



# Affinity Water

## Affinity Water creates a digital-first employee service experience and minimizes regulatory risk



Requests now fulfilled through self-service



Reputation and SLAs maintained during period of industry reform



Reduces risk of regulatory fines

**Industry:** Utilities  
**Location:** Hatfield, UK  
**Size:** 1,400 employees

### Affinity Water re-imagines the employee service experience

Affinity Water is the largest water-only supplier in the UK. The company's IT operation is responsible for delivering a range of IT services to 1,400 employees. Previously outsourced, the company initiated a bold move to bring all IT services and projects back in-house to kick-start its digital-first strategy.

Ben Wilson, IT Services Manager, Affinity Water, explains: "We wanted to make a strategic move towards transforming the IT services function. This encompassed a variety of elements, including the development of new applications, accelerating our use of the cloud, and re-imagining the experience we created for our internal customers."

To initiate the digital-first strategy, 90 people joined Affinity Water's IT department, covering the whole operation: architecture, service desk, service management, infrastructure, security, projects, and programme management. Yet, the radical move presented challenges.

Ben explains: "We were essentially starting from scratch so we saw this as an enormous opportunity to vastly improve the systems to record assets and call logging information."

### With ServiceNow out-of-the-box functionality Affinity Water brings outsourced IT services in-house and creates a single employee self-service portal

Using ServiceNow out-of-the-box, Affinity Water launched a quick-start package for incident, problem, and change management, and within six months had transferred all responsibility from the incumbent outsourcer.

#### Challenge

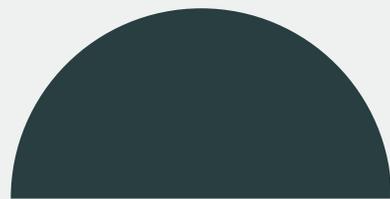
Affinity Water wanted to regain control of its IT support function to gain better visibility into customer supply issues and minimize the risk of fines

#### Products

- ServiceNow® IT Service Management
- ServiceNow® Customer Service Management

#### Solution

ServiceNow delivers a single platform for modern self-service across the organization and enables better control over supply issues—increasing employee and customer satisfaction while reducing regulatory risk



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ServiceNow has agility built in. We can get our ideas to market before others have even finished scoping them—and that’s incredibly exciting.

Ben Wilson, IT Services Manager,  
Affinity Water

“Building our in-house operation from scratch seemed like a massive undertaking,” says Ben. “We had a new team and didn’t have the luxury of time, yet it was exciting. ServiceNow enabled us to develop workflows and incident scenarios while still being able to meet the day-to-day challenges of the business, taking an agile approach to service management development.”

Phase two of the initiative focused on request fulfilment through the launch of a new service portal, which Ben says: “truly opened the new interface between IT and the internal customer.”

Ben’s team worked hard to bring the portal to life, creating 60 to 70 items in the self-service portal that enable employees to request anything from kit bundles and hardware to software applications and access rights. Every piece of information required by the IT service desk to action the request is captured in the portal, helping to ensure fast resolution.

A focus on the user experience was essential, says Ben: “Rather than designing the portal for IT, we focused on creating a customer-focused service with simple workflows—a business portal to consume anything IT-related.”

Within four weeks, approximately 40% of requests had shifted to the self-service portal, at which time Ben took the decision to turn off email requests. Today, 85% of requests come through the portal, which means 20,000 requests per year have been moved off email into the service portal.

## **Affinity Water expands its use of ServiceNow to customer service to help meet strict regulatory requirements and minimize the risk of fines**

In recent years, significant market reform from UK industry regulator Ofwat led Affinity Water to split its wholesale and retail operations and run them as separate businesses. This presented a new opportunity to use ServiceNow.

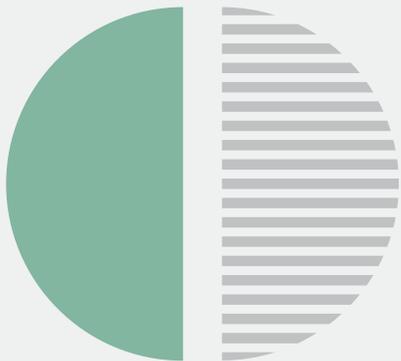
Ben says the restructuring created challenges: “Our wholesale team had to work with several new retail customers and needed a more efficient way to record their interactions. They needed a system to provide visibility of queues, including who was calling and the status of requests or problems.”

Affinity Water’s wholesale department approached Ben and his team to find out more about how IT could improve its service to retail customers. Ben’s team worked closely with wholesale to deploy ServiceNow Customer Service Management to create a seamless experience for retail customers. Information on every single Supply Point ID—which identifies the meter supplying each address—can be accessed on ServiceNow. This allowed the wholesale team to identify exactly which supply point the retailer was calling about, and expedite a resolution.

Ben added: “Our wholesale team has used this system to its full advantage. They are now pushing for the top spot on wholesale service delivery in the water industry and our IT department is delighted to have had the opportunity to help them achieve this.”

## **ServiceNow provides visibility into unplanned service disruptions and expedites restoration**

ServiceNow has also extended into Affinity Water’s Situational Awareness programme, forming the platform for a control hub to handle the communication and information flow for every planned and unplanned interruption. The hub is called the Customer Impact Tool.



Ben comments: "Incidents can happen at any time across our water network, through pipe failure or external damage. Either way, we have a duty to restore water within 12 hours. We are regulated on this and failure to comply can mean fines and rebates to customers that can be a significant cost to the business."

All communication has moved off email and into ServiceNow, where automated workflows provide timely alerts to stakeholders on what has happened, why it has happened, and what is being actioned.

Manual monitoring has been replaced with dashboards displaying countdown clocks and the status of all disruptions so that informed decisions can be taken on where to apply resource and remediation.

Ben says: "We're dealing with complicated scenarios and a ticking clock for resolving any interruption. Now, every executive, incident handler, customer service representative, and field engineer can view the dashboard and, with the right permissions in place, update jobs in real time. The consolidated tracking capabilities makes auditing straightforward for our regulation teams."

### **Affinity Water plans to increase its corporate agility in other areas of the business using ServiceNow**

The agile approach supported by ServiceNow enables the IT team to deliver value across Affinity Water by creating new features, applications, and instances on a single platform. Additional projects are already being discussed with Facilities and HR, while IT is exploring automation and machine learning, and is primed for a Customer Impact Tool part two.

Ben says: "It's easy to come up with an idea, but usually hard to make it happen. You need to plan, build, buy, and test. ServiceNow has agility built in. We can get our ideas to market before others have even finished scoping them—and that's incredibly exciting."

He continues: "ServiceNow is a significant win for Affinity Water. People across the business are experiencing first-hand what IT has achieved, and we're doing some genuinely awesome work with the platform."