



CASE STUDY: Affinity Water

Customer Service and Important Choice of Contractors



Affinity Water is the largest water-only supplier in the UK, providing around 900 million litres of water every day to more than 3.6 million people in the Home Counties, parts of London and in Kent and Essex. Whilst needing to meet strict OFWAT targets for customer satisfaction, as well as operational and regulatory targets, Affinity Water now needs to re-organise a significant proportion of its water network to accommodate the HS2 rail network programme.

Why were we needed?

The HS2 route will pass under a heavily urbanised area, including residential, commercial, hospitals, schools and other essential services. HS2 has informed Affinity Water that as a result, the water network in this area will need to be re-organised. This includes:

- ◆ Between 20 and 32 kilometres of mains network
- ◆ Up to 170 water mains points
- ◆ Up to five water treatment sites
- ◆ The installation of up to three replacement water sites

The cost of this project is likely to exceed £55m and needs to be completed in line with HS2 timescales. HS2 offered Affinity the option to undertake the work with their own suppliers. However, with strong eye on customer service and network performance, Affinity wanted to be involved in the choice of supplier and the completion of the works to ensure the best chance of on-time and on-spec completion.



Why is collaboration so effective?

Positive attitude and behaviour is vital to the success of long-term projects. Defining acceptable behaviours for your project, selecting suppliers consistently and developing, motivating and measuring those

behaviours during mobilisation and delivery can transform the way you, your partners and other stakeholders perceive your success.



Collaboration works.

Choosing to work with JCP

Affinity Water is already convinced of the benefits of behavioural working, having worked with JCP to develop an understanding of the benefits a behavioural approach to procurement can bring as well as apply the learning into delivery projects. JCP has also worked on large-scale infrastructure projects in the past. The strict OFWAT targets placed on water companies means that Affinity Water must organise and implement this project efficiently and effectively, and minimise the impact of the disruption on their customers. Rather than outsource this vital work to other contractors, Affinity water asked JCP to help with a procurement process that would identify the best suppliers and manage the complexities of the project.

HS2 itself is one of the most complex infrastructure projects ever undertaken in the UK. The work that Affinity Water has to do will materially impact on the HS2 project if it over-runs, so it is essential that the company achieves best attainable performance, and it understands that this depends not just on technical expertise, but on selecting the right project partners who can consistently display the collaborative behaviours and competencies that will make the project a success.

What did we do?

JCP brought together classic JCP-tools alongside tailored enhancements to deliver a system whereby the right procurement partners could be chosen based on individual and organisational attitudes to collaborative working.

JCP Tools and Process

- ▶ JCP asked for **behavioural biographies** as an extension to the existing CVs being submitted by each team. These were scored on real examples of their previous experiences of collaboration. They also provided an additional tool at interview stage to dig a bit deeper into specific examples and awareness.
- ▶ Conducted **leadership interviews** with both Affinity Water and leaders from each organisation to examine how they work together as well as check out their individual attitude to and examples of working collaboratively.
- ▶ Developed a two-day behavioural assessment process for each of two different frameworks resulting in four days of dedicated workshops. These assessments were based on:
 - ▶ Real-world exercises, including scenario-based problems to really test customer centric thinking, behaviours and approach
 - ▶ Mobilisation exercises
 - ▶ Team problem solving

At each stage the participant company was assessed on its behaviours including examples of past collaboration, and translating experience into solving a given scenario. We wanted to see how collaboratively each tenderer could work, based on our Working Together model which brought participants into mixed teams with other participants and representatives from Affinity Water.



What did we achieve?

A successful and efficient selection of the key partners which was well received in the trade press:

[Read the article](#)

A follow up two-day kick off workshop for the successful parties and the Affinity team, using the mobilisation exercise outputs from the original workshops, helped to develop a better understanding of each other and build the relationship, leading to the speedier establishment of a structured plan and common purpose for their work together.

With the selection of contractors whose values align with those identified by Affinity Water, the company can be confident that behavioural issues are taken seriously and will apply them to the best effect to get the project finished on time. The cultural and behavioural values that Affinity Water works to will run through the whole project – no matter which contractor is leading the process.

