



Enhancing Payment Accuracy and Efficiency

**ARDEM Dual Data-Entry Solutions for
Streamlining Utility Bill Management
in a Restaurant Chain**

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Case Study



Background

In the fast-changing world of restaurants, making everything run smoothly is a big deal. Organizations need to realize how important it is to make handling utility bills as efficient as possible. This not only helps save money but also makes the whole business work better.

The client we will be talking about in this case study was facing interruptions in the services due to missed payments. Its previous outsourcing vendor failed to provide the support needed to open and close accounts. There were so many other issues being built upon one after another. To tackle this challenge effectively, the client turned to us.

In this case study, we explore how **ARDEM's** unique and effective **business process outsourcing** solutions have transformed **utility bill management** for a restaurant chain and set the stage for operational excellence in the restaurant business.



Background of the Customer

Our customer acts as the parent company for two distinct restaurant brands. The company oversees a diverse portfolio of more than 370 restaurants, which includes both company-owned and franchised establishments.

The company's commitment to culinary excellence is evident in the diverse offerings available at multiple locations. They've really become a key part of the local dining scene, offering top-notch food and amazing service. Their commitment to these values has made them a go-to spot for folks looking for a tasty meal in a warm and friendly setting. They've definitely earned their place as a trusted and beloved spot for both individuals and families.

The customer's decision to collaborate with ARDEM was driven by our proven track record in delivering cost-effective and accurate **utility bill management services**, allowing his teams to focus on their core business activities while ensuring the utmost precision in their financial operations.



The Challenge: Streamlining Utility Bill Management Across a Vast Restaurant Network

Running a restaurant business is a complex task, and when you're responsible for over 370 restaurant locations spread across challenges can be monumental.

The Complexity of Utility Bills

Each of the customer's restaurant locations incurs various utility expenses, including electricity, gas, water, and more. These expenses fluctuate based on usage, location, and time of year. In the competitive world of the restaurant business, overseeing operations across more than 370 locations brings with it a multifaceted set of challenges. So, handling utility bills for them can be quite a complex and resource-heavy job.

Manual Management Woes

The sheer volume of utility bills to process, verify, and reconcile was overwhelming. Initially, the company had been managing these utility bills manually, a process laden with its own set of challenges. This manual approach left ample room for human error, which, in the realm of utility bills, could lead to over-billing, late payments, and even disputes with utility providers. Despite hiring a business process outsourcing company to do the job, they were missing payments due to errors made by humans.

Lack of Support from Previous Vendor for Account Management

The client faced a significant hurdle in the form of inadequate support from their previous vendor for opening and closing accounts. This lack of assistance made it really tough for them to handle their accounts well. It left them feeling isolated and pretty overwhelmed trying to figure out the ins and outs of account management.

Absence of Utility Inventory Control

One big problem our client had was not having a system to keep tabs on their utilities. This created a lot of mess and made it hard to know what they had and how to use it efficiently. Without this essential control in place, they couldn't make the most of their resources.

Payment Issues

Payment problems plagued our client, manifesting in various ways:

- **Missing Payments:** The client struggled with payments that seemed to vanish into thin air, creating a considerable financial and operational burden.
- **Duplication Payments:** Double payments for the same invoices occurred frequently, causing confusion and financial strain.
- **Late Fee Reoccurrences:** Late fees piled up due to recurrent payment delays, eroding the client's financial stability and reputation.

Service Interruptions Due to Missed Payments

One of the most pressing issues our client faced was service interruptions resulting from missed payments due to their previous outsourcing partner. These interruptions affected their day-to-day operations, causing disruptions and delays. The consequences of missed payments extended beyond mere inconvenience. It seriously messed with our client's ability to serve their customers the right way.

The Need for Efficiency

Our customer needed a streamlined, efficient, and error-free solution that could handle utility bills across their multiple restaurant locations. The client needed an innovative, efficient, and foolproof solution. They were looking for something smart and reliable that could save them time and money, all while making sure those bills were paid on time and without any mistakes.

The Multifarious Nature of Utility Bills

Utility expenses vary significantly across the company's restaurant network. They've got bills for electricity, gas, water, and more, and these costs aren't the same everywhere. They go up and down depending on how much they use, where the restaurant is located, and even the time of year. So, you can imagine, it makes the whole billing thing quite a bit trickier



The Solution Provided by ARDEM

Navigating the maze of utility bill management, **ARDEM's dual data-entry services** emerged as the guiding light that would lead the customer out of the complexity and into a realm of efficiency. Here's an in-depth look at how ARDEM's approach provided the perfect remedy to the company's challenges:

1. Enhancing Data Accuracy Through Dual Data Entry Protocol

The accuracy of utility bill management hinges on precise data handling. ARDEM introduced dual-data entry and won half the battle:

- **Dual data entry:** We had to stick with manual processes because the images the client sends us vary a lot, with some being poor quality or bad scans that need a human touch for correction. In practice, customer data, spanning meter readings and consumption records, was concurrently entered by both Team A and Team B. This simultaneous data entry approach generated two identical datasets for every customer.
- **Quality Check:** Following the completion of data entry, a dedicated data quality specialist assumed the pivotal role of comparing the records independently entered by both teams. Multiple audit and validation routes were executed to guarantee high accuracy. We utilized QA algorithms to guarantee 99.97% accuracy across all payment and consumption data. This meticulous examination aimed at identifying any discrepancies or errors, which were promptly flagged for comprehensive review.

