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Improving Customer Access to Information Increases Interaction & Satisfaction

Integrated Solutions from Cogsdale Improve Customer Experience & Internal Business Processes for Public Power Utilities

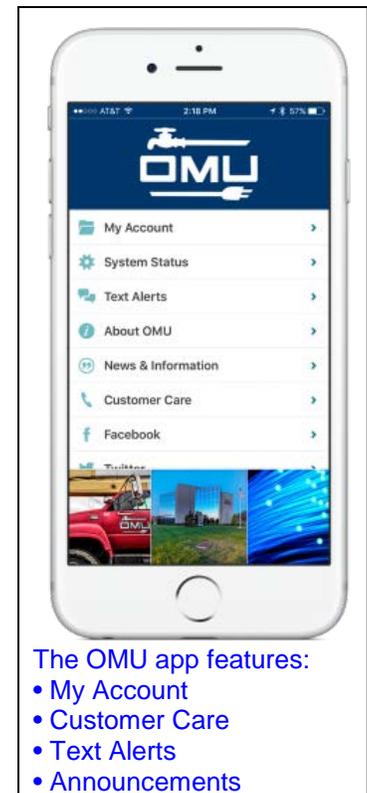
The staff at [Owensboro Municipal Utilities](#) had grown weary of contending with the legacy billing and customer information system. The age and inability to upgrade the software presented a variety of issues when trying to implement new technology and processes. OMU had created “workarounds” to most of these hurdles, but the process grew too cumbersome and time consuming. After investigating options for a new utility information management system, OMU selected the customer service and workforce management solutions from [Cogsdale](#).

OMU is the largest municipal electric and water system in Kentucky with more than 26,000 electric, 24,000 water and 160 telecommunications customers. OMU went live with the Cogsdale Construction Management and Financial systems in January 2013. The Cogsdale Customer Service systems were brought online in May 2013.

Cogsdale is a premier provider of integrated information solutions for local governments and utilities, offering the only utility-focused CIS solution built on the Microsoft platform. Focused on the public sector industry since inception in 1997, Cogsdale offers solutions for meter reading, collections, construction management, preventative maintenance, and more.

To evaluate available information systems, OMU formed a cross-functional team that included personnel from the Customer Service, Work Management, Finance and Accounting, Human Resources, Materials Management, and Information Technology departments. “Having the right people with the right areas of expertise was critical to our selection and implementation process,” said Terry Horn, Information Technology Manager. “Our team was critical to this process. We set a goal to find a fully integrated solution so that all enterprise resource planning (ERP) modules worked together seamlessly. After requesting bids and doing extensive evaluations, OMU selected Cogsdale as the solution that would best fit our needs.”

Since implementing Cogsdale, OMU has been able to improve or deploy a variety of new technologies to improve customers’ access to information and to improve internal business processes. “Increased customer access means increased customer satisfaction and interaction,” said Sarah McElwain, Billing Supervisor. “OMU has been able to offer our customers a greatly improved and enhanced website and mobile app, as well as provide email notification of billing. Internally we were able to create additional, timely, and useful reporting to isolate issues and track data, improve data access, and define procedures for internal users to increase accuracy as well as efficiency.”



According to McElwain, OMU has been able to partner with more vendors to integrate with the Cogsdale applications, including document imaging, mobile management of service orders, integrated voice response system, and meter reading.

Terry Horn noted, “OMU views Cogsdale as a partner. We are involved in the Cogsdale User Group and work closely with their development teams when applicable. Cogsdale has continuously refined their development, deployment, and testing processes that provide OMU with new functionality to better serve our external and internal customers. This partnership has proved fruitful for our customers and our internal team.”

Sarah McElwain added, “Cogsdale is a progressive company that strives to improve and take advantage of industry trends which is reflected in their dedication to releasing upgrades quarterly. Furthermore, Cogsdale is very responsive to issues they receive from us, and in most cases these problems are resolved within 48 hours. Cogsdale does a great job of connecting with their users, whether at their conferences or regional user meetings, as well as through emails seeking input.”

