

Customer Focus

PUTTING ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) FRONT OF MIND

**'ESG IS RIGHT AT
THE HEART OF
OUR BUSINESS'**

Thames Water's CEO Sarah Bentley
on environmental stewardship and
engaging the community

**'ENGAGING CUSTOMERS
ALONG THE JOURNEY
HAS BEEN REALLY
IMPORTANT'**

Head of transformation for stores
and property at M&S, Jo Moran,
on greening the retail giant





SETTING A NEW COURSE

by Jo Causon

With fires and floods growing in severity and frequency, we are unquestionably seeing more focus on the environment and on the wider ESG agenda.

There is an interesting cross-section of issues at play here. The time we have spent in lockdown has encouraged us to reflect more – and understand more about our impact as consumers and on the community and environment around us. And while we are all keen to resume more familiar routines and activities, there is greater willingness to question those aspects of our former lives we want back and the ones we want to set aside.

As a result, we're more inclined to ask questions of the organisations that serve us. What is your social purpose? What are your environmental credentials? Our research indicates people expect organisations to be green *and* to help them as customers to become more green.

We have seen – and The Institute's data bears this out – that the brands that have done well during the pandemic in customer service terms are established, trusted ones and they tend to be strong on their stated intent.

Clearly that won't be enough on its own to sustain a positive direction of travel. Leaders will need

to challenge themselves and their organisations continually. What does it mean to be sustainable? Are we clear about what we do, what we don't do and – crucially – what we're going to stop doing? Where organisations have been crystal clear on these points, they've won support.

When we look at the world today, the signs are clear. Next-day delivery of goods is no longer a given. Supply chains are more fragile, and the attractions of rampant consumerism are fading. We are thinking more consciously about what we can and cannot have.

Businesses need to work to understand and gain insights into their customers, but within their purpose. There is still some scepticism around the green agenda and customers clearly worry about its cost. The answer must be to give people choices – and more information. Sustainability is a topic that is here to stay and also provides a great opportunity to engage both customers and employees – I would encourage all to do this.

The organisations in this edition are undertaking to engage with environmental issues choices at a time when none of us can afford to ignore them. I hope you find the edition to be of interest and as always welcome any feedback.

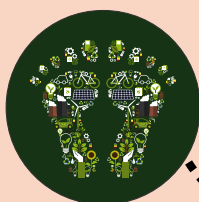
September

CONTENTS

THE INTERVIEWS

04 THE CEO INTERVIEW: LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

COVID-19 has put social purpose and ESG credentials front and centre for water companies. Thames Water CEO Sarah Bentley explains why customer engagement is central to environmental stewardship.



08 HOW RETAILERS ARE RESPONDING TO EVOLVING STANDARDS

Retailers face demands to improve environmental performance and customer experience online and in-store. Jo Moran, head of transformation for stores and property, describes the evolution at M&S.



12 SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS – BETTER CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Gerry McGarry, sales and marketing director at recycling business Berry bpi, explains how an increased focus on plastics is leading to richer conversations with customers on usage.



16 GROWING EXPECTATIONS IN THE WATER SECTOR

Provision of service is no longer enough for consumers, Ofwat's interim CEO David Black explains. Water companies must respond to demands for environmental improvements and progress towards net zero.



20 CONSISTENT DELIVERY: CONTINUED INNOVATION

Nick Harrison, director, home and direct to consumer at Covéa Insurance, believes that ESG performance is becoming as important as price.



POLICY MATTERS

24 HELPING CUSTOMERS BECOME GREENER

Why businesses must become sources of information and support for consumers as we work towards carbon transition and net zero emissions. Liz Loxton explores the findings in The Institute of Customer Service's *Green Goes Mainstream?* research.

28 SKILLS IN SHORT SUPPLY

As we emerge from the pandemic, enhanced customer experience should become a priority. Oliver Hazell, senior account manager at Cavendish Advocacy, argues that customer service skills underpin a thriving economy.

NEWS

29 UK CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX

The latest UKCSI indicators from a challenging and unusual year and news about The Institute's next research project on – *The Changing World of Work*.

30 REDEFINING THE SERVICE NATION

Don't miss The Institute's Annual Conference – the UK's biggest forum for customer service – and Awards, a chance to celebrate service excellence at its best.

31 DATES FOR THE DIARY

Upcoming training courses and online resources.

ESG IS RIGHT AT THE HEART OF OUR BUSINESS

Thames Water CEO Sarah Bentley's task is to turn around an underperforming company. Just as important to her is to put stewardship of the environment and socially focused projects on the agenda. She tells Liz Loxton all about it



Water companies occupy an unusual place in the UK business landscape. As businesses they are often owned by pension funds and other institutional investors. As regulated, public service monopolies, they must answer to the Water Services Regulation Authority, or Ofwat. And as suppliers of the most essential resource of all, they have a responsibility to heed and address the concerns and needs of their customers.

