

# Thames Water digitises operations

Delivering a step change in  
efficiency with Salesforce





# Delivering a step change in efficiency with Salesforce

**Thames Water takes care of water for 15 million people across London and the Thames Valley region. They transport and process over seven billion litres of water and wastewater every day—a huge undertaking. As with any operation of this scale and level of complexity, things can go wrong. Sewers get blocked or pipes freeze and burst. When problems like these occur, customers turn to Thames Water for help. Responding quickly to these requests is critical, not only to ensure that their millions of customers have a reliable service, but also to minimize environmental impacts, prevent property damage and reduce water leakage.**

Unfortunately, the Thames Water team was reliant on a fragmented legacy IT estate which did not provide a complete view of the available information to contact centre and field teams, hampering effective customer service delivery. Customer service agents didn't have access to the data they needed to respond to queries, while allocating work to field crews required complex manual processes which made it difficult to match people with the right skills to each job.

One of the game-changing aspects is that this solution allows us to communicate effortlessly and proactively with our customers across their journey. And it has allowed us to be better at matching our engineer skills to the job that's required for customers

**TESS FAYERS**

Director of Operational Services,  
Thames Water



## Call for change

As a result, customers weren't getting the help they needed as fast as they needed it and the contact centre team was frustrated that they did not have the tools to do their job properly. Field engineers weren't happy either, as they were often sent to jobs they weren't skilled for, or didn't have access to the information they needed to resolve a customer issue the first time. With no line of sight to the required information, field crews weren't operating efficiently and customers were often left unsatisfied.

With almost 700,000 repair and maintenance jobs scheduled per year across its water and wastewater networks, cost pressures and service demands were growing for Thames Water. With their understanding of the potential of technology to transform operations, Thames Water's leadership team launched a workforce management programme to drive a step change in operational efficiency. It would transform the way essential services were delivered to the most important people in the process—the end customers.

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 700,000





When tech meets human ingenuity

# Consolidating 13 systems into one

**To help Thames Water achieve its goals, Accenture proposed revolutionising the customer and employee experience via a fully integrated Salesforce Service Cloud and Field Service solution. With it, Thames Water could consolidate a number of systems across the customer services, work scheduling and dispatch, and field engineer teams. The solution, deployed through a phased implementation across business areas, would allow expensive legacy solutions to be decommissioned while retained applications from the existing technology landscape were integrated.**

An initial discovery phase focused on two streams: defining the high-level target architecture; and delivering an iterative prototype for a wastewater service to help gather feedback and present the new solution to employees. The Accenture team delivered the prototype rapidly, using an agile approach and quickly incorporating feedback from the Thames Water business team, who used the prototype to help visualize the final solution. Accenture further generated buy-in from the wider business team with simple demonstrations that showcased functionality and brought the solution to life.

Shortly after the discovery phase, the team initiated the full implementation. In a little over six months, Accenture and

Thames Water delivered and deployed the first minimum viable product (MVP) release of the Workforce Management solution into a production trial with the Wastewater business.

Accenture's Field Service Centre of Excellence team in Portugal were heavily involved in the implementation of the wastewater solution prototype. The full solution was subsequently delivered with support from Accenture's Advanced Technology Centres in both Portugal and India.

The Salesforce solution replaced 13 existing systems with a single end-to-end solution covering customer contact, work planning, scheduling and dispatch, and field mobility. The fully integrated solution has the customer at its core—it provides customer service agents and field crews with a consistent view of the information they require to carry out their roles effectively while also keeping customers informed on progress. The intelligence and automation built into the system has helped the business improve operational efficiency, taking previously manual processes and automating them to improve the accuracy and efficiency of the field engineer work schedule, and providing clear visibility of all work in the system to enable data-driven decision making.



## When tech meets human ingenuity

Following the initial MVP trial, the team scheduled further enhancements to deliver additional functionality. A continuous improvement team was created to help quickly incorporate business feedback into the solution with small enhancement releases scheduled every three weeks. The ability of the Accenture team to incorporate this business feedback so rapidly into the solution helped contribute to the high level of buy-in from the field crews who could see their feedback was quickly being taken on board.

About 2,000 people are now using the solution, and it's being enhanced and integrated with several digital platforms. Next, it will be deployed to the water networks business, where it will reach 7,000 employees across Thames Water operations.



2000





A valuable difference

# The right service, on time, all the time

**The new workforce management solution has already delivered many benefits to the operational business at Thames Water.**

In the **operational contact centre**, customer service representatives now have quick and easy access to the details of current and previous customer interactions, which helps them provide continuity of care and inspires trust on every call. The solution also provides real-time visibility of progress, which helps representatives provide proactive updates to their customers. The result? Compliance rates for key customer touch points jumped from 63% to over 96%.

“At Thames Water, this is one of the biggest transformation journeys we have been on, and will be on for the next 20 years. It has brought a massive reduction in our IT estate. And with this platform we have the visibility we need across systems to more effectively align our operations, optimising the use of our field force to better meet customer needs.”

**ANDREW MCILWRAITH,**  
Head of Change (Operations),  
Thames Water



## A valuable difference

### The solution has contributed to a number of other tangible benefits.

For field crews, the smarter, automated scheduling solutions and improved visibility into each job has helped cut travel time by around 9% and increased productivity (average number of jobs completed per day) by around 16%. A single solution for all work has also allowed the business to flex field crews across different work types and has reduced the backlog of pending jobs by 63%.

For customers, the solution's real-time reporting and visibility has led to a 15% increase in compliance levels to the Thames Water Customer Promise. Proactive customer updates have increased by 33% and the total number of customer contacts has increased by a staggering 171%, all thanks to efficiencies generated from the solution. With the new benefits in place, customers can

now get automatic updates via text messages, which has all helped complaints drop by over 70%.

As a result of the Workforce Management programme, Thames Water is getting the right engineer, with the right tools, to the right job, at the right time. The utility is managing its workforce as efficiently as possible, improving the employee experience while keeping the customer at the heart of its operations.

“The purpose is to digitally transform the way that we work so we can move into the twenty-first century and deliver excellent customer experiences.”

#### TESS FAYERS

Director of Operational Services,  
Thames Water





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