Practices for Lesson 15: Managing Budgets

Overview

Practices for Lesson 15: Overview

Lesson Overview

The term "budget" refers to a program that allows customers to pay a fixed amount rather than be subject to oscillating charges associated with seasonal temperature variations. Some companies also refer to this as "levelized payment plans."

This lesson describes the management of budgets for customers.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Put a customer on a budget and review the financial effect.
- Describe how the system calculates a suggested budget.
- Explain how the system identifies anomalous budgets.
- Describe how the system "trues up" a budget.
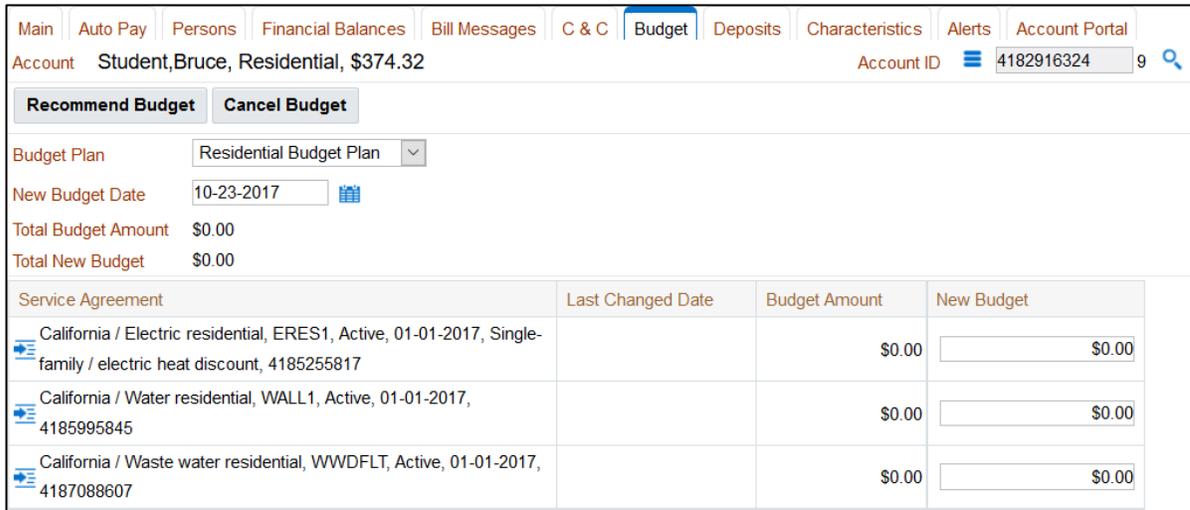- Identify what happens when a budget is canceled.

Practice 15-1: Put an Account on a Budget

Overview

In this practice you will put an account on a budget. In the day-to-day operations of a company, this may be done when starting service or at any time during the life of a service agreement.

Task

1. Search for your customer in **Control Central**.
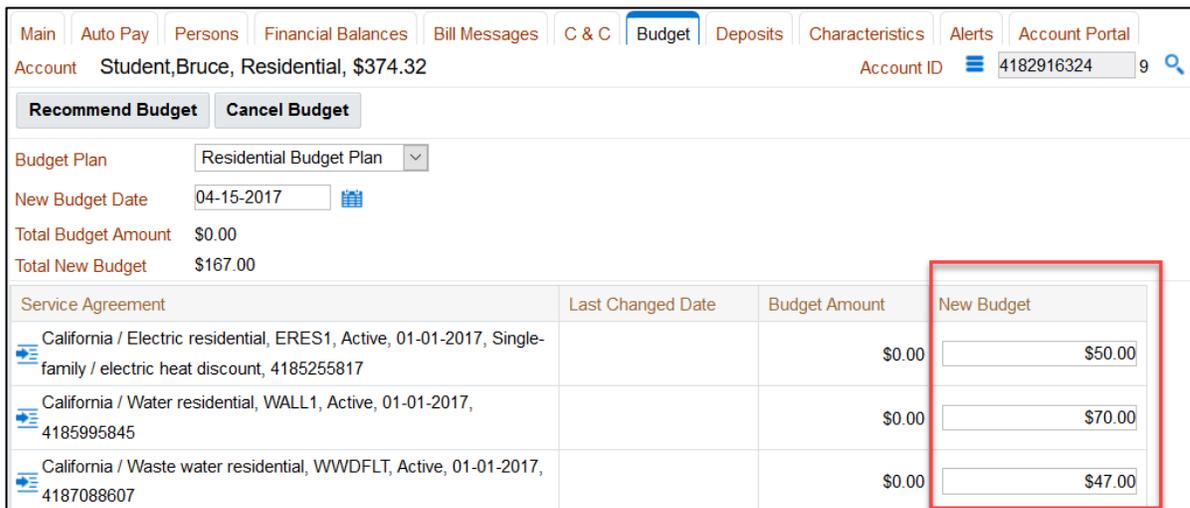2. Navigate to your **Account's Budget page**.

