PROCESSING UTILITY BILLS FOR AN ENERGY BENCHMARKING COMPANY

ARDEM INCORPORATED

THE CURRENT CHALLENGE

As data collection from utility bills moves beyond simply recording periodic usage to tracking consumption trends over a period of time for smarter energy management insights, utility bill outsourcing solutions also need to innovate and match stride with the changing times.

ARDEM was contacted by a utility tracking and energy benchmarking company to help them optimize data processing from incoming utility bills. The task at hand was to process data from over 11,000 utility bills and provide advanced analytics for smarter decision-making.

The primary challenge with utility bill outsourcing is that these invoices come in different formats based on the type of utility and the utility provider. As such, it requires the analysts working on the project to have some sort of familiarity with the typical format of a utility bill and the knowledge to identify where each field of data is located.

KEY BENEFITS

- Accuracy and Efficiency of Data Extraction
- Reliable Training Process
- Ability to Quickly Scale the Team to Meet and Exceed Growth Forecasting

Additionally, the client was also facing constant disruptions in workflow due to their current mode of operations. The process as it existed entailed hiring freelancers and this left the core team with the responsibility of managing both employee training and quality management.

At ARDEM, we started by understanding the client, their primary objectives along with their immediate and future requirements. Our team got down to work, and through a series of conference calls, team meetings and chats gauged the challenges that lay ahead.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Current Process Flow and Training Requirements

Tracking utility data offers multiple benefits including making smarter decisions that help mitigate the effects of climate change in the long-run, while also enjoying real-time economic benefits including lowering your utility consumption and increasing savings. This is where utility data comes in, by entering vital statistics from utility bills and tracking consumption patterns, we can create effective strategies for smarter energy management.

In order to help their client base achieve optimized utility usage benchmarks, the client required efficient and timely data processing from the incoming utility bills with access to a repository where one could track metrics over a period of time. This entire process consisted of the following requirements:

- Data had to be extracted from incoming utility bills in real-time.
- This data next had to be entered directly into the client's system.
- Our team would then log into the client's system to work on different accounts to add the data points for different meters.

Extracting Specific Fields of Data

The minimum required data points for every utility bill include:
- Start date
- End date
- Usage
- Total Charge

Units for all utilities are standardized for easy comparison.

Gas
- 1 Therm = 1.024 CCF1 Therm = 10,000 BTUs

Water
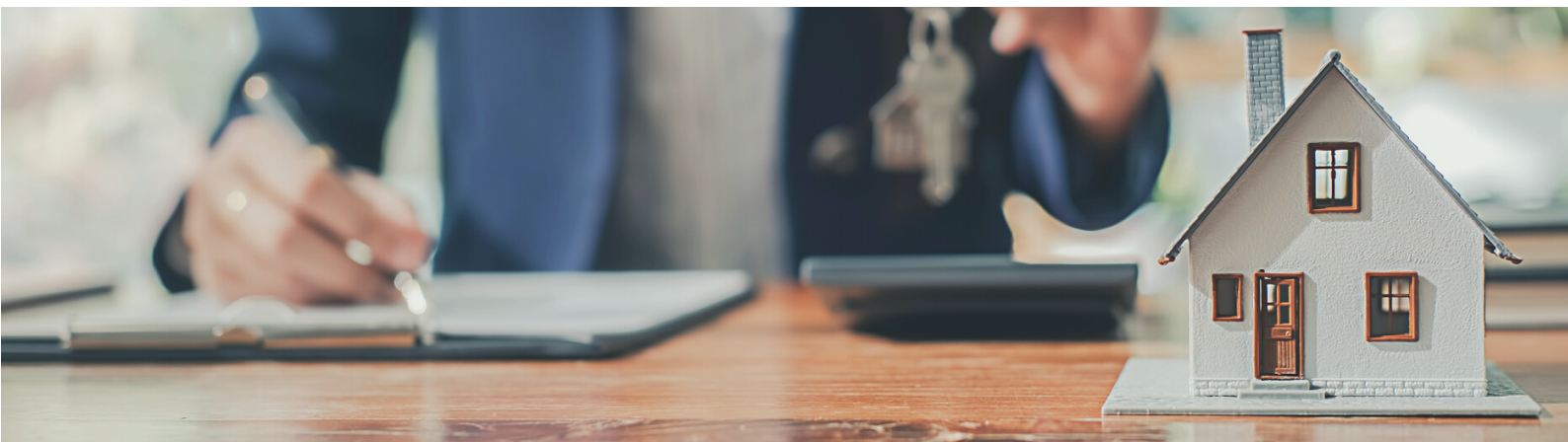- 748 Gallons - 1 CCF
- 1 CCF = 1 HCF
- 1 CCF = 100 CF

Electric
- kWH = Kilowatts per hour
- kW = Kilowatts (demand consumption)

ARDEM'S SOLUTION

After much study and evaluation, ARDEM proposed the following solution:

- The data will be extracted from utility bills and entered directly into the client's system.
- After logging into the client's system we will work on different accounts to add the data points for different meters.
- Each analyst logs into the client's system and will be assigned accounts to extract and enter data. All assignments are prioritized from oldest to newest.
- The amount of data available for each meter will vary (could be a few months, could be a year).When adding data points, there are 10 specific fields that will be extracted along with a screenshot of the data points as a backup.

Once the data is extracted, it goes through a series of verification protocols and validation routes to ensure accuracy. Utility rates are compared to historical data points to catch any mistakes or errors and the account numbers are double-checked to ensure that all data points are being entered correctly.

Any exceptions are marked for review using a drop-down of common utility billing issues along with any additional context to explain why the said bill cannot be processed, i.e., an image of the bill, a note regarding the reason, etc. These bills are then sent to a Data Quality Administrator for verification and finally removed from our list of assignments for review.

ARDEM is completely committed to providing absolutely nothing less than 100% satisfaction to both its employees and clients. The aim is to build a strong network of closely-knit people who are passionate about their work and take pride in what they do.

BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH ARDEM

Currently, we are processing over 11,000+utility bills daily for the client, making sure to deliver high-quality data as promised while constantly striving to discover ways for continuous improvement.

IMPROVING QUALITY AND VISIBILITY

Scalable Solutions for Improving Utility Benchmarking:
- SOPs and SLAs are defined and benchmarks are created to ensure each team member reaches a certain level of efficiency and accuracy eliminating team and redundancy management off our client's plate.
- Weekly meetings and frequent communication allows us to work as a true partner and ensure all goals are met, handle exceptions, and improve with feedback.
- Greater visibility and scalability is added allowing this energy benchmarking company to meet company goals, improve customer service, and have a reliable team to scale with growth.

40,000+
ACCOUNTS
PROCESSED

33,000+
DATA POINTS
EXTRACTED

4,500+
DAILY ACCOUNTS
ADDED NEXT MONTH

ABOUT ARDEM INCORPORATED

ARDEM Incorporated delivers success for companies looking to efficiently streamline their processes and improve ROI. We implement the world's most sophisticated Technology platform combining human interaction with advance technologies to automate business processes and lower operational costs.

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