Running a water company is a complex proposition. Operating ageing infrastructures has its difficulties, but renewing them can be highly disruptive to the lives of customers. Add in non-trivial incidents such as pollution from sewage, leakages and billing issues and the prospect might seem daunting to many.

It's a set of responsibilities that Thames Water CEO, Sarah Bentley, readily acknowledges. Bentley, who joined Thames last year from Severn Trent where she was chief customer officer, is in no way prepared to duck the issues, however. In the wake of the company's annual and sustainability reports, she has been transparent about missed performance targets and vocal about the company's turnaround plan and the need to do better.

"We're being really transparent that our performance isn't what our customers rightly expect, and we absolutely have to accept that and do something about it. We've got a lot of basics that we need to fix," she says.

New appointments

Unsurprisingly for a former chief customer officer, Bentley has made two customer service-focused appointments to the executive team since joining the company. Cathryn Ross, who is also a non-executive director of The Institute of Customer Service, joined as strategy and regulatory affairs director in June. Prior to that, Warren Buckley, a former global customer service director at HSBC's retail bank and chair of Citizens Advice, also joined the company. Buckley, Bentley says, profoundly understands what good customer service looks like – an essential ingredient when customers don't have a choice of provider.

So, what does a former chief customer officer bring to the role of CEO? Bentley has spent her career focusing on customers and technology, stating, "I've



always been really curious about how you can use technology for the good of customers. But I'm really clear that our job as a company is to deliver life's essential service, so that our customers, the community and environment can thrive. All of our effort needs to be focused on serving our customers, protecting the environment and giving back to communities, which means that all of us have to serve our customers and support the frontline teams," she says.

Environmental, Social & Governance first

If Bentley is clear-headed about the imperatives and urgency behind Thames Water's eight-year turnaround plan to 'put the basics right', as a leader, she is also long-sighted about the future and the need for good Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) stewardship and aspirations. ESG, she says, is central to everything Thames Water does.

All of us have to serve our customers and support the frontline teams

"I think it's interesting that some businesses or sectors talk about ESG as something you plug in," she says. "The way I see it, ESG is right at the heart of our business. I think historically that's been more evident on the environmental side of things. But increasingly, we are embedded in the communities that we serve. I'm passionate about the social agenda and clearly good governance is central to any large business. There isn't a part of our business that isn't ESG," Bentley says.

The way Bentley and the senior management team operate Thames Water as a business is centred around those goals and aspirations, she says. That includes developing a network that is more resilient to leaks and spillages; preventing pollution; restoring rivers and maximising green energy. That last point is perhaps a more surprising assertion, but Thames Water generates biofuels from waste and

is working on England's first sewage-powered domestic heating scheme looking at ways to recover heat from sewage treatment processes. Waste generates heat, she points out, and right on everyone's doorsteps.

Heating remains a huge challenge in the context of the carbon reduction agenda, she says. But the UK's water industry signed up to 'net zero by 2030' prior to the pandemic, and collective efforts to build sustainable energy sources are gaining momentum. Heat conversion technology is in its very early stages at Thames Water, but an aspirational regeneration programme with Kingston Council could see waste being employed as a heating source in social and affordable housing developments. "The idea is that we would use some of our heat and some of our land and provide a renewable source of energy," Bentley says.



"Everyone thinks of water as a resource business. I like to think of us as a renewables business. I don't think of sewage as waste. It's just an untapped energy source. We've been generating energy from waste since the 1930s, but there's much more we can do. We absolutely see that as part of the energy transition."

Tapping into customer sentiment

Thames Water is a significant operation, employing over 7,000 people, serving 15 million customers and supplying more than two billion litres a day to London and the Thames Valley. But how does it set about understanding the ESG issues that resonate with its customers?

Collaboration is key, says Bentley. "If you're having conversations and working with people every day, it becomes quite obvious what the issues are. This isn't an area where we do some research and then

go off and do something on our own. We talk to our customers every day. We interact with the environment every day," she explains.

Through those customer interactions, key themes emerge. Customers and the public generally are exercised about water reliability and scarcity. "How we manage the impact of climate change and population growth and make sure that the availability and reliability of water and security of supply are there is a theme that is very resonate," she says.

Cleaning up and protecting rivers and the sites around them is another issue that comes up. Thames Water works with river trusts and groups such as the Chalk Rivers Action Group to learn how it can support environmentally focused projects. The emphasis is on engaging with grass roots.

