Analyze and pay your energy bills by efficiently inetgrating your EDI, accounting and energy analysis software packages.

DataTrek *Case study*

Kroger Energy Analysis – Hosted Solution

Scenario:

Kroger is a national grocery chain that has a centralized EDI department that sends/receives tens of thousands of EDI documents a day for their procurement needs. Kroger decided that it wanted to start analyzing its utility bills so that it might make smarter energy decisions. Due to the non-standard element of energy 810s, it was not excited about the prospect of having to learn each utility's propriety looping requirements, charge code and usage definition differences, and the unique post-processing requirements to get bill data from 30 separate utilities into one standard format.

Kroger considered having its EDI department take on the responsibility of writing 30 different 810 maps in its existing software and then the 30 requisite post-processing programs needed to manipulate the data into a standard format. Another challenge it faced was that its existing EDI software was set to poll its VAN mailbox many times a day to send and receive its procurement EDI. Kroger knew it only wanted to process, analyze and pay utility bills one time a week.

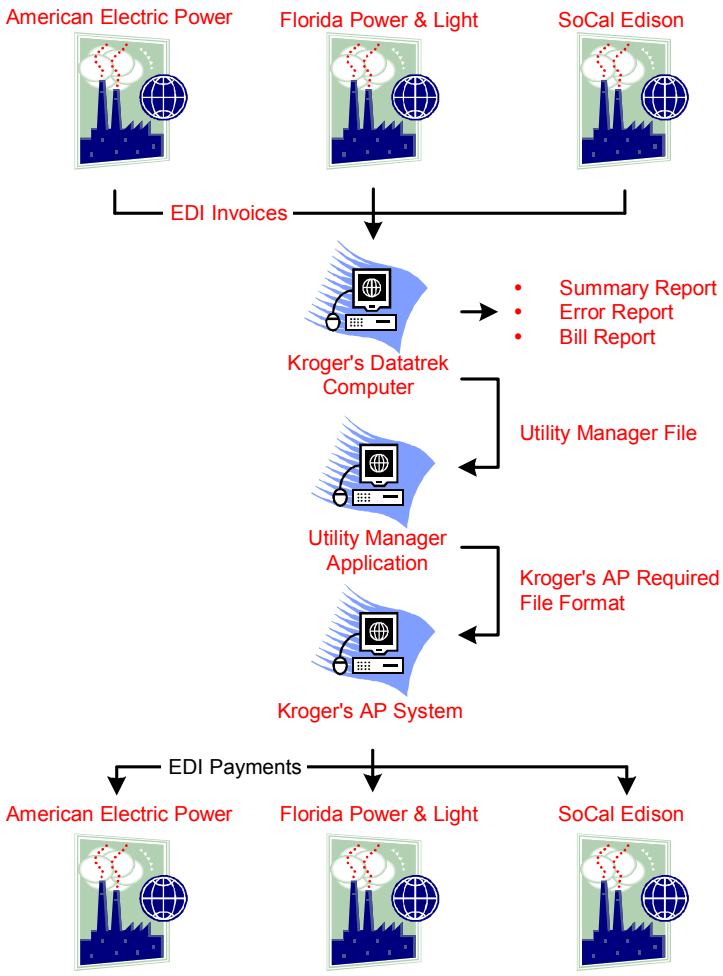
Solution:

Kroger decided to purchase a utility accounting software tool called Utility Manager (UM) that allows the company to know how its facilities compare in utility performance, find opportunities for cost savings, and to assure that only correct bills get paid, and paid efficiently. The next challenge was to be able to import the thousands of monthly utility bills and to avoid keypunching the data into the UM software. Kroger decided to purchase and install DataTrek from Xebec Data to solve this problem.

So once a week, the company runs DataTrek which logs into a VAN mailbox on nubridges that Xebec registered on its behalf, downloads the week's worth of invoices, translates them from EDI format, runs each utility's invoices through its own custom tables and programs designed to handle its unique codes and formatting, and then produces a UM Import File containing all the bill data in the required UM format. In addition, a Summary Report is generating compiling the run's results with total # of invoice and the total value of those bills organized by utility. If any errors are encountered during the process, for example a utility sends an unrecognized charge code or the total line items sent in the EDI bill do not add up to the total due reported, an Error Report is generated. Kroger also chose to have any Previous Balances or Late Payment Fees reported in this report so that they can be sure to check that they are valid and avoid double paying the balances. The entire process takes about 5-10 minutes.

The Kroger folks have been shown how to add new unrecognized charge codes to the lookup tables and thus are empowered to be responsible for maintaining their system on their own. They still report certain errors in their report to Xebec and then we take over and troubleshoot the problem, which usually results in our needing to contact the utility to report bills errors.

Next Kroger imports the file in UM, validates, analyzes, and approves the bills for payment. When a batch is approved they export the invoices from UM into a file format required by their AP system so data can be seamlessly imported into the company's backend system. Kroger has chosen to handle all making payments through in-house means rather than using DataTrek payment capabilities.



Summary:

So what does Kroger get out of the process? It saves money by efficiently importing utility bills and avoids the time consuming and error-prone process of manually keypunching bill data. The company no longer pays erroneous bills since most problems are caught by DataTrek Error Reporting or the UM validation process catching bills outside certain 'normal' parameters. It avoids paying late fees since they import bill data within a week of receipt and can schedule accurate payment before the bill due dates. Kroger never double pays invoices when a utility reports balances due on an invoice simply because payments haven't been posted. And maybe the best benefit of all is that it can use all the features of the Utility Manager application to analyze building efficiencies, find out where they can save money buy buying energy from alternative suppliers, figure out which building may need an retrofit investment to save money in the long run. They are managing their energy costs confidently and using the data to make better business decisions.

3800 W. 144th Ave. #1300, Unit 238, Broomfield, CO 80020
phone: 303.368-9964 www.xebecdata.com