

Information Sheet: Customer Engagement

The Vision

To make a cultural shift towards being a truly customer-focused business. Our customer engagement journey is the main driving force behind our business plan for 2020/25.

Importantly, customer engagement is already driving step change in service delivery in 2018 – the launch of our Alexa Voice service, Community Hub and customer education outreach programme.

Key Facts

- Direct engagement with more than 40,000 customers and community voices over past 18 months –also used 1,000s of day-to-day customer contacts to help shape our plans.
- Focus on ‘dialogue’ to give a fully rounded view of our key customer and stakeholder groups. Engagement carried out in multiple stages to allow for customer feedback to directly shape subsequent stages.
- Engagement delivered using a set of ‘rule of engagement’, such as ensuring robust and representative sample sizes in both our supply regions, including hard-to-reach customers.
- Reached all customer groups from household, business, business retailers through to developers and NAVs.
- Worked with ten expert partners and set up our first customer research strategic supplier framework to unlock innovation and allow engagement on complex issues – eg, use of immersive, role-playing exercises, such as using a ‘Top Trumps’-style game in a workshop where we gave customers information about a range of supply-side and demand management options and asked them to co-develop a plan.
- Use of WaterSmart portal to test new approach to informing and educating customers on the need to use less water.
- Creation of our first Young Innovators’ Panel to help us shape our plans to change the water use behaviours of our future customers.
- Used an innovative, seven-step, process across two waves of Willingness to Pay studies. Inclusion of numerous opportunities to engage with customers through in-depth qualitative and quantitative research. This helped overcome the challenges identified at PR14.
- Use of stimulus material to set context and provide comparative information, developed through customer input to ensure clarity and consistency.
- Worked with independent experts to develop a wide-ranging and proportionate evidence base for customers’ willingness to pay for service improvements, incorporating customer satisfaction and day-to-day contact data. Also developed a regional customer priority index to feed our multi-criteria analysis (MCA), which focused on the options for water supply and demand.



Our customer engagement journey

- Engaged extensively with our household customers to understand where we need to improve to always offer excellent service. Examples include identifying five customer segments to help guide the delivery of personalised service offerings and to inform the development of an 'Extra Care' service for vulnerable customers.
- Full engagement from our executive Boards through all aspects of our engagement.
- Full transparency with the Independent Customer Panel. This included giving members enough time to allow effective challenge of our approach and engagement, with positive changes made as a result of robust challenge and opportunities to provide additional input and review the outcomes at a later stage.

Making a positive difference:

"Love the interaction and also the opportunity to tell you as a company what is important to me as a customer" – household customer, Performance Commitment on-line survey

"It was a good use of my time and encouraged me more the save water after doing this survey." – household customer, WRMP on-line survey

"Please don't stop - it's a brilliant service, really useful. I have been very impressed!" – Cambridge WaterSmart user

Where next?

Our customer and wider stakeholder engagement from 2019 onwards will focus on a number of key areas – particularly 'customer participation', the central theme of 'Tapped In'. For example, launching our first online Community Panel in 2019 to give customers the opportunity to be actively involved with shaping the solution to the range of challenges we face.

Other areas of focus will include:

- further improving our co-creation forums and initiatives with harder-to-reach audiences to work with them to shape the service experience;
- using a robust framework to continually triangulate all our customer insights (internal and external) to tell a clear story to drive service improvements;
- improving how we share insight across the business so our colleagues can use them to improve the service they offer to customers on a day-to-day basis. For example, using user-friendly infographics, video content and portals to disseminate knowledge;
- continuing to look for new and innovative engagement approaches and supply chain partners to deliver them; and
- looking at how we can share best practice with other water companies.