The S in ESG is also central to Thames Water's ESG ethos and its connection to customers. There is a significant upside in community engagement terms for organisations that steward their land responsibly and work to make green spaces accessible. Walthamstow Wetlands is a 200-plus-hectare nature reserve around a network of ten Thames Water reservoirs and is a case in point. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and has been open to the public since 2017 thanks to a sizeable donation from Thames Water and a collaborative effort with the London Borough of Waltham Forest and the London Wildlife Trust.

Last year's lockdown provided positive proof of its beneficial impact on local people. Over the course of the past year, the wetlands attracted 650,000 visitors, people who otherwise had very limited access to outside spaces, some of them giving very specific feedback via surveys about the positive impact on their mental wellbeing and even its restorative potential to people with poor mental health. "Over the past year that's been a lifeline for people," says Bentley.

The social inputs go beyond green spaces and river preservation from Bentley's perspective: "This goes right the way through to our skills strategy, through to our commitment to the living wage, and connects with the work we do around affordability and vulnerable customers." Thames Water also works with carers and social mobility organisations, and is the first water company to be awarded Disability Confident Leader. "I think we're the first water utility to look at working with groups in society that find it harder to access mainstream employment," she says.



Lessons learned

The pandemic has brought companies' social purpose and ESG credentials to the foreground. For water companies, that has meant doubling down on their core functions.

The provision of clean water has been critical. Good hygiene has been front of mind. Frontline workers at Thames were out in the community as usual. Encouraging and supporting those frontline teams as well as other teams working in completely different ways to normal was the first order of business. Mental wellbeing too, was critical in the collective consciousness.

It has also been a transitional year for Thames irrespective of the pandemic, given those performance issues, she says. The turnaround plan will be pivotal for Bentley in the short-term.

The longer-term, however, revolves around ESG, and she's clear that community and therefore customer engagement will be at the heart of that. "We're not doing this on our own. Engaging society on our relationship with water and with waste and the environment is absolutely key. That's not just a 'once and done' exercise; that's an ongoing discussion. Because we are here to protect the environment. That's our purpose."

WATER MATTERS

- An eight-year turnaround plan for Thames Water focuses on improvements on leakages, service levels and pollution
- Over 7,000 employees, serving 15 million customers and supplying more than two billion litres a day to London and the Thames Valley
- Thames Water is in the early stages with Kingston Council to provide renewable heat within affordable housing
- The water company's open spaces saw increased uptake during lockdowns with 650,000 visitors in one year to Walthamstow Wetlands

TAKEAWAY
COLLECTION ONLY

ENGAGING CUSTOMERS ALONG THE JOURNEY HAS BEEN REALLY IMPORTANT

As the pandemic took hold, Marks & Spencer faced a hefty mix of business imperatives – survive against this challenging backdrop while providing better digital access, enhanced customer experience and unassailable ESG credentials. Jo Moran, head of transformation for stores and property at the retailer, tells Michelle Perry how it went

Those who say old dogs can't learn new tricks clearly don't know Marks & Spencer (M&S). Established in 1884, the retailer has such a powerful, emotive brand, that – although it has struggled at times to define its demographic within product lines – it retains one of the UK's most loyal customer bases. In the UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI), the non-food arm of the retailer surged up the rankings from 18th place in January 2020 to third place in January this year.

Over the past decade or so, the iconic British retailer has faced accusations of being too conservative in its clothing lines, versus testing new lines. It was also slow to adopt new digital technologies and tap into the online shopping trend.



Despite its bumpy ride, M&S was one of the first multinationals to set out a sustainable business plan in 2007, with many businesses setting sustainability targets only in the past two years. Plan A, now 14 years old, was bold and visionary and ahead of most consumer buying trends.

Consumers have caught up with that vision and are turning increasingly to sustainable businesses, and M&S is capitalising on that evolution in consumer sentiment by overhauling its services and stores. Today, retailers need fewer large stores and a more encompassing customer experience.

Press reset

To balance customer and business needs, executives must continually refocus and adjust goals in a competitive world. Conscious of challenges, M&S asked an executive with a strong customer service background to lead a transformation plan across its Retail & Property group – Jo Moran.



Moran, who was previously responsible for customer service for all contacts within the M&S brand, says the retailer's food group was "at the vanguard of the transformation with a very clear and ambitious plan", but stores and property lagged.

Her role was created to do two things: first, to be a focal point for other parts of the business looking to transform, while managing and understanding the impact on staff and customers. Second, to provide the governance for transformation across the stores and property division.

Moran took up her new position just before the global pandemic shut down the worldwide economy, so she has had to contend with adapting at a time of radically altered conditions. The pandemic, however, turbo-charged transformation at M&S.

"We have probably learned more in the past 12 months than we would have in a normal year. We've learned a lot about what customers are looking for. We've also learned from an agility perspective – how can we run our stores more efficiently? That might be because we've had colleagues isolating or we've been restricted on the number of customers allowed in store.

