



Atlanta Department of Watershed Management: **Cutting-Edge Customer Service**

The City of Atlanta's Department of Watershed Management (DWM) is committed to providing clean, safe, and affordable drinking water to Atlanta residents. It is one of the reasons that the City is spending more than \$3 billion for overhauling the aging water and sewer infrastructure. However, it is not the only reason. Mayor Shirley Franklin has made customer service one of the key goals of her administration. She attended the "dedication" ceremony for a new call center and the implementation of a new customer information system (CIS) solution at the DWM.

The Challenge

Serving 300,000 residents in and around Atlanta, the Department of Watershed Management wanted to replace their soon-to-be-obsolete legacy system with a leading-edge solution that could enhance the City's customer service offerings.

They identified these key drivers for the CIS replacement project:

- Streamline business processes
- Increase revenue volume with improved billing processes
- Enhance customer service by providing better access for customer service representatives (CSRs)
- Improve cash flow through quicker validation, documentation and receipt of payments
- Formalize the collections processes
- Synchronize information flow between customer service work orders and work management

The Discovery

As a first step towards consolidating their goals, DWM hired a consultant to put together a request for proposal (RFP) for a customer information system replacement. Additionally, DWM completed a cursory analysis of their process solely from a validation standpoint. Nine proposals were received in response to their RFP, out of which four top CIS vendors were invited to demonstrate their solutions. DWM then selected two finalists with whom to conduct site visits. Out of those two finalists, Systems & Software with their enQuesta Solution came out on top.

Solution

enQuesta's new job scheduler functionality currently enables the City to automate billing processes – a true time saver, as the need for manual intervention is removed from this daily process. DWM also adopted many of enQuesta's best business processes specifically in the areas of workflow management and credit and collections. In addition,

Case Study

enQuesta's billing engine allowed DWM to more easily flag anomalies, like severe fluctuations in usage, and helped their customer service representatives be more efficient and effective when addressing customer complaints. On a wider scale, work order information is now synchronized between the customer service function and field operations. The seamless integration between enQuesta and the Maximo Work Management System has increased workflow efficiencies by taking away the requirement for duplicate entry. Equally important was the enhanced web services integration between enQuesta and DWM's Nortel IVR system. This Web Services integration feature ensured that future integration with any third-party application is achievable with minimal development effort and expense.

The Implementation

In September of 2006, Atlanta's Department of Watershed Management went live with enQuesta, the Nortel IVR system, and opened a new call center. *"Systems & Software, Inc.'s quality system implementation team used their proven methodology to complete the highly strategic implementation within our expected time frame,"* said Debra Henson, Program Manager Officer at DWM.

Within days, it was business as usual for DWM on the new system. Subject matter experts from both Systems & Software as well as the DWM worked in unison validating data and transferring knowledge. The Deputy Commissioner of DWM, Sheila Pierce, went on to add how System & Software's implementation team was "all over the newly opened call center. They made sure that the customer service representatives received all possible technical help during those important initial days," said an appreciative Ms. Pierce.

The Results

With enQuesta up & running, the City of Atlanta's Department of Watershed Management (DWM) has been able to increase their performance to an unprecedented level. DWM's customers are able to access their accounts online 24-hours-a-day, 7 days a week. The DWM has added kiosks and payment locations for the City's residents to make payments at their convenience. The department is already experiencing enhanced call response and customer service quality due to reduced response time per call.

The City has realized additional returns on their investment which include:

- Increased ability to delineate active accounts vs. inactive accounts
- Reduction in the number of incorrect accounts on "Cut Report" per CSR
- Decrease in number of days post new meter installation to bill produced
- Reduction in overall volume of customer complaints
- Improvement in timeliness of delinquent notice delivery