

Enabling business continuity for South East Water in just 2 weeks.

Overview.

With over 2.2 million consumers across the South East of England, South East Water (SEW) supplies on average 521 million litres of drinking water from its 83 water treatment works every day. Motivated by their own mission statement of being the water company people want to be supplied by and want to work for, SEW pride themselves on pulling out all the stops to make sure they continue to supply their customers with the highest quality of water and delivery of service, even during times of uncertainty.

The Challenge.

Challenged with achieving business continuity for its customers, South East Water needed a contact centre solution that supported agents working remotely to deliver an enhanced customer experience. SEW also required a contact solution devoted to outbound calls – and they needed both as soon as possible.

Currently running a predominantly inbound contact centre with a reduced number of contact agents, this additional outbound calling capability was needed to help free up queue times by returning customer calls, conduct critical outbound calls to help customers with financial support challenges and enable the business to focus on core business functions.

The Solution.

South East Water (SEW) first engaged with ECS just as widespread social distancing guidelines were put into place by the UK Government. Already familiar with AWS and its capabilities after attending an AWS Bootcamp, SEW wanted a partner who could provide an MVP that could be validated at pace and pushed into production within a couple of weeks. AWS recommended ECS as the premier service delivery partner for AWS Connect contact centre solutions, and after an initial scoping session, we had an understanding of what SEW required to achieve full service business continuity.

In less than a week, ECS had designed and proposed a solution that aligned with SEW's needs. Part of this solution included leveraging Amazon Connect to create an outbound contact centre capability within 48hrs at very minimal upfront cost and little resourcing from SEW. This was highly attractive at a time where SEW had extensive operational challenges due to the COVID-19 lockdown, and their IT staff were extremely busy resolving a wide variety of high-priority challenges.

Whilst a fundamental contact centre platform was implemented within such a short space of time, we continued to work with SEW to deliver a complete solution over three weeks, delivering exactly what they needed to help now, and a platform to build from in the future.

In order to deliver in such a flexible and dynamic way, we worked to a Professional Services Work Order meaning SEW were able to call-off a variety of services immediately and ECS dovetailed around the existing SEW skillsets. This proved to be a highly collaborative, fast and efficient way to deliver, especially at a time where delays affected the livelihoods of so many people.

What Value Did ECS Bring?

The true value of working with ECS comes down to us delivering what we say we will, within budget and on time. In this instance, we worked alongside SEW from the very start, albeit virtually, establishing high-level objectives and reducing these down to a low-level design very specific to SEW's challenges. Due to the urgency of the project, we adopted a shared risk approach, working on trust for the beginning weeks to prevent delays in delivery.

This flexibility and trust created a good working relationship from the outset, enabling us to embed seamlessly within SEW's team. Doing so saw communications streams open up and the adoption of agile ways of working that helped to streamline the project and allow our team to upskill SEW's IT and Engineer teams in a whole host of AWS tools. The result was a three-week engagement which provided an entirely scalable (both up and down), consumption-based solution that gave SEW's agents the tools they needed to work remotely, and their customers a way to get the help they need when they need it.

The Benefits.

- 100% remote outbound contact center capability set up in 48 hours, achieving business continuity and enabling agents to work from home.
- From initial engagement to delivering a complete solution within 3 weeks.
- Enabled outbound call recording utilising Amazon Connect's built-in functionality alongside Amazon S3 storage.
- Created dynamic contact flows to allow for the contact centre to scale rapidly just by using configuration stored in Amazon DynamoDB. This included a welcome message as well as the ability to route customers to a custom contact flow or queue.
- Designed a customised Amazon Contact Control Panel with the ability to:
 - Choose which phone number to display to the customer when calling them
 - Display simple call history with Date/Time/Number
 - Make changes easily via Config stored in Amazon DynamoDB and Amazon S3
- Empowered agents with correct CLI (calling line identity) based on the type of outbound call, improving customer experience and reducing handoffs.

