



Water authority taps technology

SUMS.WATER increased billing accuracy and stopped non-revenue losses for Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority

FACT

Customer

Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority, Phnom Penh City, Cambodia

Business Solution

Synergistic Utilities Management System. Water (SUMS.WATER)

Benefits

1. FAST:

Accurate real-time financial updates, compiled faster by 13 times than previous system

2. IMPROVEMENT:

City-wide on-demand transaction processing increases counter service level

3. SATISFACTION:

Create new customer records and ready-to-bill within 72 hours guarantees customer satisfaction

4. ACCURATE:

Accurate drill down accountability, with complete audit trail to help decision makers and regulators

5. PROFITABLE:

Improve billing income from 130,000 metered connections by 20 times, improved bottom line

The challenge

Providing a clean and safe water supply to the population of Phnom Penh City was important to Ek Sonn Chan. As the new general director of Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority (PPWSA) in 1993, Ek realized the public water enterprise faced many challenges like leaky old pipes, illegal connections, insufficient water meters, poor record keeping, inaccurate customer billing to poor accounting discipline. To highlight its billing inadequacies, PPWSA had been using a stand alone billing system since 1995 to process a maximum of 3,000 monthly bills. However, PPWSA needed to bill 20,000 metered connections per month. Ek also planned to install 15,000 new metered connections per year and process more than 90,000 monthly bills.

The customer

Since 1993, PPWSA has become a public water enterprise and improved its water connection network to serve 70 per cent of Phnom Penh City from 20 per cent in 1993. PPWSA operated at a loss with annual billing income at KHR 0.7 billion (USD187,909), against operating cost of KHR1.4 billion (USD375,819).

In order to supply clean and safe water, PPWSA must grow its piped water distribution network and income generating activities. It currently manages a water distribution network of more than 280 kilometers, supplying 63,000m³ of water daily, with the newest of pipes more than 40-years-old and the oldest, laid more than a century ago. These aging

pipes leaked water and must be replaced utilizing funds generated from its billing income.

The need

PPWSA sought for a complete and integrated water utility system which can be customized and function in a modularized manner with subsystems such as Water Billing and Management, Job and Resource Management, Human Resources and Payroll and Inventory Control and more. Ek said the new water utility solution must be able to:

- correct metering inaccuracies and improper billing records. PPWSA. Had a poor collection ratio of only 50 per cent in 1993 as it used a stand alone billing system which had many limitations; it can't operate in a client-server environment or distributed processing environment, and doesn't operate in real-time.
- handle customer records, record meter readings, human resources and fixed assets management, secure billing collection records, provide accurate accounting and produce financial statements
- scalable to cope with PPWSA's increased customer base and meter connections - the application processing backlog was in months, not days
- capture current billing information, customer information and water usage history in real-time manner.

“We credit PPWSA’s enthusiasm and commitment to make this a successful deployment. Their support was instrumental,”

Yap Yen Sam
Managing Director

“We commend Synergistic Innovation’s expertise in managing change . Their level of professionalism and cultural sensitivity was a key differentiator,”

Ek Sonn Chan
General Manager

“Apart from functionality, we sought a technology partner with cross-border multicultural experience who can solve challenges in changing mindsets and work habits,” said Ek

The solution

In 2000, a team of PPWSA top executives and World Bank consultants visited Synergistic Innovations Sdn Bhd, headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, who proposed Synergistic Utilities Management System. Water (SUMS.Water). “SUMS.Water fulfilled our stringent requirements and it’s a very cost effective solution,” said PPWSA accounting and finance director ROS Kimleang. A parallel run approach was used to implement SUMS.Water, deploying modules like General Ledger, Fixed Assets, Inventory Control, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Job Costing / Project Management, Human Resources, Payroll, Water Billing and House Connection.



The benefits

The post-deployment results justified PPWSA’s conviction in SUMS.Water “SUMS.Water can process cash payments received at our counters,” he said. “Transactions are updated real-time to our Account Receivable and General Ledger,” he said adding both were previously not possible. PPWSA also experience other benefits like:

- On-demand transaction processing:
New customer applications were processed in 72 hours. “This is an improvement for the previous system took up to 2 months. Users apply, we make the connection but billing starts after the fourth month. It took ages to create a new customer account in the old system. With SUMS.Water, it helped increase our financial liquidity and cash flow.
- Quicker information processing period:
SUMS.Water improved PPWSA’s update frequency by 13 times. Its ledgers were up-to-date within seven days compared to 90 days in the previous system
- Accurate drill down accountability, audit trail:
SUMS.Water accurately showed PPWSA’s financial health. “With SUMS.Water, we can determine our financial status every quarter. Previously, such an assessment would have taken us a year,” said Ros, adding he was now able to drill down to the source level
- Improve billing income:
SUMS.Water handled records of more than 130,000 metered connections. This accuracy increase PPWSA’s billing income by 20 times and generated an average monthly billing income of KHR100 million (USD26,844). “SUMS.Water can comfortably handle more than twice its present capacity, well within PPWSA’s metered water connection growth plans,” said Ek.



A Successful Partnership

The successful partnership between PPWSA and Synergistic Innovations is based on trust and mutual respect. "We commend Synergistic Innovation's expertise in managing change. Their level of professionalism and cultural sensitivity was a key difference factor," said Ek. The collaboration effort overcame language barriers and lowered the initial resistance to change. "We credit PPWSA's enthusiasm and commitment to make this a successful deployment. Their support was instrumental," remarked Synergistic Innovations managing director Yap Yen Sam. The partnership was unique, according to Synergistic Innovations general manager CJ Oon. "We didn't speak Khmer and were initially worried about our ability to effectively exchange ideas with PPWSA. However the overwhelming enthusiasm from PPWSA quickly put this matter to rest." In addition, SUMS.WATER robustness and zero fault tolerant qualities help add a layer of assurance.



About SUMS.Water

Synergistic Utilities Management System. Water (SUMS.WATER) is a total solution with modular integration like Financials, Water Billing and Management, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Inventory Control, Job and Resource Management, Fixed Assets, Human Resource and Payroll, provide rich environment for quick decision making.

SUMS.Water – powered by Microsoft Navision is scalable, reliable, flexible and modular, any or all of the modules may be combined, integrated and customized to create a perfectly tailored water management solution



We can help grow your profits



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