WATER ONLINE

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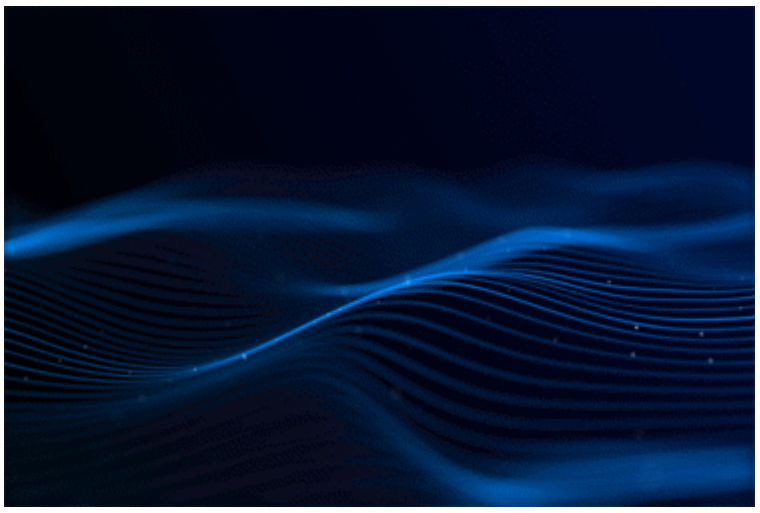
Operational Efficiencies Created With Smart Water Technologies

Source: Aquana



At water utilities across the country, operationally minded teams focus on how to best deliver water to customers in a cost-effective manner. Components contributing to operational efficiency inside a water utility include resource utilization, supply chain management, billing processes, customer service, and employee safety. All of these components work together in balance to support seamless operations.

Operationally Demanding and Resource Intensive

Providing water utility services isn't a simple process. It has long been a time- and labor-intensive endeavor. In the not too distant past, and some places still today, meter readers walk neighborhoods documenting water usage by address.
Translating those meter readers records into billings and payments required significant time and resources. These operational tactics made the best of low technology situations with the manpower available; however, today's technology is moving at a rapid pace. Technology tools and software from just a decade ago have been thoroughly updated, streamlined and optimized.

Today, a prime example of the rapid improvement of water utilities technologies appears in remote control and management capabilities. Cloud-based applications and wireless communication technology have opened a new world of efficiency to water utility operators. Actions that once required several people, days to complete and trips to the field, are all now managed from the comfort and convenience of an office. With wireless communication inside hardware tools such as smart water meters and remote shutoff valves, utility team members can engage in tasks such as turning on and off water at a specific address using a simple interface on their computers. Easy map displays, simple on and off settings and rapid response have made remote shutoff exceedingly straightforward.

Further reducing the operational demand of delivering water, remote water control management removes the heavy resource burden of rolling trucks and sending employees out into the field to turn the water off, and back on again. Given the post pandemic worker shortage, minimizing the need for workers in the field is an added advantage for operations managers.

Employee Safety Included in Operational Efficiency

In addition to the time and cost efficiency associated with tools such as remote water shutoff, these tools address the employee safety component of operational efficient water utility management. Today it's not just about doing more with fewer people, it's also about keeping your valuable employees safe in a complicated and increasingly dangerous world. Anger, entitlement and self-expression have fueled some water utility customers to act out against those simply doing their jobs to enforce non-payment. Aggressive dogs, threatening homeowners, physically obstructed water meters are only a few of the ways water utility employee safety is threatened. By removing the employee from the field, those risks are completely eliminated.

Simplify Control and Improve Safety with a Modest Investment

Many utilities haven't yet taken advantage of new technology applications based on the incorrect perception that implementing remote water shut off is too costly. One point that many utilities overlook is that not all service connection sites share an equal portion of the ROI to incorporate remote shut off valves. Generally, utilities have data on the repeat offenders for non-payment that are the best candidates to install valves for near term ROI. When even just 10% of service connections add remote shut off valves, the ROI approaches six months.

Investment in cloud-based management software and easy to maintain remote shut off valves such as the Aquana AVS or Aquana SV2 offer significant value in increased operational efficiency and improved employee safety, all while working toward a solid return on investment.