

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

# DataTrek Case study

## Santa Cruz EDI and Utility Accounting Solution

### Scenario:

The City of Santa Cruz wanted to analyze its utility bills so that it might make smarter energy decisions. It also had an interest in eliminating the horrible load of paper bills it was keypunching into its AP System. The solution needed to save money and improve efficiency in its AP Dept and at the same time better manage its energy costs.

### Solution:

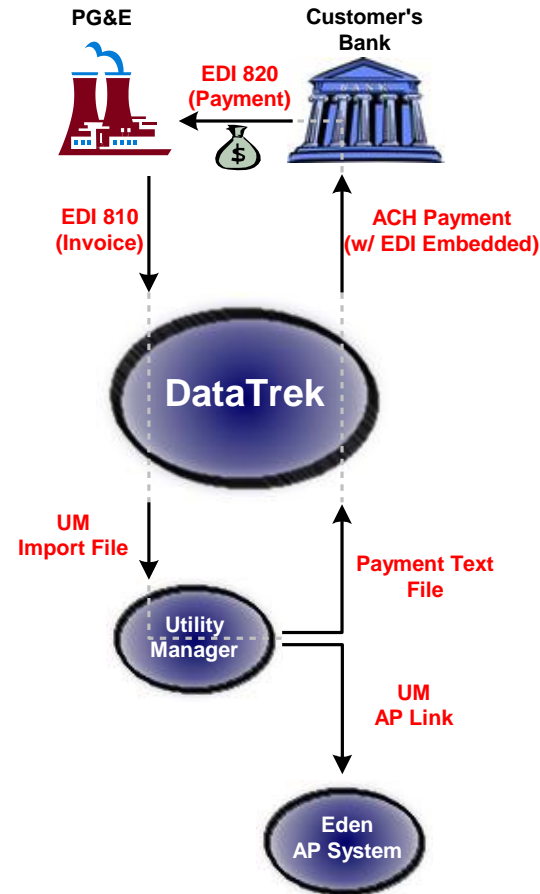
Santa Cruz decided to purchase a utility accounting software tool from Utility Management Services(415-488-4652) called Utility Manager (UM) that would allow the City to compare its facilities' utility performance, find opportunities for cost savings, and to ensure that only correct bills get paid, and paid efficiently. The next challenge was to be able to import its 300+ monthly PG&E bills and avoid keypunching the data into the UM software. The City decided to purchase and install DataTrek EDI software from Xebec Data to solve this problem.

Here is how the project was implemented with all parties working on their portions simultaneously.

- UMS submitted a complete list of Santa Cruz's PG&E accounts to PG&E.
- Xebec Data set up an EDI mailbox for Santa Cruz on the nuBridges' EDI Network.
- Xebec and UMS worked with PG&E to receive test 810 EDI invoices from PG&E.
- Santa Cruz worked diligently with PG&E to clean up Santa Cruz's account in preparation for their conversion from paper to EDI delivery. This includes balancing out summary bills so they can be unmerged into individual accounts for EDI. As all outstanding issues with bills must be resolved and accounts must be paid in full, this process can sometimes take months.
- City staff gathered information and provided it to UMS who built the UM database. All 300+ PG&E accounts had to be entered into the application, including 3 years of billing and usage history as well as City financial codes, and matched to the correct City building location.
- Santa Cruz provided UMS with the file format their Eden AP System needed to facilitate importing invoice data. UMS developed the Utility Manager AP Link module.
- Xebec Data, UMS, Wells Fargo, and Santa Cruz's AP staff decided the best solution for paying the bills electronically (a PG&E requirement if you participate in their EDI billing program) included sending an ACH file with embedded EDI Payment data to Wells Fargo.
- Xebec wrote software code to convert the UM Payment File into a valid bank ACH file.
- Xebec, UMS and City staff tested the ACH flow from Utility Manager through DataTrek to Wells Fargo and ultimately to PG&E.
- UMS completed two days of training. Day 1 included training on both DataTrek and Utility Manager and the steps required to process bills from start to finish. Day 2 included an in depth review of UM's auditing and data analysis capabilities.

Once a week, Santa Cruz runs DataTrek which logs into an EDI Network, downloads a week's worth of invoices, translates them from EDI format, runs them through a custom program designed to handle PG&E's 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 generated compiling the results with a total number of invoices and the total value of those bills. If any errors are encountered during the process (for example, PG&E 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. Santa Cruz also chose to display any previous balances in this report so they can check their validity and avoid double-paying the balances. The entire process takes about 5 minutes.

Next, Santa Cruz imports the file into UM, then validates, analyzes, and approves the bills for payment. When a batch is approved, they export the invoices from UM into an AP Link file format required by Eden so data can seamlessly update their AP records. Next, the UM- created Payment File is run through DataTrek to create and send the ACH file to Union Bank. From there the money transfers to PG&E's bank account and the 820 EDI Payment Remittance data is sent to PG&E's EDI Network.



### Summary:

So what does Santa Cruz get out of the process? They save money by efficiently importing utility bills and avoiding the time consuming and error-prone process of manually keypunching bill data. The City no longer pays erroneous bills since most problems are caught by DataTrek's error reporting and the UM validation process - catching bills outside certain 'normal' parameters. They avoid late payments since they import bill data within a week of receipt and can schedule an accurate payment before the bill due dates. The system helps avoid double paying invoices when PG&E reports a balance due on an invoice because payments are posted as soon as they are received. And maybe the best benefit of all is that they can use all the features of the Utility Manager application to analyze building efficiencies and figure out which buildings may need a retrofit investment to save money in the long run. Santa Cruz is managing its energy costs confidently and using the data to make better business decisions.



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