



# Southern Water trusts eGain

## *Clear information*

**eGain® Knowledge™** has increased the ability of Southern Water's call centre staff to diagnose problems, resulting in dramatic reductions in the number of field visits and significant improvements in first-call resolution of enquiries.

assist call centre agents to diagnose complex problems. He evaluated various solutions before selecting eGain Knowledge. As he explains, "We realised that eGain Knowledge case scenarios, or scripts, could be built into our own system. We'd seen that demonstrated at other water companies and we were impressed by what it had to offer."

With eGain Knowledge, access to the cases is conversational so the interactions between the agent and the customer are fluid and natural. The system zeroes in on the best answer through a series of questions. When one of the cases passes a predetermined confidence threshold, the agent delivers the suggested response to the customer.

## **Implementation**

eGain Knowledge was integrated with Southern Water's customer service management system and coupled with the existing geographical information system. This has given staff instant access to a pool of expert technical knowledge that helps them solve more enquiries at first contact. Staff can also enter information directly into the database which is sent to field staff via handheld terminals. Hawkes continues, "The eGain team were very responsive and knowledgeable. They knew exactly what to do to help me meet my ultimate objective of improving customer service."

## **Results**

In Hawkes' words, "With eGain Knowledge coupled with the existing

### **Key results**

- ✓ 60% improvement in single call resolution.
- ✓ 50% reduction in agent training time.
- ✓ 25% reduction in unnecessary call outs in nine months.

### **Company**

Southern Water is responsible for delivering clean, fresh water to around one million households in the south east of England. It also treats and recycles dirty water from nearly two million households. It is a large and dispersed organisation with 104 water supply works collecting and cleaning water before it is used, and 390 wastewater treatment works treating the water so that it can be returned to the environment. It also has a huge pipe network with 13,300 km of water mains.

### **Challenge**

With so many customers, Southern Water has a dedicated customer service office with 250 staff, of which 150 work in the company call centre. Around 30 of those staff handle 1000 operational enquiries each day. As part of a programme of business improvements specifically aimed at increasing customer satisfaction and reducing wasted call outs, a team was put together to investigate potential solutions.

### **Solution**

Neil Hawkes, Southern Water's call centre manager, was aware of a number of knowledge-based CRM products that

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**Neil Hawkes**

Call Centre Manager  
Southern Water



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**Neil Hawkes**

Call Centre Manager

Southern Water

systems, we were able to capture key information and put it in an easily accessible format for our agents.”

With eGain Knowledge, staff in the call centre now have better control over the calls and can ask the right and—more importantly—the relevant questions. This allows staff to give helpful and informative advice to customers who are now getting better, more consistent service. Making that information more easily accessible and available to call centre agents has resulted in a 60% improvement in single call resolution and the introduction of new systems has enabled Southern Water to reduce training time by 50%.

However, it is in the area of field visits that Southern Water has experienced the most dramatic difference. Productivity has been improved as the new systems help staff determine ownership of operational jobs, providing more

consistency in the way work is passed to field staff. Hawkes continues, “We’ve greatly benefited from using eGain Knowledge. The first nine months alone show an improvement in first call resolution and a reduction of 25% in unnecessary call outs. As a result, we’ve also seen a reduction in enquiries that need a field visit which means engineers’ time can be better spent on proactive work.”

### Future plans

In the future, Southern Water may well extend the eGain Knowledge product into the billing call centre. As Hawkes explains, “Our billing call centre handles over 4000 enquiries every day and the billing system itself is extremely complex. Any help we can give staff to guide them through the billing process will have an immediate benefit for both staff and customers.”

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