Main	Auto Pay	Persons	Financial Balances	Bill Messages	C & C	Budget	Deposits	Characteristics	Alerts	Account Portal

Account Student,Bruce, Residential, $374.32   Account ID ≡ 4182916324   9 🔍

Recommend Budget   **Cancel Budget**

Budget Plan   Residential Budget Plan ▾
New Budget Date   10-23-2017 📅
Total Budget Amount $0.00
Total New Budget $0.00

Service Agreement	Last Changed Date	Budget Amount	New Budget
California / Electric residential, ERES1, Active, 01-01-2017, Single-family / electric heat discount, 4185255817		$0.00	$0.00
California / Water residential, WALL1, Active, 01-01-2017, 4185995845		$0.00	$0.00
California / Waste water residential, WWDFLT, Active, 01-01-2017, 4187088607		$0.00	$0.00

- Notice that there's a **Recommend Budget** button on this page. When clicked, it populates the **New Budget** column with a recommended amount for each SA.

3. Select the *residential budget plan*.
4. Enter a date of *04-15-2017* in the **New Budget Date**.
5. Click the **Recommend Budget** button.

Main	Auto Pay	Persons	Financial Balances	Bill Messages	C & C	Budget	Deposits	Characteristics	Alerts	Account Portal

Account Student,Bruce, Residential, $374.32   Account ID ≡ 4182916324   9 🔍

Recommend Budget   **Cancel Budget**

Budget Plan   Residential Budget Plan ▾
New Budget Date   04-15-2017 📅
Total Budget Amount $0.00
Total New Budget $167.00

Service Agreement	Last Changed Date	Budget Amount	New Budget
California / Electric residential, ERES1, Active, 01-01-2017, Single-family / electric heat discount, 4185255817		$0.00	$50.00
California / Water residential, WALL1, Active, 01-01-2017, 4185995845		$0.00	$70.00
California / Waste water residential, WWDFLT, Active, 01-01-2017, 4187088607		$0.00	$47.00

- Notice that the system populates the **New Budget** column for you to review.

6. Click **Save**.

7. Check out the change to the SA.

Even though you used the account transaction, you have actually not changed anything related to the account. Rather, you have added a Recurring Charge entry for the service agreement.

▪ Click the **Go To button** next to the **electric service agreement**. Then navigate to the **Chars, Qty & Rec. Charges** page.

Note: On the Account - Budget page, the system requires that all service agreements shown on the page be put on budget if one is put on budget. If the customer requests that only certain service agreements are on budget, the user can navigate directly to the service agreement's Budget Amount and change its amount there.

Practice 15-2: Bill an Account on a Budget

Overview

In this practice you will bill your account again and review the effect that the budget has on the bill.

Tasks

1. If it isn't already, please bring your main account into **Control Central**.
2. Add Meter Reads for your electric and water meters.
   - Create **meter reads** for *05-01-2017* of *Regular* **type** and including the following register reads:
     - **Electric**: 4400

Main	Characteristics	Meter Read Portal

Meter Read   Meter XX-E1, Read 05-01-2017 12:00AM, 1 register read   Meter Read ID ≡ 581961146947 🔍

Meter Configuration ID ≡ 5810202382 🔍   Electric - simple kWh, XX-E1, Eff 01-01-2000 12:00AM , Default Electric Configuration, 1 register

Premise ≡   1066 Your Street, San Francisco, CA, 94102

Read Date/Time   05-01-2017 / 12:00AM   Use on Bill ☑

Meter Read Source [⌄]   Meter Reader

Reread Meter

Seq	Register Information	Read Type	Message	Register Reading	Previous Readi
1	KWH, format 5.0, 1.000000, Additive	Regular ⌄	Usage: 1,286, Valid Usage: 498 - 995, Valid Readings: 3612 - 4109	4400.000000	System Estima

   - **Water**: 10500

Main	Characteristics	Meter Read Portal

Meter Read   Meter XX-W1, Read 05-01-2017 12:00AM, 1 register read   Meter Read ID ≡ 818927804931 🔍

Meter Configuration ID ≡ 8185855684 🔍   Water simple CF / CCF, XX-W1, Eff 01-01-2000 12:00AM , Default Water Configuration, 1 register

Premise ≡   1066 Your Street, San Francisco, CA, 94102

Read Date/Time   05-01-2017 / 12:00AM   Use on Bill ☑

Meter Read Source [⌄]   Meter Reader

Reread Meter

Seq	Register Information	Read Type	Message	Register Reading	Previous Re
1	CF, format 5.0, 1.000000, Additive	Regular ⌄	Usage: 1,915, Valid Usage: 2,003 - 4,006, Valid Readings: 10588 - 12591	10500.000000	System Est

3. Add a **Bill**
   - From the **Account Context Menu**, select **Go To Bill > Add**
   - When the **Bill** window appears, click **Generate**.
   - Set the **Cutoff Date** to *05-01-2017* and click **Calculate**.
     (Don't allow estimates.)

