



CASE STUDY:

Major utility achieves simpler, faster,
and more efficient production for
time-sensitive workloads



With Ricoh solutions, Middle Egypt Electricity Distribution Company cuts monthly production times by 73%, reduces costs and energy consumption, and lifts employee productivity.

COMPANY PROFILE

Headquartered in Minya, Egypt, Middle Egypt Electricity Distribution Company (MEEDCO) is responsible for the transmission and distribution of low cost, sustainable energy to millions of customers. With more than 1,000 employees, MEEDCO is one of nine companies operated by the state-owned Egyptian Electricity Holding Company, which manages power generation and supply throughout the country.

Every month, MEEDCO prints more than four million electricity bills, dispatched to domestic and commercial customers. Completing production accurately and on time is vital: bills delivered late or with incorrect charges increase the risk of missed payments, create administrative hassle, and negatively impact customer satisfaction.

For more than ten years, MEEDCO had relied on two sheetfed production printers to support the billing processes. The company streamed a text file containing customer usage data and charges to the devices, which had billing template overlays stored in their memory and would print the final bills on pre-printed papers.

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Rafat Hussein Ibrahim Ahmed, Head Director

Over time, though, this had become a costly and challenging way of working. Firstly, changing the templates meant contacting and paying extra fees to the device manufacturer. Furthermore, checking the lengthy text files for mistakes before printing was very difficult, leading to high error rates and waste, with additional spending on paper and consumables. When reprinting bills, the text file did not offer the option to specify a range of updated pages in the original document; instead, users spent time creating an entirely new text file containing only the changed data to be printed, adding to complexity and cost.

As the devices aged, performance and maintenance issues became more and more frequent. Spare parts were rarely available, and print quality was often affected. Achieving the target volumes within target timeframes was growing increasingly tricky, prompting MEEDCO to rethink the production process.

Rafat Hussein Ibrahim Ahmed, Head Director, explains: "Our objective was to improve the productivity and speed of our print environment, and to simplify management of billing templates. Monthly bill printing was starting to take more than two weeks to complete, and was soaking up too much time for our employees. We wanted to accelerate the process, cut operational costs, and reduce paper wastage."

SOLUTION

MEEDCO issued a tender for new print devices paired with software for creating and managing customised billing templates. After site visits, demonstrations, and assessments of solutions from several vendors, the company chose Ricoh business partner IOS, and deployed two RICOH Pro C9210™ digital colour sheetfed printers, with FusionPro Producer software for high performance personalised document creation.

Rafat Hussein Ibrahim Ahmed continues: "Seeing the Ricoh solution in action at another customer's site helped to persuade us to go with IOS. We also noted their excellent track record working with the other main electricity distribution companies in Egypt. When IOS presented a detailed study showing the cost-benefits that those electricity distributors had achieved with Ricoh solutions, we were convinced we had found the right option."

Together, the Ricoh solutions enable a smarter, more efficient production workflow. The FusionPro Producer software allows MEEDCO to create and edit its own billing templates: users simply prepare billing data, import it into a saved template, and then generate a print-ready file. Intelligent rules within the template ensure the integrity of the output file.



IOS and Ricoh provided excellent service during the changeover, ensuring we maintained business continuity and production without a hitch. When we encountered a complication with Indian-Arabic numerals in the software, IOS went the extra mile and brought in Ricoh experts to write a customised script for us. We know that IOS will deliver all the maintenance support we need in the future, too.

Rafat Hussein Ibrahim Ahmed, Head Director



The PDF is then sent to the Pro C9210 devices, which support high volume production of colour documents at exceptional page-per-minute rates.

However, even though the old print equipment was no longer fit for purpose, there would be a brief wait before the arrival of the new Ricoh devices. To support interim production, IOS arranged for temporary use of a Pro C9200 device, a trial version of the new VDP software, and an onsite engineer to train users.

On delivery of the Pro C9210 devices, IOS completed the implementation within 24 hours, configured FusionPro Producer, and helped MEEDCO to develop electricity bill templates for domestic and commercial customers. Moving forwards, IOS will continue to provide 24/7 onsite support to optimise device performance, and will monitor supplies of consumables to ensure sufficient levels are available for monthly print runs.

BENEFITS

Since partnering with IOS and Ricoh, MEEDCO has achieved impressive results. Most importantly, billing production now runs much more rapidly, as Rafat Hussein Ibrahim Ahmed confirms: "With our old print devices and billing templates, each monthly print run would take 15 days to finish. With the Pro C9210 devices and FusionPro Producer, we print four million electricity bills – one million A4 pages – within four days. This 73 percent time saving helps to ensure timely customer payments and contributes to better tracking and management of revenues."

The move to IOS and Ricoh has also enabled MEEDCO to reduce operational costs and improve workforce productivity. The shorter monthly production window means that employees enjoy more time for value-added, strategic tasks. Furthermore, the adoption of modern, energy-efficient Ricoh digital sheetfed devices reduces power consumption and

spending, allows MEEDCO to print onto more cost-effective plain paper rather than pre-printed stocks, and helps to improve environmental sustainability. In addition, being able to check billing details prior to production has significantly reduced error rates, helping to prevent waste and unlocking further time, paper, and consumables savings. If customer bills require changes, MEEDCO now uses the archive of PDF files for reference, and can reprint specific documents and page ranges.

Where the old production devices suffered from maintenance and reliability issues, the Pro C9210 solutions and the presence of an onsite IOS engineer help to ensure uninterrupted print uptime, delivering higher quality output on schedule every month.

Rafat Hussein Ibrahim Ahmed concludes: "Our work with IOS and Ricoh has enabled us to create a simpler, faster, and more efficient workflow for time-sensitive monthly billing production. We can print our target volumes within much reduced timeframes, with lower labour and print costs. Our experience with IOS and Ricoh has been excellent, from first consultation to deployment and continuing support, and we look forward to working together in future."

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services that enable individuals to work smarter from anywhere. With cultivated knowledge and organisational capabilities nurtured over its 85 year history, Ricoh is a leading provider of digital services, information management, and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation and optimise business performance.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group has major operations throughout the world and its products and services now reach customers in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2022, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 1,758 billion yen (approx. 14.5 billion USD).

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