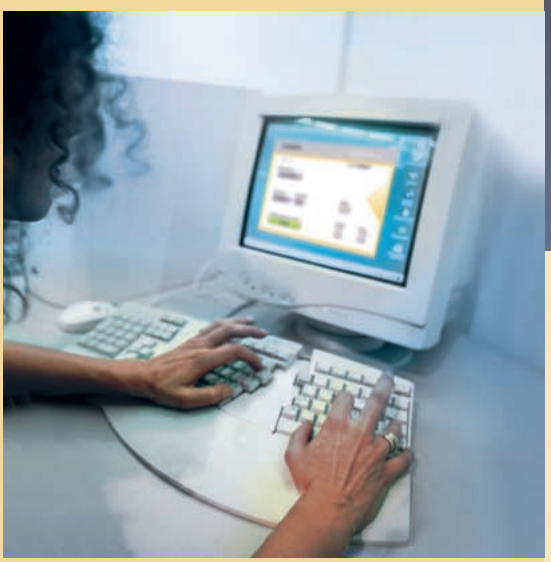
READING – CHEKKING – SAVING:

CHEKKER meter for optimised billing processes

In issue 3-2003 of Profiles, we introduced the new Z6 index for diaphragm meters. In the meantime, we have had a number of inquiries into what might lie behind the 'billing meter with a check number', which we announced at the end of the article on the new index. To put it simply, the CHEKKER meter and the CHEKKER system are intended to help you optimise your billing processes.

Since the gas meter basically registers an energy supplier's income, it of course fulfills an extremely important function. Although this is the life-blood, the daily bread, of a company working in the field of metering technology, if we look objectively at this function just for a second, we will realise that gas meters are really only a necessary evil in the process chain leading towards invoicing the customers. This process and the attendant costs, classified as 'metering costs', are beeing scrutinized by the regulating authorities in several markets and are, therefore, now under pressure.

So, how on earth can the gas meter help us to optimise this process? In order to answer this question, we must first of all explain briefly how



CHEKKER works. The CHEKKER is a patented meter which generates a two-digit check number in its index. The number is generated mechanically and the system requires no maintenance. This check number is encoded. When the meter is read out, the check number is also registered and, with the help of a software module, the number enables the user to check whether the meter reading is

Fig. 1: The CHEKKER index including the additional two-digit check number

right or wrong. To do this, the check number is automatically decoded before the data is processed by the billing system.

The CHEKKER can be used in all traditional methods of manual meter reading, e.g. with postcards, when the reading is sent via the internet, via the telephone server, via a call center, via handheld computers, or in a good-old hand-written list. The use of the CHEKKER is particularly effective when reading out the data with a handheld computer or via the internet, where the checking process is carried out as soon as the data is entered. If you use the CHEKKER, you are well on your way to achieving 100% in terms of data quality and data security, which you can then transfer directly to the invoice.

Fig. 2: With Chekker you are well on the way to 100% correct data

Customers that have already used the CHEKKER system have found the following practical advantages:

- Metering points that are located far apart from each other can be read out cheaply and correctly.
- The reading can be checked without entering the appartment. This makes it more customer-friendly as there is no longer any need to infringe upon the private sphere of the customers.
- The protection against unintentional errors in the invoicing can be used as an additional form of advertising and can help to increase customer loyalty.
- The number of complaints and costly phone calls to the call center concerning errors in the invoices can be reduced.
- The costs of checking the data are halved as, previously, data had to be entered twice in order to check the correctness.
- Annual invoices can be prepared earlier.
- You may only pay your meter readers for correct reads.
- You will easily detect meter readers doing "remote reading" from home.

This list of advantages is by no means complete or applicable to every case and every environment. Nevertheless, it gives you an idea of how the CHEKKER system can contribute to process optimisation. If you should think of any further advantages, please use the attached postcard and let us know. We will gladly consider any comments. If you think CHEKKER might be of any interest to other people in your company, please pass on the information in this issue of Profiles.

CHEKKER is available as an option with all diaphragm meters which include the new Z6 index. Based on your decision, you may be able to see the advantages of CHEKKER from the beginning of next year, when the new Z6 index goes into large scale production.

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