MILSOFT® Utility Solutions

The Future of **CIS** and **Billing** is Here

Meet Today's Utility Demands

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Being able to bring customer information systems (CIS) and billing together in an automated, all-inclusive system has taken on added significance for the utility industry. Budget constraints and the general reluctance to go through a full-scale migration are factors holding back many utilities from updating their current systems. Preferring to avoid the large upfront investment required in cost, resources, and manpower, many utilities choose to depend on systems that are older and simply getting by. After all, switching systems involves a lot of coordination and moving pieces, and can potentially disrupt operations. Utilities are asking themselves, is the return on investment substantial enough for us to make a change?

The reality is that any upgrade or system change is not an easy move; but it is a necessary one. Utilities need to modernize their CIS and billing processes to save time and improve overall workflow for customer reps, billing clerks, and cashiers. This includes cutting down on manual, paper-driven inefficiencies, while driving more productive workforces. The right CIS and billing system can help utilities gain:

- Automated processes through full integration with service orders and work orders
- A robust customer accounting system
- Single bill, statement, or invoice billings
- Built-in Prepaid Billing and Net Metering—no need for a separate software purchase
- Online collections to prevent manual processing

Changing Workplace Technology Needs

Employees demand more automation, faster and more efficient processes, simplified access to applications, and above all else, the flexibility to use the devices and technology they are most comfortable with to access their utility services.

When it comes to the evolving utility workforce, similar technology transitions are taking place. Energy and utility companies are gaining more opportunities to take advantage of a new mobile work environment in which field workers can safely connect to applications from anywhere.

As older utility personnel retire and move on, having modern technologies in place is important to attract and retain a hungry workforce. There is a strong correlation between the advancement of these tools and the increase in overall employee satisfaction, performance, and productivity.

Full Integration with AMI Technology

Given the technology advancements at hand, it is important to have a system that not only responds to emerging needs but is fully adaptable to other utility systems and modules.

For example, advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) has emerged as a major component for progressing two-way communication between the meter and meter data management system, and also empowers utilities to remotely manage their metering assets.

Utilities not only need to consider having full AMI compatibility at some point, but they also need to have a robust CIS and billing solution that can take full advantage of its capabilities.

Overview of Changing Customer Technology Needs and Expectations

Meeting customer demands and maintaining their satisfaction levels is no longer a straight-forward process. Customers have more options than ever before, and they expect to have certain technology capabilities at their fingertips.

For example, Gartner pointed to "the power customer" as a key market trend. These empowered customers need to have more mobile and web access to conduct business transactions.

Utilities in particular need to be better prepared for the changes that are taking place in the marketplace. Their customers seek more automated, online options from their services including:

- Direct access to utility websites through mobile smartphones and tablet devices
- Online bill payment, account registration, and support for multiple accounts
- Email and text notifications for new billings or balance thresholds
- Billing and payment history accessible through mobile devices

What to Look for During the RFP Process to Find a Sustainable CIS and Billing System

With all of the technology requirements that utilities need to consider, how can they find the right system that meets everything? Moreover, how can they find the right service provider that can ensure all of their unique industry and organizational needs are addressed?

Utilities must carefully assess their current technology needs, and prioritize what they need in a new system before moving forward with a search. They need to consider if they want a more flexible system that can be modified, or if a more off-the-shelf, preconfigured solution fits best.

Either way, utilities cannot shortchange the amount of time they spend on research and planning before selecting a solution.

Milsoft is the Clear Choice for CIS

At Milsoft, we believe that successful utilities are built on a strong foundation. We are dedicated to providing the platform on which your business operates. From billing and customer service, to financials and work management, our highly-trained staff of specialists ensures that any utility system we install is integrated and functioning at optimal efficiency for your business.

Companies have chosen Milsoft for over 30 years to solve the issues that arise with outdated solutions.

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To learn more about our proven solutions with pricing flexibility and configurability, call us at 800.344.5647 today.

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