

Case Study – PART A

Mercury Energy is an electricity supplier of the city of Lamar. It is the only electricity company in the region. In order to finance its expansion project and infrastructure construction in the adjacent city, the administration is holding a meeting to decide the budget of next year.

You are now attending a top management meeting on behalf of your department. Please share with other department leaders the information you have. Each department will have its own concern, and you should coordinate with other managers to reach a consensus on the budget. You have to make an action plan for the current situation facing the company. (You don't necessarily have to decide the exact number on the budget. Only action plan is needed.)

Average Monthly Expenses for this year:

Call-service centers	300,000
Bill-collecting representatives	500,000
Advertisement	32,000
Charity & Social Responsibility	50,000
Research & Development	37,000
Construction	80,000
Total	999,000

The overall sales are relatively stable during the recent months, and will not see any vibration in next year. There are mainly four client sectors, urban residential, rural residential, manufacturing and offices.

The Customer Service Department is mainly consisted of call-service centers and bill-collecting representatives, who are responsible for collecting overdue electricity bills. It hires more than 1000 reps in the city, and increases the number of people recently to boost its bill collection.

The Public Relation Department is responsible for the advertisement and press relationships. They also held events to create a friendly image of the company.

After 5 minutes' preparation, you will have 15 minutes for discussion. Then you have to deliver a 5 minutes' presentation on the action plan you suggested.

Instructions:

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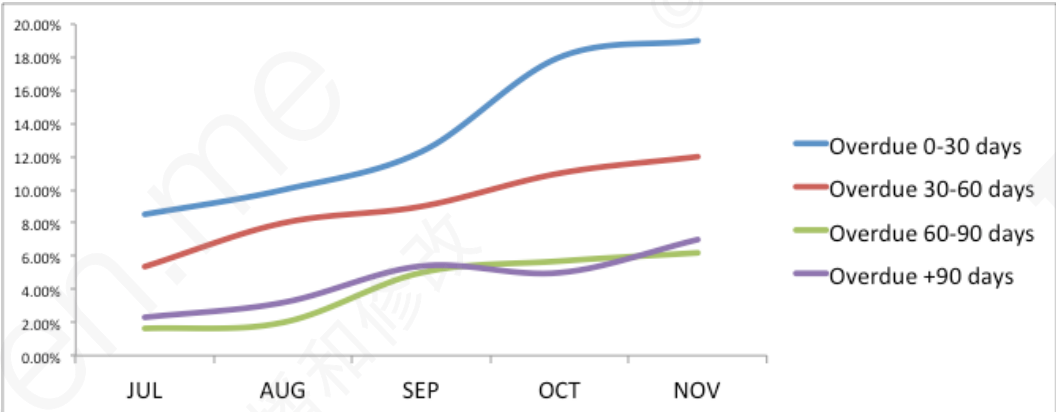


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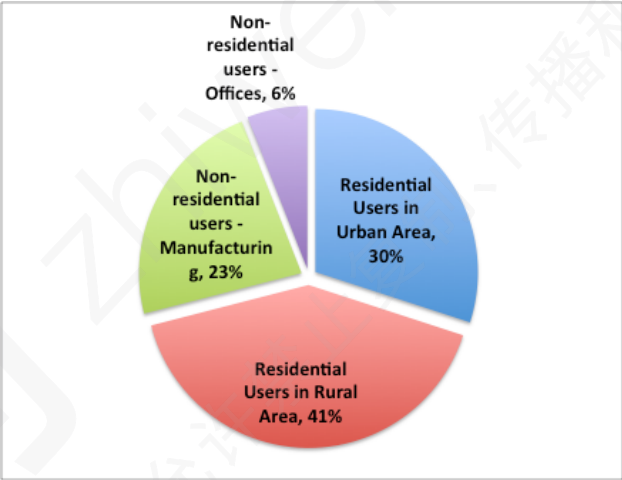
You are the finance team of the company. In the latest monthly financial report, you find the following trend of the overdue electricity bills.



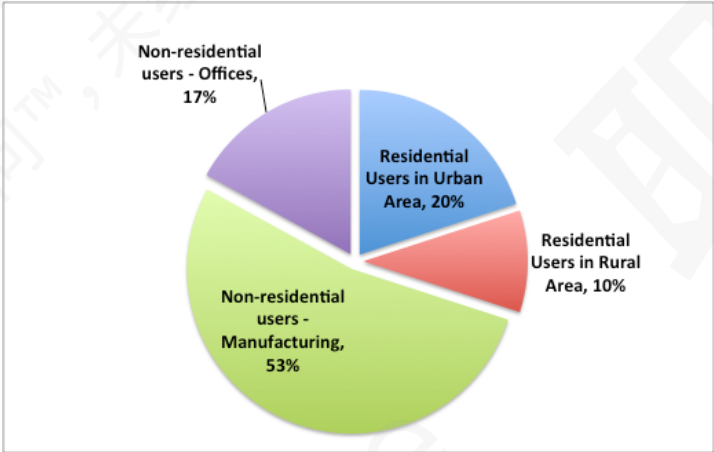
Overdue rate for different clients in the past 5 months (% on each sector' total receivables):

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Residential Users in Urban Area	39%	37%	12%	14%	11%
Residential Users in Rural Area	42%	38%	37%	39%	40%
Non-residential users - Manufacturing	19%	15%	31%	30%	30%
Non-residential users - Offices	2%	3%	8%	8%	8%

