

## Rev-Trac Implementation with Major American Utility & Energy Provider

**In 2012, one of North America's largest rate-controlled utilities contacted Rev-Trac Consulting to assist with implementation of Rev-Trac by Revelation Software Concepts, the market-leading, third-party, SAP change control technology. Supporting 10,000 employees and serving millions of customers of all sizes across its region, the utility found that its legacy manual spreadsheets, forms and email change control processes speed-limited the ability to respond quickly in its fluid, complex and highly regulated operational environment. Rev-Trac delivered the required flexibility, automation and controls that legacy methods and other evaluated solutions had proved unable to provide. Rev-Trac Consulting designed the implementation while in the field, based on the utility's real-world requirements for flexibility, audit-ready documentation and near-100% system uptime.**

### Requirements

Emerging new energy products such as Home Energy Management, "smart" consumption meters and selectable "green" sourcing plans mean utilities must be able to introduce new projects and capabilities into their existing processes, sometimes on very short notice, without destabilizing their IT systems or otherwise limiting their productive use. These and other realities of business have led utilities to place a high priority on change control process enforcement and compliance, not solely to meet legal requirements but to be able to maintain stable IT production systems as well.



For these reasons, the SAP IT environment



at a large North American utility company was extraordinarily fluid. Multiple SAP projects were being developed in parallel, with a very busy support change program that led to continual modifications being moved into production as new projects began the development and testing cycle. Due to the volume, frequency and complexity of parallel projects, ranging from SAP solution upgrades to new functionality, the projects needed to be kept outside the main support stream and so were developed and managed in separate development and testing streams. This led to additional work, related to change control of multiple projects while, at the same time, maintaining a busy support schedule in separate, parallel streams.

The high number of parallel streams led to frequent addition and removal of pre-production, performance testing and training instances. Over time, the number of separate instances multiplied, complexity increased, the volume of changes rose, and problems such as overtakes, overwrites and collisions of changes generated outside the main production stream began to threaten production system stability.

Ultimately the determination was made that the utility's change control tools - spreadsheets, manual forms and email - were no longer sufficient. Greater automation was required.

The IT team selected Rev-Trac as the new change control technology because of its demonstrated ability to accommodate extremely fluid situations while providing the level of enforcement needed to reduce risk and assure strict auditability. Rev-Trac also had the flexibility needed to respond effectively to future situations as they arose.

### Implementation Strategy

A hallmark of a well-managed utility is near 100% availability. Therefore, reduced uptime

to accommodate implementation and testing was not acceptable. Still, introducing even minor changes to a functioning IT system carries risk, so a stepped, increasingly complex implementation was the strategy adopted.

### Consulting Engagement

Rev-Trac Consulting was engaged to assist implementing Rev-Trac using a straightforward, gradual course:

1. Implement Rev-Trac on the Development Rev-Trac Master with a sandbox landscape for testing, make it fully operational, and train staff in new procedures and software capabilities.
2. Repeat implementation process for the Production Rev-Trac Master and all productive landscapes.

The initial go-live implementation on a Development Rev-Trac Master would allow tuning the approach to the utility's architecture, staffing and processes without impacting productive landscapes. Full implementation on the utility's sandbox landscapes would then lead into system-wide prior-tested productive implementation on all systems, including dual-path cloned instances and N+1 and N+2 project landscapes.

The goal was an error-free implementation in minimal time. The tasked work included concurrent training of administrators and of 80 to 90 change team members including managers who sign approvals, technical configuration specialists, developers, BASIS team, and the change management team itself. Several days of training were budgeted during each initial stage and the knowledge transfer was to be completed during the software implementation and configuration period. At the end of configuration, the utility's Rev-Trac users would take over and continue additional workflow creation and configuration changes.

## The Implementation

Rev-Trac Consulting was then tasked to thoroughly evaluate the utility's system configuration, including a complete review of processes, and to make recommendations on existing workflow and migration configuration needs.

Based on Rev-Trac Consulting's reports, the utility realized it would need to define and clarify its objectives in more detail. The utility's many parallel, concurrent projects created a fluidity that made broader initial implementation desirable, since all projects had to use the new processes, not just some projects. The implementation would be more complex than at first anticipated, and the needed additional work was tasked during several additional consulting days spread over the following six months as implementation expanded to more systems.

As part of Rev-Trac Consulting's participation, the team also identified and corrected gaps in the existing change documentation workflow, and recommended corrections that Rev-Trac could deliver as part of its automated change control process.

*"Because of our highly regulated industry, we absolutely did not want any surprises – we needed to plan our work carefully. The Rev-Trac implementation consultant was key to helping us understand what we needed to do to assure success in each phase of the implementation"*

– Attendee at Training Sessions

## The Bottom Line: System-Wide Automated Change Control

Rev-Trac Consulting completed the initial implementation phase of Rev-Trac in the minimum two week period normally allowed, despite expanding configuration needs due to the many parallel projects continually being introduced or removed.

Rev-Trac provided the flexibility to automate and enforce the change control process, delivering audit-ready documentation, and accommodated the frequent addition and removal of instances introduced due to project delivery requirements. After training, the internal team was able to configure Rev-Trac to handle ad-hoc changes quickly. Rev-Trac Consulting successfully performed all stated objectives and was able to expand the scope of what proved to be a complex implementation with minimal expansion of the consulting engagement.



*Revelation Software Concepts' Rev-Trac has been implemented by companies of every size and complexity worldwide in today's significant vertical markets, to control changes made to their SAP software-based information infrastructures.*

*These industry-focused Rev-Trac Consulting case studies are modeled on actual implementations, but have company-identifiable information removed. The goal is to provide insights into the Rev-Trac implementation process in specific vertical industries.*

## Avoiding Surprises

When budgeting for a new software implementation, the last thing you want is to be surprised as the project grows in ways you hadn't anticipated. The best way to avoid surprise expansions of project scope is to invest a bit of thought ahead of time.

- Create a detailed requirements document to guide the work.
- Define engagement work plan (e.g., review existing workflow and migration configuration, review/recommend documentation configuration, evaluate/recommend training periods and objectives, etc.)
- Define what the work plan must not do during the initial period (e.g., assess and recommend reconfigured processes, convert change orders to new format, etc.)
- Determine your implementation team, bearing in mind that -
  - The Rev-Trac administrator should not be a single person, but rather a group whose members have defined admin duties
  - All team members should be educated on the entire implementation process, in order to accommodate vacations, transfers and the like
  - The senior members of the team should be made accountable for delivery of the eventual go-live

Implementations in the utility industry that require a phased approach typically require 10-15 training days over 2-3 months to achieve the goal of full phased implementation within three months. With large or complex infrastructures, setting detailed requirements in advance can save your project many hours of billed work and help you bring it in on time and on or under budget.

**Rev-Trac**<sup>®</sup>  
Now you're really in control

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