- **Discrepancies resolved:** In the event of any discrepancies, the data quality specialist collaborated closely with the data entry teams to swiftly resolve the issues. Furthermore, necessary adjustments were made to the data entry process to mitigate the likelihood of recurring errors.
- **Audits and Training:** To sustain the effectiveness of the Dual Data Entry Procedure, Ardem's project manager conducted regular audits and provided continuous training and feedback to our dedicated data entry teams. This approach ensured ongoing adherence to the established protocol, maintaining the highest standards of data accuracy and reliability.
- **Uploading the Output in the AUM:** With the data now rigorously verified and fine-tuned, the final step involved uploading this accurate information into the AUM system. This ensured that the client's asset management operations were based on precise and dependable data, ultimately leading to better decision-making and operational efficiency.

2. Comprehensive Account Management

ARDEM provided comprehensive support to address account management challenges, ensuring a smooth transition from the previous vendor's shortcomings.

- **Personalized Guidance:** We offered personalized guidance and support, catering to the specific needs of the client. This included step-by-step assistance in navigating account management tasks, making it easy for them to handle their accounts efficiently

- **Clear Documentation:** We emphasized the importance of clear and straightforward documentation. This helped the client keep track of their accounts and financial transactions without any confusion.
- **Problem Resolution:** Whenever issues arose, we promptly addressed them without resorting to complex jargon. Our goal was to solve problems quickly and effectively, ensuring minimal disruption to the client's operations.

3. Cost Savings and Efficiency

The introduction of dual-data entry wasn't just a change; it was a seismic shift in the efficiency of our utility bill management solution. This enhanced efficiency, in turn, cascaded into substantial cost savings for our customers.

- **Reduction in late fees:** The accuracy and precision embedded in ARDEM's solution resulted in a noticeable reduction in late fees and billing errors. These often-overlooked cost-saving measures provided an additional layer of financial security, further bolstering the company's bottom line.
- **Power of precision:** For our client, efficiency, and precision weren't just ideals; they were the engines of financial prudence. This transformative process not only streamlined their utility management but also fortified their financial foundation, making every dollar count. It was a journey marked by the power of precision and its undeniable impact on the bottom line.

4. Inventory Control

Here's a breakdown of how ARDEM improved utility inventory control for our client:

- **Categorization:** ARDEM meticulously categorized utility expenses based on location and utility type, including electricity, gas, water, and more. Each expense found its rightful place in this granular allocation process.
- **Cost Analysis and Management:** This categorization allowed for comprehensive cost analysis and management. Our client could easily identify where their utility expenses were distributed, empowering them to make informed decisions and optimize costs effectively.
- **Efficiency:** ARDEM's approach transformed utility inventory control from a burdensome chore into a highly organized and structured process. This newfound efficiency saved our client valuable time and resources.
- **Resource Allocation:** With precise utility expense data at their disposal, our client could allocate their resources more efficiently, ensuring that they made the most of their available funds.

5. Mapping Configuration Output File

ARDEM takes a crucial step in ensuring that our clients can seamlessly integrate the data we extract into their ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) and SaaS (Software as a Service) systems. We achieve this by creating a Mapping Configuration Output File.

This file serves as a kind of roadmap for how the data is organized and how it should be placed back into our client's systems. Think of it as a detailed blueprint that guides the flow of information.

Here's what this Mapping Configuration Output File does:

- **Data Organization:** It outlines how all the extracted data fields are structured for each bill. This means that every piece of information we've captured, whether it's related to accounting and payments or consumption data for sustainability purposes, is neatly organized.
- **ERP Integration:** For accounting-related tasks, this file ensures that all the financial information is in the right format to be smoothly integrated into our client's ERP system. This includes things like invoice amounts, due dates, and vendor details.
- **SaaS Integration:** On the other hand, for consumption data going into their sustainability SaaS offering, the file helps our clients present the data in a way that's clear and meaningful for their users. This could be data related to energy usage, resource consumption, or any other sustainability metrics.



Results and Impact: A Transformation in Utility Bill Management

The culmination of the customer and ARDEM's partnership tells a story of a remarkable transformation in utility bill management. Here's an in-depth exploration of the results and impact of this collaborative journey:

1. Efficient Utility Bill Management

ARDEM's Utility Bill Management solution proved to be the compass that guided the customer out of the labyrinth of utility bill intricacies. The impact was immediate and profound. Before this partnership, handling utility bills was like navigating a maze for the customer. It was time-consuming and needed a lot of resources. But then came ARDEM's solution, and bam! Things changed overnight. ARDEM's solution streamlined the entire process. It made the whole bill process way faster and easier, especially for their restaurants all over the place. This meant they didn't have to spend as much time and effort on bills anymore. They got back some valuable time and resources to use on more important stuff.

