

VATTENFALL AB VÄRME NORDIC

Improved Efficiency in Billing and Customer Service

Vattenfall is wholly owned by the Swedish state and is the fifth largest energy company in Europe. The utility has operations in the Nordic countries, Germany and Poland and is active in all stages of the electricity value chain – generation, transmission, distribution and sales. In the Nordic region, Vattenfall AB Värme Nordic is the fourth largest supplier of heat with 50 district heating plants servicing 1.3 million customers in the region including 900,000 in Sweden.

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The Challenge

To enhance customer satisfaction, Vattenfall AB Värme launched a remote meter reading project for its 2, 030 heat utility meters with the main aim of providing all customers with billing based on actual consumption. To augment its remote meter reading solution and enhance its capabilities, Vattenfall sought to equip its field operations team with new mobile handheld computers. The solution would have to be ergonomic, robust and rugged enough to withstand the tough and changing environments of field work.

The Solution

Vattenfall AB Värme Nordic decided to equip its heat utility meter reading team with WORKABOUT PRO handheld computers fitted with a Kamstrup A/S radio card module. This enables the field operations team to read meters remotely so they no longer need to enter customers' homes.

Routes are stored in advance on the WORKABOUT PRO mobile handheld computers and the meter reader selects a predetermined route through the user friendly colour touch screen display. The large display also provides an overview of the status of all available routes and

meters clearly stating meter number, address and corresponding meter identification number. Finally, all meter data such as reading time, energy and volume are displayed.

A Kamstrup A/S radio module is installed in both the meter and the WORKABOUT PRO to enable the transmission of meter data directly to the handheld computer - with a range of up to 200 meters if there are no obstructions. Once a meter is read, the consumption figures are transmitted to Vattenfall's invoice system and customers are invoiced for actual consumption.

WORKABOUT PRO handheld computers were chosen by Vattenfall AB Värme as they are particularly suited for demanding field environments. The WORKABOUT PRO is ergonomic and easy to carry through a long day of meter reading while offering the ruggedness to withstand operation in varying weather conditions faced throughout the year. The Windows® Mobile computer has a full VGA colour touch screen display provides easy readability especially in low light and direct sunlight. The ergonomic alphanumeric keypad is designed for one-hand operation and the handheld's computer long lasting 1800 mAh lithium ion battery ensures productivity – even over the longest shifts.

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The Benefits

Remote meter reading implementation offers Vattenfall many benefits.

The utility always has an accurate snapshot of households' consumption and is able to base billing on actual consumption instead of estimate consumption. Meter readings are fast, error free and accurate and billing is quick and involves simple processing of electronic data. This has resulted in increased customer satisfaction with regard to service, quality, efficiency, and customer care.

It isn't only Vattenfall's customers that benefit from the remote meter reading solution - Vattenfall's operations has also seen improvements. Efficiency has improved as the field operations team no longer needs to enter customers' homes to perform meter readings – workers are

no longer dependent on whether household residents are home to provide access to meters. In addition, carrying out meter maintenance is simple as Vattenfall can now update the date, time and customer number on the meter without knocking on a households' door.

Finally, from a regulatory point of view, Vattenfall is now better prepared for any requirements for remote meter reading of heat utility meters by regulators



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