"It has been an incredibly challenging – and in some cases tragic – year, but the whole of the M&S family of colleagues has been in this together and supported and brought out the best in one another. The end result has been that we are emerging stronger from the pandemic and accelerating our transformation forward."



During the pandemic customers turned to their most trusted stores. In the July 2021 UKCSI, M&S (Retail food) ranked 18 with M&S (Retail non-food) at 24 out of the top 50 organisations – a slight dip on the January results. M&S (food) features among the ‘top rated organisations by customer satisfaction’ in the UKCSI July Retail (Food) sector. M&S is the second highest rated food retailer, with a UKCSI score of 82.6.

“Our transformation is about returning M&S to sustainable, profitable growth that can deliver that long-term value that stakeholders, shareholders, customers and colleagues are looking for,” says Moran.



New services

During the pandemic, M&S relaunched its Sparks scheme after writing to its seven million members. It received direct feedback from 250,000 customers that helped shape the redesign, and the membership has grown to more than 11.5 million in the space of a year. The retailer also launched new digital services such as Sparks Book & Shop to make shopping safer.

Over lockdown more than 365,000 existing M&S customers shopped online for the first time, and the retailer has seen more than 700,000 new downloads of the M&S.com app, putting it on track to become a ‘digital first’ business with a wider reach.

Alongside the online reboot, Moran’s big focus is on managing the property portfolio, with a remit to future-proof buildings to meet energy efficiency standards, while demonstrating to customers it is prepared to go beyond existing legislation.

Customer appetite for new technology in some ways outstrips the retailer’s, Moran concedes. Introducing web chats, chatbots, automated voice platforms

and customer self-service has not only improved the customer experience but helped the retailer dedicate resources to more complex areas.

Fairness in business

Supply chains have become a focal point of the ESG agenda and – for retailers in particular – a potentially incendiary one. As Plan A is now completely embedded within M&S, the provenance of raw materials, the importance of local sourcing and ethical management of suppliers are factors that are very much front of mind.

“We have a very clear commitment that we’re always going to treat people in business and our supply chains fairly, and we should be prepared to stand up to the scrutiny that comes with that – something that is probably more in the spotlight than it used to be with the advent of social media.”

As well as a loyal customer base, M&S also has a vocal one. Over the past three years, M&S has closed around 60 stores and plans to close another 30, in most cases to the dismay of customers in those areas. Overall, the retailer will increase the total square footage of stores due to the growth in its food-only stores, Moran points out. The move comes in recognition – some might say a little late – that online shopping, particularly for clothing, is only set to grow. M&S needs less physical store space for its clothing and home furniture sales, an evolution that best reflects how customers are choosing to shop.

Visible signs

The latest example of this can be found in the new -look M&S Café at its new Solihull Sears store, which opened earlier this year and extended the store’s hospitality offering. It also marks the 16th food renewal store. A further 24 renewal stores are planned for the 2021-22 financial year, taking the total to 40.

In these new stores, M&S is offering a fill-your-own option – a choice growing in popularity among consumers who want to reduce their plastic use. Customers can bring in or purchase reusable containers, or use free, recyclable paper bags. The refillable grocery range covers more than 50 product lines. Fill-your-own has proved popular among customers; more than 40 per cent of the lines outsold packaged alternatives.

The retailer is also trialling a plastics scheme where customers can return all plastic containers for

EASY-BREEZY STYLE

Shop shirts & blouses →

Shop new in →



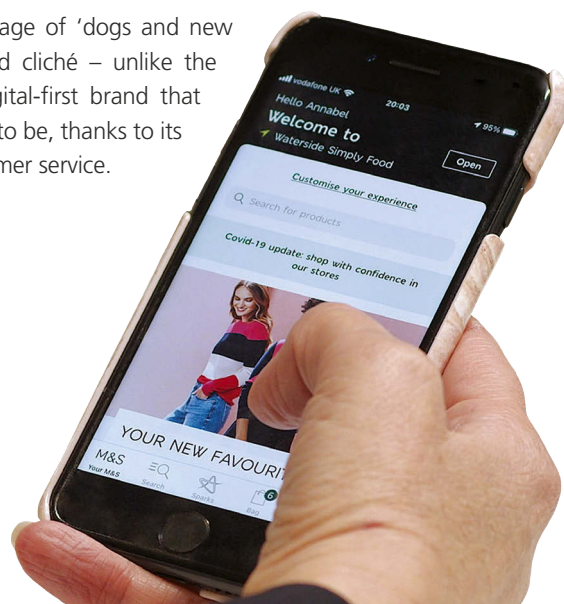
recycling. M&S says the programme has been well received, and although it paused the roll-out in 2020, it plans to extend it to more stores. Next year it will launch a bottle return recycling service in Scotland, a service that will be rolled out across the rest of the UK later in 2022.