2. Error Reduction

In the world of utility bills, precision is paramount. ARDEM's dual-data entry solution stepped up as the ultimate error-buster. Through the implementation of data comparison and validation processes, ARDEM's solution significantly diminished the likelihood of errors in utility bill processing.

The impact was twofold: it prevented billing disputes that could lead to financial setbacks and eliminated late fees. These weren't just small wins; they were big money-savers that made the company's finances rock-solid.

3. Cost Savings

The efficiency boost didn't stop at just saving time; it was about saving resources and, most importantly, money. **ARDEM's outsourcing solution** made cost savings a reality that you could actually see and touch. Improved efficiency reduced the operational costs associated with utility bill management. Besides, reduced errors meant fewer financial hiccups, preventing unexpected expenses. The allocation of utility expenses became an art, allowing the customer to optimize its spending. All these savings weren't just small changes; they were like a treasure chest of resources that they could put back into the business. It fueled growth and gave them the freedom to try new things and innovate.

4. Informed Decision-Making

One of the most impactful outcomes of ARDEM's utility bill solution was its ability to empower the company with data-driven insights. This info wasn't just nice to have; it actually changed the way they made decisions. Before, the company didn't really know much about their utility expenses and usage. But with this solution, they had a goldmine of data at their fingertips. This data helped them make smart choices, whether it was about cutting costs or using utilities more efficiently. Whether it was about managing costs or strategically reducing consumption, these insights were the compass guiding the company's strategic decisions. Instead of guessing, they were now sure of what to do, and that knowledge was like a superpower for them. It made their decisions much more effective.

5. Scalability

As the company kept growing, opening more restaurants, ARDEM's dual data-entry solution was like a secret weapon. It wasn't a rigid, one-size-fits-all solution; it was agile and adaptable.

This scalability was a game-changer. It meant that the company could easily handle more and more utility bills as they expanded. And here's the kicker – they didn't have to give up efficiency or accuracy. It was like a crystal ball that helped them see into the future. So, no matter what came their way, they were ready to handle it. It was like future-proofing their utility bill management, all thanks to this agile and adaptable solution.



Building Trust and Peace of Mind with ARDEM's Utility Bill Management

In the world of utility bills, trust is a big deal. Our customer needed to know, without a doubt, that their utility expenses were in safe hands – accurate and dependable. Well, ARDEM didn't just meet this need; they went above and beyond.

We made our customer feel really confident and at ease, knowing that everything was taken care of with absolute precision and reliability. Trust and peace of mind? Yep, ARDEM delivered on that front, big time. Here is what our customer gained in terms of trust and peace of mind:

Reliable Accuracy

ARDEM's dual-data entry process was the bedrock of our customer's trust. With every bill that passed through our system, our commitment to accuracy shone brightly. Bills were meticulously processed and cross-verified, leaving no room for errors or discrepancies. This high level of precision meant that bills weren't just processed; they were processed correctly from the get-go. No do-overs were needed!

On-Time Payments

Late fees can be a significant drain on a company's finances. ARDEM's solution ensured that bills were processed promptly and paid on time. Thus, it reduced the risk of late fees. Our customer could rely on us to manage the entire payment process efficiently. It freed them from the worry of missed deadlines.

Transparency and Reporting

Trust is also built on transparency. ARDEM provided our customer with real-time data and detailed reports. This offered full insight into their utility expenses and consumption patterns. This transparency empowered our client to make informed decisions and verify that everything was in order. No more hidden surprises or uncertainties.

Responsive Support

Trust is further nurtured through responsive support. ARDEM's dedicated team was always ready to address any questions or concerns. Our customer knew they had a real partner they could reach out to any time they needed assistance or just some clarification. Having this kind of support made them even more confident in our services. It's like having a friend you can count on!

Strategic Partnership

ARDEM didn't stop at just managing utility bills; we formed a real strategic partnership with our customer. We weren't just a service provider; we became like an extra part of their team.

This teamwork approach helped us tailor our services to fit their specific needs and goals perfectly. It was like a puzzle piece that clicked right into place, making our partnership even stronger and trust even more solid.

Peace of Mind

In the fast-paced world of business, peace of mind is priceless. ARDEM's utility bill management solution delivered just that. Our customer could put all their energy into their main business, without any worries about their utility bills. They knew we had it covered with extreme care and accuracy. So, no more tossing and turning at night, stressing over billing mistakes or late payments.

Conclusion: ARDEM's Solution - A Recipe for Success

In conclusion, this partnership between the restaurant chain and ARDEM wasn't just your usual business deal. It was a real game-changer that completely redefined how they managed their utility bills.

Efficiency, accuracy, saving money, smart decisions, and the ability to grow as needed – were the building blocks of this amazing transformation. And it wasn't just about making things run smoother. It also made the company's financial base stronger and gave them more strategic power.

This wasn't just a partnership that solved problems; it was like opening a door to tons of opportunities for growth and fresh ideas. ARDEM's utility bill management solution wasn't just another tool; it was the spark that set off this incredible transformation. Overall, its impact is still felt in the company's ongoing success.



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