



>
accenture

High performance. Delivered.

Achieving high performance
with Accenture's service
workforce solutions for utilities

• Consulting • Technology • Outsourcing

Is your workforce helping— or hindering—performance?

When facing cost and revenue pressures, it may be tempting to make cuts to your workforce. Reducing head count or slashing investments in employee training and engagement programs may deliver short-term financial benefits. However, such actions can also lead to negative long-term consequences—including reduced employee engagement, declining productivity, a lack of process controls, lower customer satisfaction and, ultimately, higher cost to serve (see Figure 1).

If your organization is challenged by workforce optimization, you are not alone. Many retail utilities are struggling to control costs without sacrificing service quality or long-term success. In many cases, utilities are challenged with optimizing workforce spending—that is, the costs

to hire, orient, train and continually engage employees. While workforce engagement is key to improving bottom-line results, determining the best ways to do this is a challenge.

High-performance businesses, including utilities, recognize that people play a pivotal role in the success of the customer care enterprise. Instead of focusing on slash-and-burn tactics, they hone in on workforce performance. Using a holistic, long-term approach, they make strategic investments to attract, hire and retain the right people. In doing so, they not only maximize workforce productivity and increase the efficiency of their operations; they also improve customer satisfaction and reduce cost to serve.

Did you know?

While many utilities are realizing net savings from reducing service workforce head count, focusing on service workforce performance can provide sustainable reductions in the controllable budget.

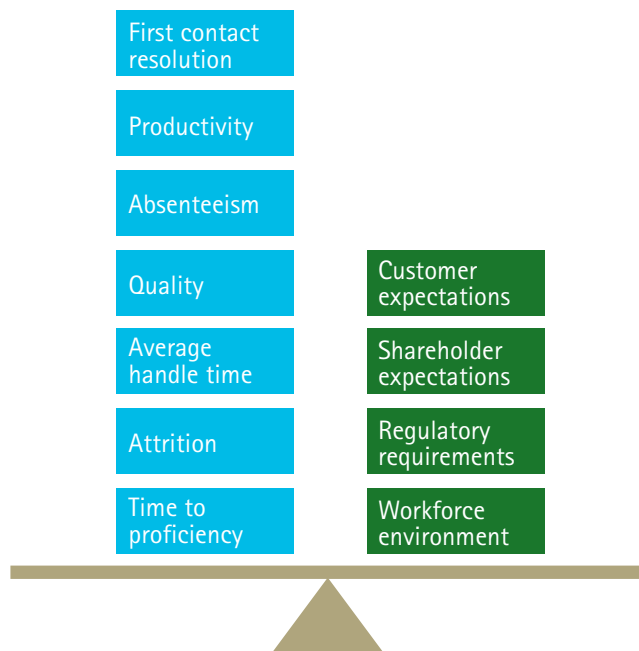
Employee absenteeism can account for an estimated 12 to 18 percent of payroll costs.¹

Inefficient training and induction is costing 2 to 5 percent of the controllable budget.²

High employee attrition is wasting 2 to 5 percent or more of the controllable budget.³

Figure 1. Balancing expectations and performance.

To maximize cost savings, utilities must balance workforce, customer, regulator and shareholder expectations with the need to optimize workforce performance and cut costs.



Accenture's service workforce solutions help retail utilities to optimize the cost and productivity of their workforce—achieving high performance in their customer care organizations.

Accenture's approach to optimizing the service workforce

Accenture can help you more effectively assess and address the performance of your customer care workforce. Our approach starts with an in-depth diagnostic, through which we identify key improvement areas and prioritize initiatives based on strategic relevance, value and cost. With a clear picture of current strengths and weaknesses, we can help your organization tackle critical elements throughout the employee value chain.

Leveraging Accenture's functional and industry experience and expertise, we have assembled a suite of proprietary, utilities-specific assets that deliver sustainable results. More specifically, our workforce solutions include tools and capabilities to support a cycle of excellence (see Figure 2). Our capabilities empower you in the following areas:

- Investing in a good start. Improving the way you hire, orient and train employees provides significant benefits—including increased employee engagement, decreased time to proficiency and better quality of work.
- Delivering the customer experience. Your customer care workforce can create—or destroy—customer relationships. Accenture helps you identify opportunities for workforce investments that will improve short-term and long-term employee engagement and customer satisfaction.
- Rewarding and retaining employees. Employee incentives might seem like an obvious target for trimming costs. Accenture will help you focus on better utilizing rewards to drive desired performance and enhancing front-line management leadership skills to increase engagement and propel performance across the workforce.