During the initial stages of each of these schemes, M&S consulted customer focus groups, conducted online surveys and tapped into its active customer database as well as working with non-governmental organisations, such as Age UK and disability groups. “Engaging customers along the journey, taking on board customer feedback and making improvements has been really important,” Moran says.

“As we come through the pandemic it’s important that every individual, but particularly those of us in leadership roles around transformation, takes every opportunity to ensure we don’t take a step back. It’s

been a tragic year for retailers, and we do not want to be one of those organisations that is not able to seize the opportunities.”

Proving the adage of ‘dogs and new tricks’ is a tired cliché – unlike the up-to-date, digital-first brand that M&S is aiming to be, thanks to its focus on customer service.



RETAIL MATTERS

- Introduced in 2007, the M&S Plan A sustainability pledge was ahead of its time
- Over the past year, M&S customer reward scheme Sparks grew from seven million to 11.5 million and a survey elicited feedback from 250,000 people
- During lockdowns, 365,000 customers shopped online for the first time and the retailer’s shopping app was downloaded more than 700,000 times
- M&S Food has 16 fill-your-own stores, where customers bring or buy reusable packaging. A further 24 will open during 2021-22

WHEN I JOINED, RECYCLING WAS THE DIRTY END OF THE BUSINESS. NOW IT'S FRONT AND CENTRE

After years of a bad rap, plastics are coming of age as new technologies and formulations push recycling to critical mass and make plastic a sustainable choice for packaging. For Gerry McGarry, sales and marketing director of Berry bpi, the evolution is changing conversations, as he explains to Rachel Willcox

Plastic and sustainability may not, on the face of it, be words that sit comfortably together. But Gerry McGarry says that for Berry bpi, environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors have become a key differentiator with competitors and are changing the dynamics of customer interactions.



Berry bpi is the industrial packaging part of global plastics business Berry Global, a \$13bn New York Stock Exchange-listed business employing 47,000 people operating across 285 manufacturing locations. The company has doubled in size since 2016 – following two acquisitions, so maintaining continuity of customer service for its 18,000 customers has remained a priority.

“We’re a B2B business and some of those customer relationships go back 40-plus years,” explains McGarry, whose broad remit as sales and marketing director also includes R&D and customer service. What’s also true is that the dynamics of the industry are changing; the need to address some of the tricky environmental issues the industry faces are not something the company has shied away from.

Berry services a huge range of clients, operating across sectors such as food retail, healthcare, agriculture and construction. They all share a desire to up the environmental credentials of the plastics they use. Fortunately, Berry bpi also happens to be one of the largest recyclers in Europe.

“We collect back plastics that have been recovered from the market and recycle them into new products,” McGarry explains. “Increasingly that recycled content is being driven by the wider plastics agenda where we’re looking to drive more recycled content and more recyclability into the packaging products that we supply to our key brand owners.”

Plastics in the spotlight

Environmental credentials have risen up the agenda across the plastics sector in recent years – but it wasn’t always that way. “It’s an industry that needed a wake-up call. We’re now having to pay a lot more attention to the custody of the products we place onto the market and ensure that the environmental impact is being mitigated. It’s an enormous agenda within most plastics businesses.”

“ESG is up there as one of the primary drivers of our strategic thinking, product development and customer

interaction. Increasingly our conversations with customers are around sustainability and how we can help them to improve the products that they place onto the market,” McGarry says.

As the UK starts to prepare for the introduction of a packaging tax next April, ESG and recycling questions are becoming ever more frequent. “We now have experts within our business who work with our customers to understand fully the implications of any new regulations, and this has been very well received.”

One of the biggest challenges is keeping customer-focused teams up to speed on new regulations and solutions. Remote working has brought further challenges when it comes to ensuring the information is disseminated and the company has harnessed technology across the business to ensure that takes place effectively.



Reinforcing that communication with customers is paramount. The company has engaged with The Institute of Customer Service for more than a decade, with the First Impressions training programme becoming the bedrock of its customer-service training programme. “Prior to joining we struggled for years to identify programmes where the benefits of training stayed embedded over a period of time, and we have found that The Institute’s programmes have really worked for us in this regard. We have also taken advantage of the networking events to learn best practice from like-minded organisations. We have a clear vision as to where we wish to go, but more importantly, in working with The Institute, a clear pathway as to how we achieve that.”

