

Variance Monitor™ ensures accurate data. **NRG** and **GenOn** discover real power.

*"We needed to find ways to better utilize our time and automation was the key"*





## About NRG Energy

NRG Energy is the largest competitive energy provider in the United States with a diverse portfolio of nearly 140 different power generation facilities which can generate approx. 52 000 megawatts of electricity to support millions of homes nationwide. The company's retail electricity providers, NRG Residential Services, Reliant, Green Mountain Energy, Cirro and Energy Plus, together serve about 3 million residential, business, commercial and industrial customers. NRG is a Fortune 250 company with about 9 000 employees. The company is committed to helping create a sustainable energy future by leveraging an increasingly diverse suite of energy sources, empowering consumers with real choices and value, and developing and implementing cutting-edge efficiency and demand-response initiatives.

GenOn Energy, Inc., was one of the largest independent power producers in the US with the capacity to generate more than 14 000 megawatts of power. The company was acquired by NRG Energy in December 2012.

Mergers are inevitably a source of tension and fear for data and system managers. Vast amounts of information from different systems must be relocated quickly and accurately, error always threatens, and time, cost and expertise are invariably in short supply. The union of NRG Energy and GenOn Energy showed that the negative effects associated with mergers can be prevented. This successful integration can be attributed in part to the use of Data Sync Manager and Variance Monitor, both products from EPI-USE Labs.

## The Merger

When NRG acquired GenOn in 2012 the two companies were faced with the integration of two very different systems and processes. GenOn, the smaller company with about 3 000 people, was on a full SAP® platform using CATS, while NRG's 6 000 employees were using ADP for payroll and a system called eTime for time entry. An interface to load eTime data to Infotype 2010 (which is the additional payment information) had already been built, and the plan was to convert the NRG population to CATS in three rollouts.

## The Challenge

The first complication in the move to CATS was that time processing was determined by personnel area and required extensive payroll schema modifications. Both the time processing and the schema changes would need to be tested, which would involve a huge effort and the analysis of thousands of payroll results to be sure that the changes had no negative effects.

Data Sync Manager™ (DSM) was used to copy the employee population on production to the test system, then the old eTime data was deleted and the corresponding CATS data added back. Once this was complete, Variance Monitor (VM) was used for the payroll comparisons. At this point it was realized that testing could be done based on a simulation run which would speed up the testing phase significantly and, crucially, deliver 100% accuracy.

*"Variance Monitor is kind of addictive. Once you start using it, it's hard to say, 'Well I don't need it any more'."*

John Cloud, IT Business Analyst | NRG Energy

## Another string to VM's bow - payroll simulation

*"The EPI-USE Labs support staff said I would be able to use Variance Monitor to run a simulation and compare results against the original without ever creating a new payroll. I thought, 'Wow! I didn't know that... let's try it.' It was great... and it allows you to process large volumes."*

John Cloud, IT Business Analyst, NRG Energy

## Variance Monitor™ plots the way forward

Variance Monitor incorporates Statistical Analysis reports. These were integral to managing the variation testing process because they create a graphic interface that is ideal for showing the total population of the employees under scrutiny, as well as testing status, and how it was progressing. The reports helped track progress, and management could instantly see that the data was (e.g.) 80% correct with a 20% variance that would need analysis.

*"We absolutely counted on those reports to help us identify the variances, help the testing teams focus, and also show the management that we were working through the problems."*

Variance Monitor made it easy to verify potentially hazardous changes to rules, schemas and configuration. John elaborates:

*"It was necessary to change the configuration of the savings plan for one of the union groups. I was able to make the appropriate change and run the Variance Monitor while I went to lunch. When I returned, I had a detailed report of exactly which employees had changed and in what way but, more importantly, I had a regression test assuring me that the 8 000 employees who weren't supposed to be impacted, remained unchanged."*

The project took three months and was delivered on time, thanks to Variance Monitor. Initially three parallel tests were planned, but because of VM's ability to show the completeness and testing through the reports, only two parallel runs were needed.

*"I use it all the time now as a regular testing method for production support. It's easy. After we had used it for the time project, we saw other things that it could do. It could compare an external file to internal SAP wageypes, so it could do all the data loads and confirm that all the data actually got loaded into the SAP system. There's probably much more that I don't know it can do, but I'm learning."*

## About EPI-USE Labs

EPI-USE Labs provide superior solutions to enhance data management and optimize SAP environments. If you would like more information on how our products make your business more efficient and profitable, please contact us at [info@labs.epiuse.com](mailto:info@labs.epiuse.com) | [www.epiuselabs.com](http://www.epiuselabs.com)

## The benefits

Variance Monitor enables users to:

1. See fluctuations and discrepancies in detail, which means that problems can be resolved before they happen.
2. Create multiple rules to easily determine the course of problems on a large scale rather than person by person.
3. Easily repeat period-to-period runs. No need to reinvent the wheel each payroll.
4. Run in a simulation mode for config changes. Issues are identified and corrected before payroll is opened.
5. Save time and effort.

## About Data Sync Manager and Variance Monitor

Data Sync Manager is a suite of solutions that support and align SAP® ERP, SRM, SCM, BW and GTS and is compatible with HANA.

It consists of four products:

- Client Sync™ for high performance client copying
- Object Sync™ for reliable test data when you need it
- Data Secure™ to protect your sensitive data
- System Builder™ to build a new system shell quickly.

Variance Monitor™ is used to analyze variations in SAP HCM data. It detects all discrepancies by allowing you to set tolerance levels and automate comparisons; inconsistencies in SAP HCM data are tracked down and risk is minimized. The process is easily repeatable and because the effort and risk of manual comparisons are eliminated, VM can save up to 70% in time. It is ideal for identifying data discrepancies and for validating SAP data against external or legacy systems.