

Case Study: Public Utility Company

Ricoh delivers business process outsourcing benefits to a Fortune 500 utility company

About our customer

As one of the largest utility holding companies in North America, this public utility company employs about 17,000 people worldwide and is a leading energy provider in North America. Generating and distributing electric and natural gas, their networks serve over 40 million consumers. Recognized in the industry for their prioritization of ESG standards and clean energy practices, this company has been in partnership with Ricoh for more than a decade. Through this growing relationship, Ricoh has provided both on-site and off-site support in various parts of the company: managed print, mail centers, mail distribution, courier services, and other business services.

Challenge

- Wanted to modernize and digitize processes to protect business continuity
- Physical mail delivery disrupted due to hybrid/remote work
- Needed employees to have quicker access to correspondence
- Wanted to optimize costs and sustainability goals while delivering superior customer support

“We are always looking out for our customers, becoming more efficient and driving sustainability. In doing this, we look to save money and improve where we can by using Ricoh technologies to help us get there.”

— Category Manager, Public Utility Company

Having a large customer base often comes with the challenges that surround mail, accounting, auditing, supply chain, call center operations, and other back-office processes, making it a smart decision to take advantage of business process outsourcing benefits.

With a shift to hybrid and remote work over the past few years, the public utility company opted to modernize many of its business services to ensure quality customer experience, fair rates, on-target budgets, security, and sustainability. Luckily, their relationship with Ricoh was built on years of trust, reliable managed services, technology experience, and an easy, vetted way to request services — all advantages of BPO (business process outsourcing). Some of those outsourcing opportunities included:

Mail distribution and shipping: As more employees began working from home, the company’s temporary delivery solution was to send their mail using scanned documents attached to email. However, this quickly revealed security concerns, and the company sought methods to address the staggered mail delivery. Inbound correspondence needed to be delivered safely as it dealt with millions of people’s electricity and gas payments.

Courier services: The company offers courier services to deliver important documents and packages. Remote and hybrid work was impacting this as well, and drivers were clocking in around 900,000 miles per year, which was not eco-friendly and proved costly.

Printer fleet: The remote and hybrid work environment left office buildings and printers underused. The company needed to reevaluate its investment in printers.

Back-office business process: The company’s non-core functions like managing finance and accounting, IT services, application management of 13 platforms, 20+ help desk inboxes responding to about 5,000 emails per month, and other processes needed expertise, employee resources and overall management.

Outsourcing these functions became part of the company’s business model as it was more cost-effective and efficient to utilize Ricoh’s team rather than doing certain work in-house.

“With Ricoh’s help and training, we got key departments to embrace change. Additionally, this reduced incoming mail, and less paper was used, furthering our commitment to ESG guidelines.”

— Category Manager, Public Utility Company

Solution

- Implemented Intelligent Delivery Services for digital mailroom automation and delivery via Ricoh’s cloud-based Intelligent Business Platform (IBP)
- Deployed parcel, IT lockers and vending lockers for secured retrieval
- Brought on a Ricoh change management consultant to help with transitions
- Initiated better practices for more sustainable courier services and eco-friendly vehicles
- Expanded business support services for equipment and special projects
- Utilized a Ricoh analyst to cost-optimize printers, devices and shipping

Ricoh Business Support Services & Solutions for Public Utilities Company

Managed Services on-site team	Management of 13 platforms and systems
Intelligent Delivery Services	Supply chain vendor & insurance platform
Parcel, IT and vending lockers	Transaction and card purchasing enablement
Courier services	Audit and compliance services for contracts
~500 printing devices	Management of 20+ help desk inboxes
Travel expense management	Electronic records management
PBX switchboard operators at a call center	Office services: invoices, billing & wire transfers
Investment recovery for devices	LAN badge requests
SharePoint landing page for requests & services	Meeting services
Document management & repositories	Ad hoc projects
IT & device services and shipping	

With our decade-long partnership providing both on-site and off-site support in various parts of the company, Ricoh's experience led to a deep understanding of our client's business operations. This enabled Ricoh to develop and present intuitive, customized solutions to help meet the customer's goals by taking advantage of business process outsourcing benefits.

From cubbies and sorting to digital mail: Ricoh's Intelligent Delivery Services enabled a cloud-based, digital mailroom, which included automated scan, capture and delivery workflows, allowing employees to securely access their inbound mail from anywhere. Most business units adopted automated processing, which made a big impact on departments like accounts payable.

New courier services drive sustainability: "With Ricoh, we gradually reduced our courier delivery time from 5 days to 1 day due to our Intelligent Delivery Services and new lockers, which is amazing," said the Category Manager at the Public Utility Company. The lockers also require lots of logistics and tracking, which Ricoh now handles.

Sustainability is an important topic and the company continues to look at ways to reduce their carbon footprint and lower emissions. In fact, they were able to lower their mileage by 20% and calculated that out of all their drive miles, about 72% were considered "green miles" with no emissions. There are about 34 different couriers, who drive about 60,000 miles per month.

Printer reduction impacts the bottom line: The Ricoh team was brought in to assess and optimize usage and costs for its hundreds of printers. "RicoH brought in an analyst and was instrumental in doing the right sizing for us and we were able to eliminate about 100 printers, which saves us about \$10,000 per month. It was substantial," stated the Category Manager. Additionally, the company noted that on-site Ricoh resources at the print center would go the extra mile and come up with ideas, mockups, and other solutions to enhance customer service and experience.

Simplified and easy business processes: The Ricoh team set up an internal SharePoint site to simplify the process of adding to projects or services. "With Ricoh in-house, it's so easy to add a service order rather than having to go through a new contract with a new provider and getting all those signatures," commented the Enterprise Administrator at the Public Utility Company.

Ricoh also manages a variety of business initiatives and services, such as insurance compliance and contracts. "The support here has been great," said the Category Manager. "Any kind of support functions are outsourced to Ricoh and that's a good thing in my book." The team also complimented the call center and noted that while it may move to digital in the future, its customers appreciate talking to a human versus an automated system. "For example, if a customer calls about their electricity or gas bill, the operators do a great job of triaging those calls and routing them to the correct departments. They are also great at detecting and weeding out suspicious or malicious callers that are spam."

Results

- Greater efficiency, flexibility and business continuity for hybrid workers through automation and technology
- Enhanced speed and mail security with 60% of incoming mail now digital, saving time, money and paper
- Support ESG initiatives with courier and mail services while decreasing delivery time by 80% and mileage by 20%
- Significant cost savings of \$120,000 annually from a reduction in print fleet
- Overall reduction in carbon footprint by rightsizing the fleet, using digital processes and logistics optimization

With the many advantages of BPO and a digital mail solution, the company can ensure timely communication among their teams and across different channels. They can now spend more time focusing on innovation and growing the business since employees can communicate and work more efficiently. Moreover, the company has embraced a digital-focused culture, which resonates with newer employees who want the freedom this forward-thinking technology allows.

Effective business process management contributes to a more sustainable world by enhancing efficiency, reducing natural resource consumption, and promoting responsible business practices. Our solutions and services streamline our clients' operations, bringing together the right combination of hardware, software and people to drive sustainable business outcomes.

"We are always looking out for our customers, becoming more efficient and driving sustainability. In doing this, we look to save money and improve where we can by using Ricoh technologies to help us get there," stated the Category Manager. "We get such great support and fast responses from our management and account folks at Ricoh, so thank you."



Learn more about the ways our digital mail services and business process outsourcing benefits can support and grow your organization.

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