Norwich Public Utilities Relies on Cogsdale for Integrated Info System

[Norwich Public Utilities](#) in Connecticut provides four utility services—natural gas, electricity, water, and wastewater collection—to about 20,000 customers. Back in 1999, NPU operated a billing system that was not Year 2000 compliant. Facing the Y2K deadline, the utility selected a new billing system in a hurry, without having sufficient time to conduct a thorough vetting process. To rectify the situation, NPU conducted a careful search and converted to the Cogsdale financial package in 2004 and to the Cogsdale billing system in 2005. “We find Cogsdale offers a reliable, flexible product,” said Ruth Swift, NPU Customer Service Manager. “Cogsdale understands the needs of a municipal utility system.”

Swift noted that NPU upgrades its Cogsdale software once per year, moving through a careful testing process before going live with the upgrade. “Our Cogsdale deployment is part of a fully integrated information system which includes advanced metering. Our customer service representatives are able to view detailed account information for all four of our utility services on one screen, and we bill for all utility services on one invoice.”

Swift added, “Our Cogsdale systems have worked very well for more than 12 years. When a coding issue pops up, our IT staff can usually handle it, but the Cogsdale team steps in swiftly and effectively if we need help with an adjustment.”

This year, NPU plans to enable their utility customers to view and pay their invoices online via Invoice Cloud Inc., an official partner of Cogsdale.

1 A MESSAGE FROM NPU
Compact fluorescent lightbulbs can save up to 75% off the cost of lighting. Check our website for other energy saving tips.

2 Previous Balance: \$ 492.21
Payments as of 01/09/2007: 492.21
Balance Forward: \$ 0.00
Late Charges: 0.00
Miscellaneous Charges / Credits: 62.50
Current Charges: 269.60
Amount Now Due: \$ 432.40
Pay before 02/04/07 to avoid 1 1/2% late fee

3 METER READING SUMMARY

DESCRIPTION	SERVICE PERIOD	NO. OF DAYS	METER NUMBER	METER TYPE	READING	MULTIPLIER	PREVIOUS READING	CURRENT READING	TOTAL CONSUMPTION
Natural Gas	12/02/06-1/08/07	37	0785	Estimate	1750	1	1600	150	46 CCF
Electric	12/02/06-1/08/07	37	17198	Actual	1	2082	3700	1618	151 kWh
Water	12/02/06-1/08/07	37	W1038	Customer	1	300	300	0	0 CCF

Next meter reading on or about 02/08/07

4 DETAIL OF CURRENT USAGE AND CHARGES

NATURAL GAS Rate: GRES

Charges	Amount
Customer Charge	\$ 9.50
Natural Gas Used (CCF)	50 x 1.1470 = 57.35
Purchased Gas Adj.	45 x 0.7790 = 35.06
Natural Gas Total Charges	99.45

ELECTRIC Rate: ERES

Charges	Amount
Customer Charge	\$ 7.14
Electricity Used (kWh)	1518 x 0.04726 = 71.64
Energy Efficiency Fund	1518 x 0.00167 = 2.53
Purchased Power Adj.	1518 x 0.00163 = 2.48
Electric Total Charges	83.79

WATER / SEWER Rate: WRES S/B

Charges	Amount
Customer Charge (CCF)	\$ 6.85
Water Used	5 x 2.00 = 10.00
	4 x 1.07 = 4.28
Water Total Charges	21.13

Rate: SRES

Charges	Amount
Customer Charge (CCF)	\$ 4.10
Sewer Charge	9 x 3.50 = 31.50
Sewer Total Charges	35.60

6 MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES/CREDITS

Miscellaneous Service Statement # 9879	\$ 62.50
Total Miscellaneous Charges/Credits	62.50

7 NON METERED CHARGES

Gas Water Heater Rental	1 x 6.50 = 6.50
State Sales Tax	0.00
Total Non Metered Charges	6.50

Total Current Charges: \$369.90

This is a sample bill for demonstration only

For More Information

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