

Client Story

Water Reclamation District Reinvents Itself to Become Industry Role Model



Client Profile: Created in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) serves approximately 10.35 million people in the Chicago area with residential and commercial wastewater treatment and stormwater management. In addition to its utility-related responsibilities, the organization is the second-largest real estate management firm in Cook County, Illinois (the second-most populous county in the United States).

Industry: Public Sector/Utilities

Geography: Headquartered in Chicago, serving the city and 128 suburban communities throughout Cook County

Revenue: \$1.1 Billion

Employees: approximately 2,000 employees

Product supported: SAP Business Suite 7/
SAP ECC 6.0, NWDI, Business Objects



"Without the right people, you have nothing. In the end, it's all about the people you have on your team, and we have a great team."

John Sudduth

Director of Information Technology,
MWRD

"Our #1 goal was to completely transform the IT landscape of the institution—I'm proud that we've been able to achieve this."

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Director of Information Technology, MWRD

Tasked with revitalizing an aging and deeply entrenched environment, one of Sudduth's first steps was to take an inventory of MWRD's entire IT infrastructure. In parallel, he executed a skills assessment of his own team and began establishing relationships with key stakeholders across the organization. "We conducted a satisfaction survey to determine the perceptions of internal users: IT support scored around 60%," he recounted. "I was confident we could do better!"

Getting to the Root of the Problem

Research into MWRD's SAP implementation led to another attention-grabbing discovery: "We found we were not using all of the functionality of our SAP ERP system and that SAP support consumed more than a quarter of our multimillion-dollar software maintenance budget. Feedback from my team on vendor support responsiveness was not positive," recalled Sudduth.

Something Had to Change

Sudduth initially investigated realigning SAP support to the realities of MWRD's environment. He commented, "It quickly became apparent that we couldn't get what we needed from SAP support."

To address the situation, Sudduth architected a strategy to completely transform his team and the impact IT had on MWRD. By pivoting his [support for SAP Business Suite](#) (to Rimini Street), he immediately liberated 50% of the funds previously consumed by the huge annual commitment.

Sudduth adopted a formalized change management approach to lay the foundation for his plan. "We worked with the executive team and got them engaged. This included going to each of my peer department heads and asking them to share their IT-related expectations and document all of the projects that they wanted to see completed, some of which extended back to the initial SAP implementation that was completed more than 17 years ago."

Benefits

- **Halved ERP maintenance fees:** Reallocating IT budget made significant improvements across the company possible.
- **Satisfaction scores for IT performance soared by 30 percentage points:** Shifting to a service-centric culture has empowered the IT team and given it the tools to succeed.
- **Revitalized people, process, and technology:** Implementation of the technology-refresh program, resolution of multiyear project backlog, and improved support quality have had a substantial impact

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Director of Information Technology,
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For More Information

To learn more about MWRD or to read other client success stories, visit www.riministreet.com/clients.

An Investment in People, Process and Technology

Sudduth invested a portion of the reallocated budget in a cloud-based information technology service management (ITSM) application—a system that formalized the design, delivery, and monitoring of MWRD’s complete portfolio of IT services. “We created SLAs with our stakeholders to quantifiably elevate the quality of IT support. People can now see exactly how their actions impact our performance and how we’re being perceived as a team.”

“I’m delighted to state that **we’ve jumped our satisfaction scores by well over 30 percentage points,**” declared Sudduth.

He also has mandated that everyone on his team undertake information technology infrastructure library (ITIL) foundation training to further cement the discipline of delivering IT services aligned with ITSM practices and the business needs of MWRD. Several team members have even gone on to attain more advanced levels of ITIL certification.

“We’ve instilled a pervasive, service-centric culture across the entire organization and equipped everyone with the tools they need to succeed. It’s just so rewarding to witness the sense of empowerment and collaboration that now characterize how we operate.”

A “Thought-Partner” to Trust: Rimini Street

“One of the key components to realizing the vision was identifying a services provider that had a great track record of providing quality [support for SAP Business Suite](#) and was willing to help take on the challenge of revitalizing MWRD’s environment,” revealed Sudduth. “Rimini Street was that partner.”

Sudduth reflected, “Because we have direct responsibility for protecting the health of our customers, it’s critically important to do what we know is right. With SAP announcing end-of-support for our version of the application, we wanted to partner with a company that was willing to take the time to understand our specific issues and collaboratively figure out the optimal path forward. Red flags go up when vendors tell me that I need their product or service before they even know what my problems are.”

“I view Rimini Street as a great partner—a thought-partner—that knows how to listen before suggesting possible solutions. Our Rimini Street account team has been phenomenal. The strides we’ve made together have helped position MWRD as a role model for the utilities industry.”

He concluded, “When I look at the ‘people, process, technology’ methodology, there’s a reason the terms are put in the order they are—without the right people, you have nothing. In the end, it’s all about the people you have on your team, and we have a great team.”

Worldwide Headquarters

3993 Howard Hughes Parkway, Suite 500, Las Vegas, NV 89169, USA Phone: 702.839.9671 Toll-Free 888.870.9692
riministreet.com | [linkedin.com/company/rimini-street](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rimini-street) | twitter.com/riministreet

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