



OUR CASE STUDY

Water Audit Results in Recovery of over \$82,000

OVERVIEW

Staples Canada, one of our multi-site retail clients, recently added their water utility bills under our utility data management service. Previously, they had both their gas and electricity bills under the program, but decided that the water bills should also be included. for ease of accounting..

ISSUE

Once we audited their water bills, it was discovered that one particular location had an excessively high monthly cost. We investigated further and discovered that the usage at this location was 40x more than a similar store within the same region. This had gone undiscovered by our client, despite their accounting systems and procedures. That's because the store costs had been within the same budget variance since it opened. When it was compared against itself, the location never stood out.

ACTION TAKEN

Our rigorous review of data based on the cost and usage per square foot, and analytical ranking of the locations, allowed us to determine which locations should be targeted for investigation. This particular location was flagged for investigation on both issues. We compared the location to others within the same region – this comparison resulted in an alarming difference and dictated further investigation.

- 1) We contacted the utility provider and verified that the meter number for our client was correct.
- 2) We had our client's plumber go onsite to confirm if the feeds from the meter were only servicing our client's location.

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

It was determined by the plumber that the meter had also been feeding other branches (tenants) within the strip plaza. In further discussions with both the utility and the landlord, it was discovered that when the plaza was built, Staples Canada was the anchor tenant at the time and therefore the first meter (owner's bulk meter) was installed and transferred to our client when they moved in. As the plaza developed, two restaurants opened next to the Staples Canada, but separate water meters were never installed. These two tenants were drawing off of the bulk meter all this time. With dishwashers and beverage sales, they would be using a lot more water than the Staples Canada store.

RESOLUTION

Upon our request, the bulk meter was taken over by the landlord. They installed separate check meters so that each Tenant could be charged for their actual usage. Our client was then reimbursed \$82,000 for the amount they had overpaid going back 4 years.

CONCLUSION

Most companies feel that as water is generally a small cost to them, it is not worth monitoring. However, since there are many "mechanical" issues that can occur with water lines and fixtures, we believe it is the one utility where over usage can be discovered rather quickly and repairs made to avoid future costs.

THIS COULD BE YOUR CASE STUDY. CONTACT US!

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