



# Transco trusts eGain

## *Fuelling savings and service consistency*

### Key results

- ✓ Field engineer visits reduced by 8% (an annual saving of £1.8 million)
- ✓ Improved consistency of service
- ✓ 2% reduction in call handling times

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**John Rodger**

Manager of call centres  
Transco

### Company

Transco, a subsidiary of BG Plc, is the major gas transporter in the UK. The company transports gas for around 50 gas shippers piping it from beach terminal to meter through its extensive gas transportation network. Given the volatile nature of gas delivery and the customers' critical dependence on this service, Transco is also responsible for the UK's gas emergency service, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for 20 million gas users.

### Challenge

Maintaining consistent and efficient emergency service is a mandate, not an option, in the gas delivery business. Transco must meet tight, regulated standards such as answering 90 percent of all telephone calls within 30 seconds, attending 97 percent of all uncontrolled gas escapes within one hour and 97 percent of all controlled gas escapes within two hours.

Previously, 91 small call centres distributed across the United Kingdom were used to deliver the gas emergency service. Each call centre received calls relating to gas emergencies and associated work requests. After establishing the nature of the emergency, critical details of the work request were dispatched to field engineers by voice via the private mobile radio system.

The company had a history of providing “the best emergency service in the world.” Transco's challenge was to maintain this level of emergency service

while gaining the cost savings of major call centre consolidation.

### Solution

Transco created a virtual call centre that consolidated the 91 local sites into three locations comprising 100 customer service agents each. This consolidation enabled call centre staff numbers to be reduced by 1,000. A dispatching operation, built into the call centres, monitored the flow of work through a new data transmission network and connected to laptop computers used by field engineers. The only thing that was missing was a knowledge-based solution that could quickly prioritise calls, guide customer service agents to answers and capture critical information for field service engineers.

After reviewing several options, Transco evaluated an eGain call centre solution. A group of experts from Transco's emergency call centres defined knowledge in cases that covered approximately 80 percent of all call types. Using these cases, customer service agents would quickly glean vital information that should always be asked, such as “Is there any smell of gas outside the property?” and “Is the gas turned off at the meter?”

### Implementation

In September of 1997, Transco deployed eGain's software as an initial phase in its Hinkley call centre. Two separate teams were established—one which would use eGain's software and a control group that would use traditional Transco methods.

“Not only did eGain help us improve service consistency, we also achieved a 21 percent reduction in call handling time and an eight percent reduction in field engineer visits.”

**John Rodger**

Manager of call centres

Transco

Aside from the eGain solution, the teams were equally matched in every way.

### Results

“The results from the initial deployment confirmed our choice of eGain’s software,” claims John Rodger, Transco manager of call centres. “The eGain team handled calls far faster and with less supervisory assistance than the control group.”

Today, Transco is using the power of eGain’s software as it consolidates its operations down to three high-efficiency call centres and the company is experiencing new benefits it hadn’t anticipated. As Rodger puts it, “Any time you consolidate the job functions of almost 2,000 staff members down to half of that figure, you have to be concerned about how it will impact the remaining employees. Our people who use the system every day report less stress and more confidence, and feel more empowered to make the right decisions.” Which explains why Transco has noticed a 40 percent reduction in supervisory involvement.

So how does eGain software affect the skill levels of call centre agents? Transco compared the eGain group with a control group and found that knowledge-based software had significantly improved its group’s skill level. “Frankly, we had expected precisely the opposite,” states Rodger. Public safety is the primary concern at Transco. Which explains the company’s approach of “if in doubt, fail

safe.’ Inevitably, engineers must be dispatched to some jobs that they don’t need to attend. Yet, by more accurately defining the nature of the call and prioritising service requests, eGain’s software reduced unnecessary engineer visits by eight percent.

“Our return on investment was very good,” adds Rodger. “While the project cost was £860K, the annual saving in call centre staff alone is £500K. However, the most significant economic benefit to Transco is within field operations where eight percent of those visits are no longer necessary—yielding a yearly saving of £1.8 million. In other words, the eGain solution paid for itself in less than five months.”

### Future

Going forward, Transco is considering opportunities to leverage its eGain knowledge base for customer portfolio and perhaps electronic billing applications. It is also considering giving field engineers direct knowledge base access for onsite problem resolution.

Rodger sums it up in this way, “We found the eGain product to be a good technical fit with our IT systems. It was easy to integrate and provided the functionality we required. We were also very pleased by the cost savings it provided.” In other words, for exceptional customer service and return on investment, eGain software delivers for Transco.

**eGain**<sup>®</sup>  
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