



BUSINESS CHALLENGE

E.ON faced several business challenges, including the need to reduce the time taken to resolve customer queries, replace a lengthy and labor-intensive process for servicing copy bill requests, and quickly deliver customer self-service access to bills. It was also necessary to integrate key historical information for two million new customers into E.ON's business systems following the acquisition of another energy service provider, TXU.

TRANSFORMATION

E.ON implemented Macro 4's Columbus information management platform to provide easier access to millions of customer documents. 6,000 users across seven UK sites now have a single view of customer communications, resulting in faster resolution of queries and improved service levels. The system handles information for over six million customers and delivers online self-service as well as simplifying the process for producing copy bills.



Macro 4 were different. Like us, they are focused on delivering results rapidly. They really listened to us, shared our vision and took a collaborative rather than prescriptive approach.

Brendan Stafford,
Head of Retail IS, E.ON



ENERGISING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT WITH MACRO 4

E.ON is the world's largest investor-owned energy company.

E.ON's retail business is a leading UK energy supplier, with around six million electricity and gas customers, both residential and small business. Every day E.ON issues approximately 200,000 bills and letters to its retail customers.

E.ON's customer relationship management (CRM) strategy is based on a desire to treat its customers as individuals. This objective hinges on staff having effective access to up-to-date customer information and was a key driver for E.ON's original implementation of Macro 4's Columbus information management solution.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE

with more queries resolved on the first call

£600,000 ANNUAL REDUCTION

in print and postage costs following the introduction of online billing

INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Simpler, more efficient copy bill production

A SMOOTH TRANSITION

following the TXU acquisition, with high service levels maintained

THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE CRM STRATEGY:

E.ON originally had three issues relating to customer communication:

- Customer service staff did not have immediate access to bills, marketing or customer-specific information in the format received by its customers. Consequently, resolving certain telephone queries could be lengthy and frustrating. Gas bills, produced by a separate billing system, further complicated dual fuel query handling, as staff had to use two different systems.
- Servicing requests for copy bills was time and labor intensive. Copies either had to be generated from the raw information stored on billing systems or prepared by hand.
- Finally, due to the sheer volume of accumulated documents, billing information was only kept online on the mainframe systems for a few months.

To address these issues E.ON's CRM strategy drove the development of a new suite of customer systems. One key component is ICE, a call center application which provides a single view of a customer, including all of the products they have purchased.

To accompany ICE, E.ON required a streamlined online system for the storage and retrieval of billing information. E.ON also wanted to improve access to a wide range of standard letters.

Brendan Stafford, Head of Retail IS at E.ON, comments: "It was obvious that improving call center access to customer documents would boost our service levels and make a significant contribution to our CRM strategy."

Discussions with Macro 4 customers convinced E.ON that Macro 4's Columbus could deliver the high service levels expected and that the system would cope with the large document volumes involved.



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"We chose Macro 4 because their vision matched our own. Columbus not only met our initial expectations – it's also been a key part of our solution for customer self-service, which we were able to deliver quickly."

Brendan Stafford,
Head of Retail IS, E.ON

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THE INITIAL BENEFITS

Columbus initially provided over 2,000 call center and back-office staff across three locations with immediate, on-screen access to millions of customer documents. This enabled staff to have a single view of the bills and documents relating to three million customer accounts. Within eight months of going live, over twelve million documents had been stored.

Printing copy bills has been simplified. A single call center instruction sends the document to the print center automatically, from where it is dispatched to the customer. The savings for E.ON have been considerable. Approximately twenty per cent of the ten million annual calls to E.ON's call centers are bill related. The length of the average bill-related customer call has been cut by around ten seconds and handling copy bill requests no longer drains resources. This has improved customer service levels, with more queries answered faster – usually on the first call.



As Brendan Stafford explains: “By ensuring that our customer facing staff have ready access to the useful information contained in customer bills and letters, Columbus helps provide a more complete picture of individual customers. This is a major part of good customer relationship management.”

THE TXU ACQUISITION

When E.ON acquired TXU Retail, another large energy service provider in the UK, this added a further two million customers. E.ON's retail business therefore almost doubled in size, and all its systems had to be able to immediately scale up to support this workload. Integrating the entire customer base of TXU into E.ON's systems presented a significant challenge. As TXU ceased trading it was vital to ensure quick, effective service was maintained to all customers. Exporting TXU's billing history and vital communication letters to Columbus, quickly and easily, enabled E.ON to manage this transition effectively.

Columbus now has to support 200,000 bills and letters being archived every day, instead of the original 100,000. It also holds a database of almost twice the amount of customer history. Today, the system supports 6,000 users across seven UK sites, and all this has been achieved with no impact on performance.



When we doubled in size as a company, Columbus met this challenge, and it continues to help us streamline our business processes which are document related.”

Brendan Stafford,
Head of Retail IS, E.ON



CUSTOMER SELF-SERVICE

E.ON has looked to Columbus to deliver even more value. Online customer access to account details reduces the costly processes of printing and posting monthly or quarterly bills. E.ON has introduced online accounts and, by integrating Columbus with its self-service web portal, is able to present customers with their bill electronically. Approximately ten per cent of E.ON's retail customers are now registered online, which has realized a saving of over £600,000 per year just in print and postage costs, as well as improving E.ON's environmental profile.

For those residential customers who do still want posted bills, Columbus has enabled E.ON to reduce the costs of other key processes. 'Draft' bills used to be printed off for checking purposes prior to postage, creating a lengthy workflow process. Columbus has enabled staff to check these bills in an electronic format instead, so only the final version of the bill is printed, enabling E.ON to reduce waste and make significant savings in terms of both time and money.

MOVING FORWARD

Since the original implementation of Columbus, E.ON has experienced incredible growth and Columbus has grown with the company, from handling three million customers to over six million and still facing future expansion.

As Brendan Stafford concludes, "E.ON operates in a highly competitive and changing market, so we need the ability for new systems to be delivered quickly. Unfortunately, a lot of suppliers tend to over-engineer their solutions, so projects take too long.

"Macro 4 were different. Like us, they are focused on delivering results rapidly. They really listened to us, shared our vision and took a collaborative rather than prescriptive approach. The solution was very quick and simple to implement, and has proved to be reliable and flexible.

Since then we have been able to deliver a succession of 'quick wins' using the same technology, all of which have improved customer service and made our business processes more effective. The Macro 4 system has moved from an initial 'point solution' to be far more strategic. It supports key areas of our business to a level that we couldn't do without it."



THE NEXT STEP

Read about other companies who have used Macro 4 software solutions to transform their organizations www.macro4.com/resources or contact us to learn more.

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