

# ABBYY Fuels Higher Efficiency for Utility Management Firm

Total Utility Management Services, LLC, processes and manages over 5,000 utility invoices a month from 2,000 providers. Manual entry of these complex documents into Total Utility's database required the full time efforts of three people – a slow, error prone, and expensive process that is now handled swiftly, accurately, and automatically with ABBYY FlexiCapture for Invoices.

**"FlexiCapture has minimized manual data entry. The time required to process an invoice has easily gone down 80%."**

*Travis Hayes, Account Manager, Total Utility Management Services, LLC*

## Saving customers time and money with superior energy management services

Offering customers a 360° solution for utility management, Total Utility Management Services, LLC, brings deep experience and wide-ranging expertise to the management of commercial and industrial utilities. Handling the complex tasks involved in energy management, Total Utility enables commercial customers and large manufacturers to focus on their core business – lowering their utility costs, managing those costs and giving them a better picture of where their money is going. "We cover everything," says Travis Hayes, Total Utility's Account Manager. "From procurement and transportation of resources, to the management and processing of invoices, we take care of it all!"

### **WANTED: AN ALTERNATIVE TO INEFFICIENT MANUAL INVOICE PROCESSING**

As Hayes describes, managing invoices had become the fastest growing area of Total Utility's business and one of the most time-consuming. "Utility invoices," explains Hayes, "are complicated. We collect and store a complex range of data from those invoices and extensively audit them. They can be very hard to understand, and the utilities can get them wrong. So if you don't have experts watching over things, you can pay money that you don't owe."

And with over 5000 invoices arriving every month, manually processing them was not only a drag on efficiency, but costly and time consuming, too. "It was," as Hayes recalls, "slow, tedious and a drain on resources. We had three people entering data into an Excel spreadsheet all day long – which was then uploaded into our database. Plus, one client requires a PO number specific to each invoice and the associated account and that information wasn't on their invoices – so we'd have to manually type all that in, save and compress the invoice, then send it over."

Additionally, manual data entry was a barrier to growth, as Hayes describes: "Potential clients are very interested in our invoice management capabilities. And the inefficiency of manual processes required rethinking our position with every new client. Would we need to hire more staff, or outsource? We needed more confidence in our processes – the freedom to grow as we wished wasn't there. Finally," he says, "we decided automated data capture was a must."

In investigating their alternatives, Hayes and his team quickly identified a common shortcoming in the

software they saw demoed: “Our invoices can vary vastly from one utility to another, so the power to customize a solution to suit our needs was key. And we weren’t seeing anything like the customization we needed, until we were introduced to ABBYY FlexiCapture for Invoices.”

### **ABBYY FLEXICAPTURE FOR INVOICES: A CONDUIT FOR HIGHER EFFICIENCY**

On the recommendation of a colleague, Hayes reached out to Naviant’s General Manager, Travis Spangler, who arranged a demo of FlexiCapture for Invoices. Impressed, the team requested a second demonstration using sample invoices from Total Utility. “After seeing the potential FlexiCapture offered for customization,” says Hayes, “we decided to move ahead.”

As Hayes recalls, installation and the vast majority of configuration was accomplished within a week. And with ongoing assistance from Naviant, Total Utility continues fine-tuning FlexiCapture to achieve even greater efficiency. “Naviant® has been incredibly helpful in pointing us in the right direction,” says Hayes. “They even coded us a script that automatically places PO numbers and related account information on invoices for our client – saving us even more time and manual input.”

According to Hayes, FlexiCapture is fulfilling its promise: “Invoices are scanned directly into Flexi-Capture with no keying. Once loaded into the verification station we do a quick audit of each invoice to ensure the rates and charges are correct. Manual entry is now minimal – maybe changing a character here or there. An image of the invoice is stored and then uploaded into our website for access by clients. And the data is automatically exported to our database – with no Excel spreadsheet in between.”

“The time it takes to process an invoice,” says Hayes, “has easily gone down 80%. The efficiency we gained from automating the data entry has been fantastic. We were hoping for a 50% gain in efficiency, and now we’re already looking at pushing into the 90% range. Plus, the software’s accuracy is even better than we’d planned for.

## **The Results**

As Hayes confirms, FlexiCapture for Invoices is on target to delivering all the efficiency that Total Utility was aiming for. The company expects that the number of hours and human resources required to process invoices will further decline as it continues customizing FineReader – and no longer anticipates having to add headcount, even to take on new business. “We have confidence in our processes and the software,” Hayes affirms. “It’s definitely going to help grow the company in the way we want to.”

**“It will definitely make a difference to our competitiveness.  
Invoice processing is going much faster with FlexiCapture for Invoices.”**

*Travis Hayes, Account Manager, Total Utility Management Services, LLC*

And the benefits to Total Utility’s customers are significant, too. “FlexiCapture enables us to get bills to clients faster – giving their AP departments more time to schedule payments and decide how to manage cash flow. It’s a big improvement in our services and a real help to our customers.”

Plus, FlexiCapture is strengthening the company’s competitive edge. In addition to helping Total Utility take on new clients, it also enables them to offer better Service Level Agreements (SLAs): “We will be able to guarantee how quickly invoices will be processed upon receiving them. That might be 48 hours today, maybe down to 24 hours in the near future – or even shorter. It’s all about being able to provide clients the most efficient option.”