Yorkshire Water supplies 1.7 million UK households with water and sewerage services. The company manages the collection, treatment and distribution of water, supplying around 1.24 billion litres of drinking water each day.

Their vision is to be “clearly the best water company in the UK.” With Ofwat positioning them at the top of the annual league table for operational and customer service excellence, things are obviously going in the right direction.

Challenge
Yorkshire Water receives 400,000 incoming customer calls a year purely about water supply problems, such as low pressure, burst pipes and water quality. The increase in water meter usage means even more customer enquiries. Although 80% of customer calls are relatively common and simple to respond to, the other 20% are complex. Not only are these complex queries hard to answer, providing an incorrect response can lead to a significant increase in costs, unnecessary engineer call outs and customer dissatisfaction. Yorkshire Water needed a knowledge management and customer service solution advanced enough to enable its agents to easily handle complex enquiries. It wanted to make every agent as good as its best agent by propagating expertise, best practices and resolution knowledge to the entire pool of agents.

Implementation
Partnering with eGain, Yorkshire Water implemented eGain Knowledge+AI™, eGain’s award-winning AI-powered knowledge management solution for contact centre agents. eGain’s professional services team helped them design best practice processes for knowledge capture, creation and management as well as customer service delivery.

The knowledge base now contains over 750 resolutions and is being used by 130 agents. The system drives efficient and effective conversations between agents and customers, improving service consistency, first-call resolution and compliance with corporate processes, while minimising the number of unnecessary engineer callouts.
“One of our requirements was to free our agents from rigid and often inappropriate scripts. eGain’s solution drives adaptive and flexible conversations between agents and customers that speed up call resolution and enable superior customer experience,” commented Alan Clubb, team manager on the Integrated Customer and Operations Management (ICOM) team, Yorkshire Water.

Following a call, the audit trail of what has been discussed and recommended is automatically captured by the eGain system and passed into Yorkshire Water’s call tracking system, along with the service request. The process eliminates the need for the agent to make notes. This speeds call wrap-up time while ensuring high-quality data for closed-loop management of the call centre. If a callout is required, the transcript of the call diagnosis is passed to an appropriate engineer. This ensures that the right engineer is despatched with comprehensive details about the nature of the problem so that the visit results in efficient problem resolution.

Results

A service excellence mindset is firmly entrenched in Yorkshire Water’s business and eGain’s solution is playing a key role in enabling it.

Yorkshire Water is now achieving more than 30% first call resolution on operational contacts which, in turn, has cut unnecessary engineer call outs. Reduction in field rolls saves an average of £30 per call adding up to a whopping £3.6 million per year.

With the continued improvements planned in handling operational calls using eGain Knowledge+AI, the first call resolution rate is expected to rise further. This will generate more savings, but more importantly, improve the customer experience.

In addition, eGain’s knowledge management solution has reduced agent training time by 25%. Agents are able to handle a wider range of enquiries, resulting in a marked improvement in employee satisfaction. The reduction in call handling and wrap-up times is enabling agents to handle a larger number of calls.

Customer satisfaction has also increased, with Yorkshire Water currently hitting an impressive 80% of its customer experience measures.

Future

Yorkshire Water prides itself on providing customers with the highest levels of service. It is that philosophy which spurs the company to constantly improve its service efforts.

On the back of the project’s success, Yorkshire Water is now planning an expansion in the use of eGain’s knowledge management solution to handle alternative types of customer enquiries. In the future, Yorkshire Water is looking to expand its customer communication to include online channels such as web self-service and to create a unified customer engagement hub. This will provide customers with a convenient and effective way to find answers to common queries on a 24x7 basis and communicate online with Yorkshire Water. eGain’s omnichannel customer engagement hub (eGain CEH™) platform enables companies to simply plug in new interaction channels in a seamless manner to deliver a unified multichannel customer experience.

Alan Clubb concludes, “It is our goal to be the best water company in the UK and to achieve this we need to differentiate ourselves by being the leaders in customer service. In keeping with this goal, we will continue to work with eGain to provide innovative customer service options and further improve customer experience.”