lester and his team always had a lot on their hands. As Senior Manager, Billing & Revenue Protection, for a major electric utility company in the United States, Jordan, and his team of billing specialists, primarily dealt with billing exceptions such as those caused by faulty meters. The root cause of their high workloads could be traced to the utility company's monitoring process for dealing with the billing exceptions, which was heavily manual.

For instance, a key initial step to issue bills for the faulty meters involved requesting contingency reads (CRs) to fetch a customer's historical consumption records from the company's ERP systems. However, CR-based billing required multiple data

points across different systems and time periods.

So, the team would have to manually raise three CRs for a single billing exception, the first CR fetching data for a few hours, followed by a second CR which would fetch data for 2 to 3 days, followed by a third CR which would fetch data for a complete bill cycle. Jordan's team of billing specialists, using these data points, would then be able to rightly estimate the right amount to be billed to the customer. But with each of the CR requests taking close to 24 hours to fetch the data, addressing a single billing exception would take close to 3 days to complete.

Adding to the lengthy cycle time to resolve the billing exceptions, Jordan's team also had a high volume of utilities and meter data to analyse to zero in on the exceptions in the first place. Their efficiency was further hamstrung by the organization's complex business rules, limited use of machine learning and deep analytics, and mix of legacy and cloud-based systems. And despite the team navigating around all these challenges by resorting to manually intensive workarounds, over time their slow, manual processes had given rise to a serious aging of the billing exceptions, and in turn the spectre of significant revenue loss for the company.

Automating in effortless efficiency

The time had come to address these long-pending challenges head on, and rolling up his sleeves, Jordan picked up the phone. For close to two and half decades, Infosys BPM had been a partner of choice for the

utility company with several Infosys BPM teams playing critical roles in the company's multi-year journey of massive, digital transformation. Lately, the partnership had evolved to focus on strategic, AI initiatives.

So, Jordan confidently reached out to Anuraag Jayant, Infosys BPM's account manager for the company, and listed out his challenges, requesting him to design a comprehensive technology-led solution.

Approach Summary



Responding swiftly, Anuraag deployed up a small team of Infosys BPM's transformation experts to examine and tackle Jordan's challenges head on. After a deep dive into the billing team's existing processes, they came back having designed a solution approach. Their solution would not only capture all the billing exceptions in one go but would also raise a bulk CR to extract the required data points in bulk.

Once he green lighted the approach, Jordan was impressed with how quickly Anuraag and his team fleshed out and deployed their solution. For the bulk exception captures and CR request capabilities, it featured an intelligent workflow automation, with SQL, DB based Enterprise Automation Intelligence bots handling the routine tasks of querying the database and fetching the data, massively

freeing up his human resources. Further, it also featured automated data capture from the smart meters, with the meter readings automatically populated into the master database. This technology intervention would not only eliminate his earlier processes of manual entries, but it would also greatly reduce the billing errors.

Righting the bills, lighting up smiles

After Anuraag's bots began dealing with the electric utility's billing exceptions on their own, the outcomes on efficiency were staggering. In place of the earlier three

CRs per billing exception, now only one CR was required for multiple exceptions. This massively reduced the effort required by a third, and the results of 100s of CRs

could now be generated in just three hours, against the earlier ~24 hours it took for fetching data for just 1 of the CRs.

Key benefits

-  Single CR for multiple billing exceptions
-  Three-hour turnaround
-  Significant efficiency boost
-  Enhanced billing accuracy
-  Reduced revenue loss
-  Improved customer satisfaction



Jordan and his team were elated. The bots had not only eliminated manual tasks and reduced processing times, their automated data capture and error detection had also minimized the need to deal with any errors creeping in due to manual entries. The comprehensive automation with its accuracy and efficiency had freed-up their precious bandwidth, and they could now focus on higher-value work.

In due course, with the improved accuracy and efficiency leading to speedy resolution of ageing incidents and timely billing cycles, the electric utility began enjoying a significant increase in its revenue collections. But while that would have in itself been reason to celebrate, there was another unexpected benefit. The real-time data visibility and faster resolution times delivered by the solution had empowered

Jordan's billing specialists to provide personalized customer support and address inquiries promptly, which greatly enhanced customer satisfaction.

So, in the end, Infosys BPM's billing exceptions automation enabled the electric utility to go beyond merely supplying light to its customers, to also deliver delight.

**Names have been altered to preserve the identities of the people involved.*

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