As a signatory to the Ellen MacArthur Global Foundation and subsequent Plastics Pact for a circular economy for plastic, as well as being a founding

member of the Alliance to End Plastic Waste, the goal is to ensure that by 2025 all Berry bpi's products are 100 per cent recyclable or reusable. With just 18 months to go, the organisation is already running in excess of 95 per cent but that last push is proving the hardest and the challenges of meeting both functional requirements and sustainability objectives all at a price that's right for the customer can be a tricky balancing act.

At the same time, McGarry says showing customers that you're "walking the walk" is critical. That's about using science and demonstrable metrics to illustrate improvements to the environmental footprint of products. However, the potential for greenwashing is very real, and the organisation has put its significant weight behind industry-wide initiatives to set common standards.



Ultimately the customer-service benefits make it more than worth the investment, as customers find themselves under pressure to meet growing stakeholder demand for more environmental approaches across their supply chain.

Wider conversations

The focus on sustainability is also driving richer conversations with customers to help them achieve their own increasingly sought-after sustainability goals and to ensure they overcome technical challenges and get the best from the next generation of more environmentally friendly products on the market.

"Now we're sitting down with the environmental directors, product teams and procurement teams – there's a lot of collaboration going on to solve their business problems using circular materials that we can reuse and turn into products our customers will buy. It's not always possible for technical reasons, but that's the ultimate goal and these are dialogues we're increasingly having. A few years ago, those

conversations wouldn't have been happening at all," McGarry says.

The sustainability focus of products is included in Berry's *Impact 2025* report. At the same time, there's a strong focus on local community projects – on hold during lockdowns – such as one that encourages local schools to collect plastic packaging in return for benches made from Plaswood, a wood-effect material made from recycled plastic.

Community engagement aside, the pandemic has presented a host of challenges for the business as demand from some sectors – especially food retail and healthcare – caused unprecedented spikes in demand, while others fell away. "We had to work out how to get our operations working continuously but safely in line with social distancing regulations. It was a leap into the unknown," McGarry admits.

Like many other businesses trying to find a way through the uncharted waters of the pandemic, customer service needed to adapt continuously, as customer service teams were forced almost overnight to work from home. Despite the initial chaos, the customer service focus did not waver: "Once you have a contract, it's about efficiently servicing that demand. A lot of the metrics we use aren't particularly sexy – stock levels, capacity of our machines – but we need to make sure those metrics are right, so the product arrives when our customer expects it."

The fact that everyone along the supply chain was in the same boat and grappling with the same issues helped, McGarry believes. "We all had to adapt at the same time. I think it enriched the conversation; we had a common purpose and together we had to work out how to guarantee continuity of supply."

Open dialogues

While the experience of the pandemic has not fundamentally altered Berry bpi's commitment to customer service, it has certainly had an impact on its approach. "We're probably discussing things with customers now that we wouldn't have discussed in the past. A lot of that is to do with the sustainability agenda. That focus has intensified across the industry."

Technical challenges remain, but investments and new approaches make it an exciting time to be in the industry. "The pace of change is faster now than it has been in the past 30 years – not just for us but for equipment manufacturers – and we're seeing new technologies come in that allow us to do new things and process materials in different ways."



And while plastic might still have some way to go in terms of public perceptions about its environmental credentials, the recycling side of Berry bpi's business has evolved from a functional necessity to a driver of business success and differentiation. "It's about

getting more sustainable products to our customers. When I joined the business in 1994, recycling was the dirty end of the business," McGarry says. "Now it's front and centre."

PLASTIC MATTERS

- Berry bpi Group has 47,000 employees globally and 285 manufacturing locations
- The business is a signatory to the Ellen MacArthur Global Foundation and a founding member of the Alliance to End Plastic Waste
- By 2025, the company aims to ensure all its products are 100 per cent recyclable or reusable
- Berry bpi backs industry-wide efforts to arrive at a recognised standard measure for recycled content

A pair of hands is shown cupping a teardrop-shaped icon. The icon depicts a stylized Earth with blue and green wavy patterns, and a small orange silhouette of a person standing on it. The background is a solid blue color.

CUSTOMERS ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT

In a highly regulated sector, water companies are being measured against retailers and other providers for the first time and being challenged on their environmental impact and community engagement, as Ofwat's interim CEO David Black explains to Peter Crush

It's 21 July, and David Black, interim CEO of water regulator, Ofwat, is preparing for the start of another two years of work that will end with determining how water companies treat their customers until the end of the decade. The deadline for the UK's 17 water companies was 22 July 2021 to submit their responses to the regulator's 'ideas and ambitions' stage – the opening salvo for what's known as Price Review 2024 (PR24), the five-yearly commitments water companies agree to and which they'll be held accountable for between 2024 and 2029.