Because optimizing the service workforce must be an ongoing initiative, we also help you in building a people-advocacy capability. The goal: to champion people initiatives beyond the HR department. A cross-functional commitment leads to enhanced employee engagement, customer satisfaction and productivity, as well as reduced attrition and absenteeism.

Working with Accenture, you can lay the groundwork necessary to optimize the cost and productivity of your workforce—achieving high performance in your customer care organization.



Figure 2. Enhance workforce performance across the employee value chain.

Optimizing workforce performance is not a "one-off" project, but rather a collection of prioritized initiatives across the employee value chain.



Mitigating risk and reducing cost to serve by improving workforce performance

Generating 50 GWh of electricity annually and serving more than 1.8 million customers, a major North American electric utility was facing an evolving industry and sizable capital constraints. The organization sought to improve its service workforce performance as a means of reducing cost to serve within its customer care operations and mitigating business risk. Working with Accenture, the utility developed and launched a series of campaigns and programs to enhance employee engagement. The ultimate results included an 18 percent increase in customer satisfaction, a 42 percent reduction in calls per customer and achievement of 87 percent first-contact resolution.

We know what it takes to build a leading service workforce.

What can you expect when you team with Accenture?

You work with professionals who understand the unique challenges of the utilities industry. We see the world as you do and can help your company differentiate itself to achieve high performance. Our understanding of key business issues and trends, and applicable technologies and business solutions enables us to deliver innovative yet practical solutions tailored to each client. We bring a breadth of skills, capabilities and assets to help utilities address our clients' business challenges, including:

Utilities industry experience

Accenture's utilities industry group has more than 30 years experience working with electric, gas and water utilities worldwide. Our group includes 7,500 utility industry people working with approximately 275 clients in 40 countries. We serve 74 percent of the utilities on the 2009 Global *Fortune* 500 list using our deep, global industry knowledge, people and assets to help clients develop the strategies and adopt solutions to improve performance in the dynamic utility market.

Client-ready utilities assets

Accenture has developed many utilities assets, including the High Performance Utility Model, based upon our extensive consulting,

systems integration and outsourcing experience. This model helps utilities assess their performance against industry leaders, jump-start business improvement projects and accelerate program delivery.

Accenture Utilities BPO Services

Accenture not only has leading consulting capabilities, but we also have a deep operational understanding based on our business process outsourcing (BPO) services for utilities. Accenture Utilities BPO Services provides solutions to 14 clients and 15 million customers in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific.

Accenture talent and organization performance capabilities

Accenture helps organizations increase productivity, market share and shareholder value by ensuring our clients have the right people with the right skills in the right roles. We deliver human capital strategies that benefit a company's overall business and financial performance. Our holistic approach helps ensure that all levels of the organization work together to create an innovative, talent-powered organization, ultimately helping our clients to achieve high performance.

Contact us

Accenture's approach to building a service workforce is holistic and designed to help retail utilities navigate through today's challenging environment. We work with companies to chart a successful course to improve the way they manage the service workforce—and to build the high-performance businesses that can compete and win in a changing environment. We would like to hear about your needs and discuss how we can work together to help your organization advance toward high performance.

Gregory S. Guthridge
+1 604 646 5043
gregorys.guthridge@accenture.com

Eva Buren
+1 917 239 4597
eva.buren@accenture.com

Endnotes

1. How much does absence cost?, Mitrefinch UK, www.mitrefinch.co.uk/solutions/absence_management/absence_management_3/index.html.
2. Accenture client case studies.
3. Ibid.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company.

Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world's most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. With more than 176,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, the company generated net revenues of US\$21.58 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2009. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

Copyright © 2010 Accenture
All rights reserved.

Accenture, its logo, and
High Performance Delivered
are trademarks of Accenture.