Cutoff Date	05-01-2017 📅	**Calculate**
Accounting Date	10-23-2017 📅	**Cancel**
Allow Estimates	☐	
Billing Option	Use Cut off Date ⌄	

Your result should resemble the screen below. As you can see, the **Current Amount** for the **Bill Segment** matches the **Budget Amount**.

4. Navigate to the **electric bill segment** by clicking the **Bill Segment URL**.

   ▪ Review the **Current Amount** (the budget amount) and the **Payoff Amount** (the actual amount).

5. Navigate back to the **bill**, and **Freeze** and **Complete** the bill for *05-01-2017*.
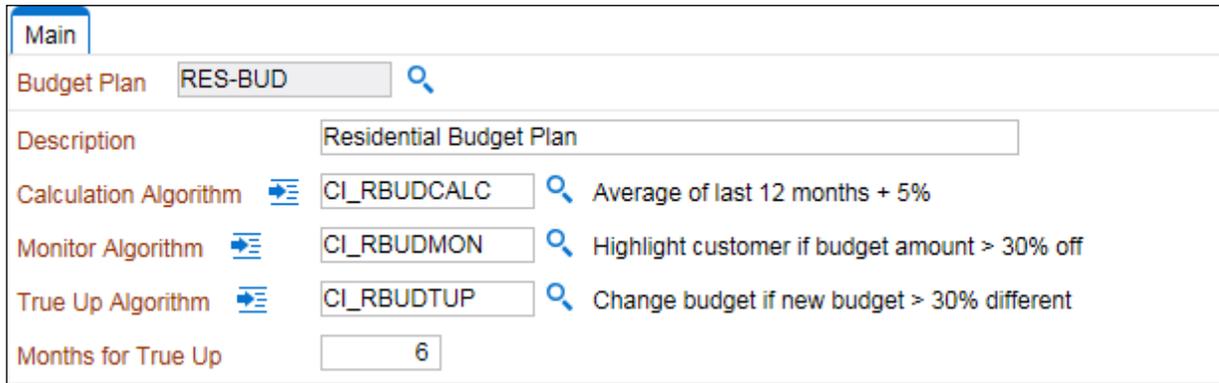
Practice 15-3: Review a Budget Plan

Overview

In this practice, you will review the setup of the Budget Plan linked to your account.

Tasks

1. Find the Budget Plan.
    - Navigate to **Admin > Credit & Collection > Budget Plan > Search**.
    - Find the **budget plan** for *RES-BUD*.

2. Here you can review the algorithms that are indicated on the budget plan.

Review Questions

1. If a new customer asks for a budget when moving into an existing premise, the system will not be able to calculate a recommended budget amount due to insufficient history. True/False

    False. The base recommendation algorithm uses premise billing history to recommend a budget amount and therefore, if the prior tenant had sufficient billing history, the system will be able to calculate a recommended budget amount.

2. Current balance will typically differ from payoff balance for customers on a budget. True/False

    True.

3. An account may have some service agreements on a budget and some service agreements not on a budget. True/False

    True. Only service agreements with Eligible for Budget set on their SA Type are allowed to be put on a budget. An account may have a mixture of different SA Types.

4. Budget amounts do not affect billing. True/False

    False. The budget amount will overwrite a bill segment's current amount. This is only done if the bill segment's FT algorithm is written to do this.

5. Budget customers are exempt from credit and collection. True/False

    False. If the current balance is not paid according to the credit process criteria, credit and collection actions will still take place.

6. The Monitor Budgets background process will review budget amounts that are "off" and update them with more appropriate amounts. True/False

    False. The Monitor Budgets background process reviews budgets and simply reports those that are off. The True Up Budgets background process will update budgets with a more appropriate amount.

7. The frequency of true up could be annually, semi-annually, monthly or any other frequency you can think of. True/False

    True. The frequency of review is defined on the budget plan (express as a number of months).

8. Name the different ways that a budget could get canceled.

    1) Manually, 2) automatically through credit and collection activity, or 3) automatically by stopping the service agreement.