The deadline kicks off a process that culminates in water companies submitting business plans to Ofwat by October 2023. What they choose to concentrate on will largely be their choice, but among Ofwat's various communications there is a telling statement: "Customers' interests are evolving, and their expectations are growing. Customers are increasingly concerned about damage to the environment." This should get them sitting up. "Ofwat's remit is first and foremost, ensuring water companies provide compelling service," says Black, who before his recent appointment was responsible for leading the 2019 Price Review. Indeed, 'providing the very best customer service' is the first thing that's mentioned in Ofwat's 'Time to Act Together' strategy, which sets out its ambitions for the water sector.

“What customers are saying is that provision of service alone is no longer good enough”

However, having successfully held providers to account (including fining Thames Water £120m in 2018 and Southern Water £126m in 2019 for 'failing customers' and 'breaching legal responsibilities' respectively), the notion of

customer service is evolving, he argues, and Ofwat's priorities – and those of providers therefore – should reflect this.

"Given most people actually have very little interaction with their water providers, customers increasingly connect environmental and social governance (ESG) and overall service standards as one," Black says. "What customers are saying is that provision of service alone is no longer good enough; rather it's what environmental impact providers have and how they connect with communities and develop close relationships on the ground. This is especially the case when dealing with issues such as flooding or sewerage overflows."

"What we find," he adds, "is that it's not having problems that kills consumer trust, but how they're dealt with. [It's] getting things right – or being seen to do things properly – that matters most when something goes wrong and especially when it's an environmental issue."

Black is new to the CEO role; he was appointed in April after Ofwat's former head Rachel Fletcher joined Octopus Energy, and is adamant Ofwat needs to become better known for taking a harder stance with providers on concerns such as ESG.

In a typical year, water prices might have been the issue consumers complained to Ofwat the most, but with average bills about to fall by £2 (0.6 per cent) in 2021/22, Ofwat is arguably taking advantage of freedoms to move into ESG areas. Leakage is one key area of focus where Ofwat has recently proposed changes to regulatory reporting requirements for 2021-22 for the Annual Performance Reports (APR) produced by the water companies.

Here, it suggested that water companies report much more widely – on the cost, leakage saved, and scale of each activity. "In 2017, Ofwat challenged providers to get much better at reducing leaks and companies have responded with leakage reductions and ambitious plans, but there's still a lot more that water companies can do," says Black. "And although environmental problems may not be the water companies' fault – for instance, issues can be caused by extreme weather, or other reasons such as agriculture or industry – they do indirectly touch providers in some shape or form."

Black adds: "It's why we're championing resilience of provision. This is how companies can ensure there is a consistency of supply in the face of more climate change impacts – something that may not be experienced by customers immediately, but which takes a longer time frame for the customer to see a payback for any investments made."

Black argues investment for service improvements that may not be immediate does still chime with what customers want, and he says that when providers do come to submit their business plans, "we will challenge them on where we think they fall short of being the best possible plans they can be." On this, he is quite specific. "Water provision is fairly standard, and it shouldn't differ hugely between water companies. So if one provider is clearly being more ambitious than another, we'll want to know why."

But if challenging providers on their ESG credentials will pay off more in the longer term, it doesn't mean Ofwat is taking its eye off the ball on more immediate service metrics.



In the past year, Ofwat has reinvented its annual service incentive mechanism (or SIM scores) – which rank companies according to the level of customer service achieved. The scores are calculated from two inputs – the number of contacts companies receive (collected and published by the Consumer Council for Water) and customers' satisfaction with their company's handling of queries (from a series of independent surveys commissioned by Ofwat). In fact, since 2015 they have also come with financial payments and penalties. But while the top performers punch above their weight, overall service scores have stagnated in recent years. The average SIM score fell to 84.4 out of 100 in 2018-19 from 84.5 in 2017-18.

To try to arrest this, but also to update it in a few key regards, last year saw the introduction of a replacement to SIM scoring – the so-called 'C-MeX' scores (Customer Measure of Experience). A 'ghost list', testing the methodology, was produced last year, with Anglian Water coming top; the first 'real' list is due imminently.

Says Black: "As well as incorporating the service views of customers who haven't contacted their water provider (SIM only looked at those customers who directly got in touch), the main innovation is comparing customers' satisfaction with their water company to their satisfaction with other services."

He adds: "It's here, in fact, that we've taken some lead from The Institute – in using its methodology to benchmark across sectors."

The aim is that competition between providers will raise performance. "The question from a customer's point of view is always 'do we expect service to improve?', Black says. "And the answer should always be 'yes'."

Some might say that it's unfair comparing water companies to the likes of John Lewis or Amazon – which this new measure will do, but Black defends this too, as well as the financial penalties or/and incentives that go with it for bottom and top-performing providers.

