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PROJECT MANAGER

## California Utility Company

*One of the nation’s largest U.S. utility companies achieves greater accuracy and accountability with RFgen Mobile Data Collection.*

### At a glance...

**Industry**  
Public Utilities

**Application**  
Inventory Control

**Environment**  
SAP 6.0

As they flip the switch, more than 14 million people and 285,000 businesses rely on this California utility company to turn on the lights. The company is on the leading edge of its industry in every way. Given this leadership, it is no surprise that it employs the best software and IT professionals to facilitate highly efficient, cost-effective operations. It also has one of the largest implementations of SAP software in North America and enjoys an established reputation as a premier IT organization.

### The Challenge

Having achieved a very stable ERP environment, the IT team at the utility company wanted to identify more ways to collect information and improve operations. An important area for improvement involved capturing data transactions in a remote environment—outside of wired or wireless networks.

“Inventory is a big part of our system,” explained the company’s project manager. “We have lots of small warehouses throughout our 50,000 square mile territory. Larger items such as cables and transformers are often stored outside. We had a lot of manual inventory processes that we wanted to automate, but we were limited by the cost of the infrastructure.”

The program manager for the company also saw opportunities to improve the efficiency of transportation operations if SAP could function on a mobile device when its drivers were not connected to any network. The company employs 40 light duty drivers to move packages, mail, and small parts around the company, as well as heavy duty drivers to move larger materials with

eighteen wheel trucks. No automated method existed for recording deliveries in SAP, so a lot of materials weren’t being tracked.

### The Solution

After considering another software package and even starting to build a solution themselves, the IT team was excited to discover the RFgen mobile data collection solution—a flexible, scalable and adaptable framework for collecting transactional data and integrating it seamlessly with SAP.

“RFgen offered a full suite of solutions that had at least fifty SAP specific transactions straight out of the box that could be used without being connected to a network. Whenever drivers returned to wireless range, we could upload that information as if it had happened in real time,” said the program manager.

A rapid implementation was required in order to meet the company’s goals for budget planning and total cost of ownership. The RFgen consultant created and delivered about a dozen custom transactions within a two-week timeframe at the end of December. The project manager revealed that his team was able to take RFgen to internal clients within four weeks.

“We consider it above and beyond, that we can do anything that large that fast,” agreed the company’s program manager.

The flexibility and scalability of the RFgen framework made the IT team confident that they could use it to tackle any number of challenges. The program

manager shared that “RFgen is almost limitless in what you can match up to SAP.” The IT team has already gone far beyond the standard, out-of-the-box transactions, and “RFgen adapted seamlessly.”

Finally, it was important to the company that the capabilities of RFgen could be expanded using internal staffing resources. RFgen provides an easy to use development environment that offers drag and drop screen design, a runtime framework for managing numerous application tasks, and built-in support for VBA/.NET event scripting. The entire system has been optimized to make it easy to modify their existing library of mobile device transactions or to create entirely new ones. Complete system training for their IT staff was handled on-site and only required two days.

“Now our staff has the ability to really develop the solution for our internal clients. We are confident that we can satisfy new requirements in house. That makes a big difference,” said the project manager.

### The Result

RFgen enables employees to collect transactional data off-line easily through mobile devices and automatically upload that data to SAP as soon as those devices enter a cellular or wireless LAN coverage area. The company is already using RFgen with light-duty truck drivers and will roll out the solution to heavy transportation and inventory control later this year. RFgen has already helped the company:

- Allow drivers to track where they've been and what they've delivered.
- Mitigate the loss of high-value items from inventory.
- Avoid costly scheduling mistakes with repair crews.
- Collect productivity information to analyze staffing needs.

“The second day after we went live, we had a major capital tool go missing. They were able to go into the system and see the date, time, and location where it was picked up, who picked it up and then where it was dropped off and when. They tracked that tool down,” the program manager recalled. “We are really looking forward to the value it is going to provide when we roll it out to other areas of the company.”

For the company's project manager, with the low total cost of ownership of RFgen, it makes good business sense to apply the solution to any number of processes. He explained, “RFgen is one of the applications where we can achieve extremely high return on investment. It is extremely simple to use, it helps reduce data entry errors, and it provides very high transparency in the system. It is so scalable that you can implement this product on any process. We would have had to spend a lot of money to do something similar within SAP that we were able to achieve at a very low cost with RFgen.”



### About RFgen Software

Incorporated in 1995, California-based RFgen Software provides flexible and reliable mobile supply chain solutions that solve real-world business challenges. As a certified Oracle, SAP, Microsoft, Deltek and Vocollect partner, RFgen actively seeks companies facing challenges managing their internal supply chain operations and solves them using real-world experience, industry best practices, and state-of-the-art technology. RFgen's Mobile Framework division specializes in development tools for mobile, wireless and voice environments and provides open standards based connectivity to a multitude of systems (database, SOA, legacy, etc.). RFgen's ERP Integration division focuses on providing certified, open-source transactions and integration expertise for Oracle E-Business Suite, Oracle JD Edwards, SAP, Deltek Costpoint and Microsoft Dynamics solutions.

RFgen's Mobile Framework is an open systems development platform that speeds the path from idea, to proof-of-concept, to solution deployment. RFgen provides built-in, native functionality for extending real-time and on-demand access to enterprise data to almost any mobile device available today. RFgen's Mobile Solutions are currently installed in more than 35 countries, in over 2,600 locations, and are supported by a certified group of over 125 solution partners.

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