Salient

Process
Your process. Our passion.

Salient Process Leverages Decision Management and Automated Events to Help One of the Largest Energy Companies in the U.S. to Automate their Power Restoration Status Check

VAST REDUCTION
Manual labor

AUTOMATED
Correlation of events

FLEXIBLE
Business users easily change rules as needed

Take the next step:

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The Client

One of the Largest Energy Companies in the U.S.

Business Challenge

For an energy company, handling power outages and restoring power in the least possible time is a core business objective. At this energy utility, the power restoration status check process was done manually by technicians. There was no automated way to identify and filter power outages where power has been restored automatically, which usually happens within a couple of minutes. Because of this, technicians had to manually check every outage. This caused unnecessary labor costs which end up causing the cost of energy to be more than necessary.

"It has ended up saving us a ton of labor in our power status area since much of the previous manual work is now automated via events correlation."

"Very smooth implementation, and it didn't take long at all to build and deploy."

- Manager IT

The Solution

Salient Process helped the client automate the power restoration status check process and exposed the business logic rules using IBM Operation Decision Manager ("ODM") business events.

A Disconnected Process

When there is a power outage in your neighborhood, there are all sort of things that happen in the background at your local utility. One of these things is the utility needs to determine where outages are, and whether the power for that outage has already been restored. In most cases, a power outage is restored within a couple of minutes.

Prior to Salient's arrival on the scene, when power outages were reported, someone had to evaluate the reported outage and confirm power is down. This was a manual process requiring a specialized technician to investigate the outage. In addition, when a power outage was caused by a ground fault, supervisors had to check them manually and then assign technicians to work on them. Due to a lack of automation, many times there was confusion and multiple field technicians would be assigned to the same outage when only one was necessary. All of this combined to create unnecessary labor expended.

Salient Results

At Salient, our purpose is to enable an organization for higher level thinking. Whenever it makes a process more effective, we always aim to automate and optimize so mundane manual tasks can be avoided and higher level thinking activities can be focused on. By automating the analysis of events to determine if a reported power outage is true, this massive energy company was able to remove the mundane and time-consuming task of having to confirm every power outage manually. This allowed them to shift resources to making sure there are even fewer power outages than were occurring before. And of course, it saves a great deal of labor since this power outage confirmation and identification is now automated.

Salient Process worked with the utility to build a solution based on correlating heterogenous events that occur during power outages. The correlation of these events allowed the utility to automatically determine whether an outage was real, and make sure the real outages had the right number of technicians assigned to work on fixing them.

Salient leveraged IBM ODM as the events and rules solution. It was an ideal fit for the high volume of heterogeneous business event types from multiple sources and complex patterns that occur in no particular time or order when there are outages. ODM was able to easily correlate the outage and restoration notifications, map the notifications that emerge from a circuit, and then apply business logic to send to other systems to take the next best action. Due to this, there has been a drastic decrease in unnecessary manual hours of technicians in verification of power restoration and fixing ground faults. This helps make sure technicians are being used for better things at the utility. Of course, an ancillary benefit is a quality and reliable system to ensure power restoration leads to happy customers and a good business reputation.

One of the other great features of IBM ODM is the exposure of business rules to the business team not only gives them visibility into what rules are being applied, but it allows the business users to change the rules as necessary. These business users can do this without any involvement from IT or the need for a new push to production. Due to the success and ROI of this initiative, the utility decided to use IBM ODM for other projects, which Salient also helped with.

The Salient team came up with the overarching solution, developed the project from inception to delivery, and trained both the business and technical teams in understanding the nuances of the IBM ODM solution. This group of technical and business people is now able to analyze their requirements to harvest the necessary business rules to automate their business. Salient also trained the utility's infrastructure team in how to properly install IBM ODM instances so they were enabled to do the work on their own.

Our goal with customers is always to at some point be told, "You know, you were great, but we just don't need you anymore. Our people can now take on the load." Salient has enabled this customer to carry on without us. Our job here is done.