Average Overdue Proportion by sector (% on total overdue bills):



Average Sales Proportion by sector (relatively stable for the past 12 months):



Case Study – PART B

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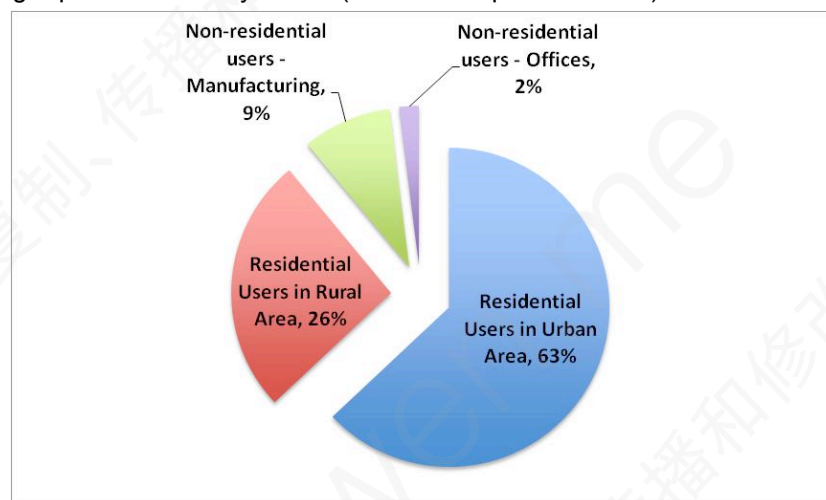
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You are the leader of the Customer Service in Mercury Energy. You have the following information for the meeting.

Mercury Energy has won the CRM Contact Centre Awards, which recognize excellence in standards of customer service delivered by contact centers throughout the country. Entrants are anonymously audited via phone and email over an extended period of time using criteria such as answer time, ease of access, product knowledge and operator attitude and efficiency. This award is one of the most well known awards in the country. It is financed by the increasing amount of call center expenses.

Bill-collecting representatives by sector (% of total representatives):



Mercury Energy adopts varieties of methods to collect overdue bills.

Cutting electricity: According to the regulation, Mercury Energy is allowed to cut the electricity of the client that failed to pay the bill in time. The notice period is 30 days. After the notice period, the reps of the company will visit the supplier and act accordingly.

Lawsuits: Mercury Energy will hire agent to launch lawsuit against any clients that failed to pay the bill for more than 180 days. The court will authorize the company to take enforcement measures.

Discounts: For large clients such as government authorities, to whom Mercury cannot take enforcement action, usually the company gives these clients a discount to pay the bill that overdue more than 90 days.

Percent of Successful Collection After Intervention:

	Cutting Electricity	Lawsuit	Discounts
Residential Users in Urban Area	30%	88%	3%
Residential Users in Rural Area	46%	79%	2%
Non-residential users - Manufacturing	91%	30%	41%
Non-residential users - Offices	93%	41%	40%

Case Study – PART C

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You are the Public Relationship department manager. You are going to react to the following events, and you have to share the information with your colleague when discussing about the ongoing expansion plan.

From last year, Mercury Energy and the Starship Foundation launched the Star Supporters Club - an initiative where customers are able to make a monthly donation via their Mercury bill to raise money for vital pieces of equipment for Starship Children's Health. Beyond the Star Supporters Club, Mercury Energy hosts a "Stars for Starship" competition each year in which school children are asked to decorate paper stars to help brighten up Starship.

By such methods, Mercury Energy is hoping to build a responsible and friendly image to the customers. This event is receiving positive feedback from the public and users, and is going to benefit the expansion plan when entering a new market.

The following is a news report on a nationwide newspaper last week:

Power-cut Tragedy

The Muliaga family owed less than \$200 on their power bill. They had made several attempts to pay some of it but not enough for Mercury Energy. The company switched off their power supply and three hours later Folole Muliaga, a woman who relied on an oxygen machine to help her breathe, was dead.

And Mercury Energy is being blamed for her death.

The family is grappling to understand why a big power company would switch off power to a woman needing oxygen.

The problem is that since Folole Muliaga got sick, the family has fallen behind on its bills.

"When she stopped working because she was sick, that's why my family struggle," says Lopaavea.

They had made two payments to Mercury Energy last month, but that wasn't enough.

On Tuesday, a Mercury Energy contractor switched the family's power off despite being begged not to by Folole Muliaga who was sitting next to her oxygen machine. It's alarm had been set off by the sudden loss of power.

"My mum told him to give us a chance," says letitaia Muliaga, Folole's son. "He said he is here doing his job and he's here to cut the power off."

Folole Muliaga started feeling unwell but told her son not to call for help. But three hours later when she collapsed, he called an ambulance. She died in front of her sons.

"They were trying the first aid thing but its too late," says letitaia.

On Tuesday night they were forced to sit in the dark and on Wednesday morning a shocked extended family rallied around.

"We all came here today to pay the power because we love the husband and the kids staying in a dark place last night," says Sarai Tokuma, a relative.

However, following publicity about the case, Mercury Energy had already switched the family's power back on.

The family is calling for an independent inquiry into the actions of Mercury Energy. But they say they know it won't bring their mother back.



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