



A Major Energy Retailer

Billing Migration

Project Brief

Our client, a leading UK energy retailer and subsidiary of a global energy retailing parent company, had a complex business and IS estate. The origins of this complexity dated back to the 1998 UK market deregulation and to the ensuing 'land grab' as our client acquired several of the then independent gas and electricity companies. In total our client did at one time support seven different sets of business process operating across seven billing and customer service environments.

The business issue was apparent. Process rework and cost to serve were both high. For the customer quality of service was low and complaints to Energy Watch were high. Unsurprisingly customer churn was also high.

Clearly this situation was unsustainable. The **complexity** of business process and IS infrastructure had to be simplified. The project to undertake this was complicated by the strain on resources available from the operating business who were fully committed coping with the extensive manual handling required by the existing complexity.

The decision was taken to migrate all billing activities onto the best of the existing billing systems.

Barnsnake Consulting was invited to provide overall management of the billing migration and to directly lead all of the business work streams.

What Barnsnake Did

**Not just a
technology
project.**

The task for Barnsnake was to define and lead the billing migration project. To achieve a major change in the operating business clearly stakeholder management was key. True engagement of the functional heads and their first reports impacted by the migrations was an essential pre-requisite for a successful delivery. Having achieved this, multiple work- streams had to be managed including:

1. Scope of Functional Enhancements

It was essential to ensure that the business process of the target system was adopted wherever possible. New functionality was only to be added to the target system when it was absolutely essential to replicate the functionality of the existing system.

The phasing of data migration shaped the overall programme.

2. Data Migration

An effective data migration strategy was key to manage the risk to the operational business. Previous migration experience had led the business away from a 'big bang' migration, resulting in a phased migration approach, with separate tranche's for Receipt of Bill, Direct Debit and Pre-paid customers. The phasing of data migration shaped the overall programme.

3. End to End Testing

Given the degree of change to the billing suite, re-testing and re-accreditation against industry processes was mandatory. The number of sub processes and complexity of the sub processes complicated testing but made it essential to define comprehensively.

4. User Training and Cutover

A classroom based strategy for retraining all front and back office service agents was adopted. Definition of training, the logistics and timing of training; combined with the phasing of customer migration and hence the go-live of trained agents made this a complicated task.

5. Archive, Decommission and Closedown

To complete the project the closed billing systems were maintained 'read only' for a number of months, followed by eventual archiving and closedown.

6. Technical Integration and Scaling

The IT implications of this billing migration were significant, requiring a substantial upgrade to processor, disk and network capacity.

7. Commercial Appraisal

An investment appraisal that quantified the timing of the investments and benefit streams to enable a comprehensive assessment of impact on P&L and EBITA.

For more information

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Outcome and Benefits

The focus of the programme was on addressing the operational business issues identified. Maintaining focus on the business outcome was key throughout the programme.

Specific outcomes included:

- Minimised functional change to the target billing system.
- A data migration strategy that reflected operational business risks.
- A user training processes that genuinely bought the users into the new processes and prepared them for the new system.
- Day by day tracking of the commercial benefits to ensure that they were actually delivered, and in fact exceeded.
- An achievable delivery programme that balanced risk and opportunity for the chosen Systems Integrator.

Overall a business led programme producing business outcomes.