

Swiss Energy Company CKW Turns to AgilePoint to Modernize Service Delivery and Legacy Processes



Industry: Energy & Utilities

CKW Group, a 127-year-old Swiss energy company, is the leading energy services provider in Central Switzerland, supplying electricity to more than 200,000 residential, commercial, utility, and municipal customers in the cantons of Lucerne, Schwyz and Uri.

Situation

CKW Group's major shareholder, Axpo Group, is Switzerland's largest producer of renewable energy and an international leader in energy trading. As a major shareholder of 81%, Axpo Group encouraged CKW to modernize their legacy processes to reduce customer service costs currently exceeding the industry average. This would ultimately improve the overall service delivery experience as well.

The first process selected for automation was a service request process as it affected many external stakeholders such as building firms, architects, electricians, and independent inspectors who interacted with CKW through an external customer portal.

Challenges

To serve the need of various customer groups, CKW was managing 100s of business processes (both internal- and external-facing). A few of them based on manual data collection from an internal portal, and other based on email data. The manual process involved transferring data from the external portal to a separate, internal tool so that staff could work on the case.

The existing half-automated, half-manual processes lacked in-process visibility, approval mechanisms, and did not show dependencies for long running processes such as applications for new connection requests by commercial and municipal customers, temporary power supply requests, or an existing customer requesting to install a solar power generation system.

In case of complex processes like power lines maintenance, grid extensions, and transformer upkeep, the process efficiency was even more dismal. Existing workflows often resulted in countless requests and huge data volumes with the need to manually transfer data to a different system, and sometimes duplicated in both systems simultaneously causing version control issues

CKW identified the shortcomings in the current system which prevented the staff from promptly and efficiently working on cases.

As a result, CKW needed a way to cater to an ever-growing need of an automated way to process service requests while leveraging existing investments and reuse existing app components without having to build each new app from scratch.



"Centralschweizerische Kraftwerke (CKW), the largest energy service provider in central Switzerland, has chosen AgilePoint to future proof its internal process applications and customer facing portal, enabling seamless reuse of form- and application-components to handle a large number of form-driven internal business processes. CKW employees could now implement process changes and have them reflect as a run-time change".

Solution

After a comprehensive vendor selection exercise consisting of technical analysis, product overview workshops, and proof-of-concept building, CKW chose AgilePoint as its business process automation (BPA) platform.

AgilePoint closely worked with CKW employees to help build a centralized portal for staff and customers that is user-friendly, fast, and transparent due to standardized processes. The team at CKW iteratively developed the desired architecture for form-based application development. AgilePoint was also used to interconnect the various systems, information, and tasks for internal and external portal users. In addition, citizen developers, aka non-technical business users, could directly make changes to the process model and have that reflect as a change in the overall process application.

The AgilePoint-based process automation and application development architecture complied with all technical requirements and the life cycle of the business processes that CKW's technical team desired.

CKW was able to set up two centralized portals, one for internal users and the other for customers when they initiated service requested. The workflow engine, 15+ process patterns, 80+ e-form controls, and open interfaces provided CKW the flexibility and performance it needed to automate end-to-end processes on a single platform. The team was also able to take parts of the solution and reuse them across other apps/workflows it needed to automate.

For very complex, recurring solution building blocks, CKW quickly and securely developed extensions for AgilePoint using Visual Studio project templates.

The resulting applications were accessible to end-users via Microsoft SharePoint as a single point of entry through the AgilePoint portal and allowed for visibility to vary according to role requirements.

Results



CKW automated 80% of the network services business processes, taking the shape of form- and process-based apps.



ROI was maximized by having solution components reused across form- and process-based applications, ultimately reducing the development time.



Approx. 200 form-driven internal business processes were implemented with connection to different systems, which eliminated the cost of writing custom integration.



CKW moved its service requests to the new portal, effectively reducing manual interactions.

"If a new service request was placed, say a request for mobile emergency power supply or a request for smart meter acquisition, now a process would be triggered automatically with roles assigned and approval workflows baked into the request. CKW was now capable of building a few core process components in a low-code environment and could have them used across several applications".

80%

of service requests were automated via process- and form driven apps

Maximized ROI of enterprise low-code/no-code through reusable components

Minimized the in-person and manual interactions with external parties

200

form-driven business processes were implemented