"At the moment, no water company makes it to upper-quartile in comparison with other sectors, so we believe the ranking will be an incentive for them to do more," Black says. He adds: "Some may see themselves as not able to close the gap, but others will see it as a stretch target to try to do better. And service league tables do work. Severn Trent has really pulled itself around in recent years. United Utilities had big issues with its service a few years ago, but now it's one of our best performers."

Just how 'up for it' water companies are remains to be seen, because penalties will always be levied against the lowest performers. Ofwat clearly hopes they will take up the challenge.

"Service is complex," says Black. "We're not fans of levying cast-iron, single service standards across the board. We need to recognise the size of different water providers and the geographies within which they operate."




But he adds: "We have a role to encourage water companies to perform better. In many ways they are – such as during the pandemic when water companies ensured that one million customers received reduced bills and more than 90,000 customers were given payment breaks."

He adds: "Overall, I think we can say there has been a significant improvement in the service provided by water providers in the past ten years. Now we just want to ensure this continues as we move into a landscape dominated more by environmental change, carbon offsetting and a move to net-zero emissions."

OFWAT MATTERS

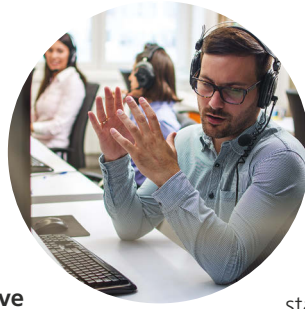
- UK water providers are in the early stages of PR24 – commitments they will be held to for 2024-2029
- Customer perception of what constitutes good service is evolving and includes environmental and community impact
- Ofwat has challenged water companies to do better on preventing leakages on the basis that there is still much more the providers can do
- Last year Ofwat introduced a new measure, C-MeX (the customer measure of experience), comparing satisfaction levels of water providers with other services

A portrait of Nick Harrison, a middle-aged man with short brown hair, smiling at the camera. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

WE'VE ALWAYS PLACED A HUGE DEGREE OF FOCUS ON EMPATHY

Standing out from the crowd is challenging in financial services. Nick Harrison, director, home and direct to consumer at Covéa Insurance tells Michelle Perry about the ESG focus, digital strategy and human touches that put Covéa Insurance ahead

Covéa Insurance, which has operated for over 60 years in the UK, serving around 2m customers, has set itself a goal to be the “most trusted insurer in the UK, putting customers at the absolute core of everything they do”. Its efforts have not gone unnoticed. Covéa came out joint top in the *Insurance Times*’ personal lines broker survey this year (2021) – the third consecutive year Covéa achieved the maximum overall five-star rating from brokers. It also achieved ServiceMark Accreditation with Distinction across its commercial claims, high net worth and personal lines businesses. Independent plaudits of the insurer’s service are helpful, but Harrison is keen to point out that Covéa also actively seeks feedback from customers to help the company meet their needs in the future.



together to make sure that we can offer a set of services to our customers that they really value,” he says.

One of the key planks of its rebooted customer service is empathy, says Harrison. The insurer has increased its staff training and customer service on empathy during the pandemic so that the most vulnerable customers have been at the forefront of its customer delivery. So, while many of today’s customers are digital-savvy and happy to buy insurance online, many still prefer someone to talk to, especially in times of crisis.

“If you can get it right for your most vulnerable customers then you’re going to get it right for the general population of customers. We’ve always placed a huge degree of focus on empathy. In the past 12 months we’ve really homed in on that, and we’ve looked to take it to another level. I do quite a bit of call listening to understand the types of issues with consumers, and during lockdown there’s been a number of times I have listened to calls and the way our people have managed a vulnerable situation is impressive.”

This kind of service has been critical to many people during the strictest of lockdowns – where we weren’t allowed to visit each other’s homes. “There’ve been some situations with bereavement and dealing with changes in policy and cancellations of policies and the way that our people have managed and delivered it is great,” Harrison says. “Often our people have gone above and beyond, sending flowers and cards.”

Like most organisations, Covéa Insurance, a UK subsidiary of the French mutual insurance group Covéa, is well underway with its digital and ESG transformation, endeavouring to embed it in its products, services and technologies. Innovation underpins much of the insurer’s new offerings – such as leak detection and safe driving practices which aim to provide customers with prevention rather than cure.

“We’re working on how to use technology to support our customers to stop the worst things happening so they can just get on with their lives,” Harrison says.

Covéa now offers its high-net-worth customers a free leak



Technological developments, changing lifestyles, a growing consumer interest in social and environmental issues, as well as the global pandemic – all these factors have accelerated Covéa’s digital transformation as part of its efforts to remain one step in front.

Staying ahead

Harrison hopes that adapting to consumers’ evolving needs in a fast-changing world will not only differentiate Covéa from its competitors, but also help it to achieve its ambition of being the most trusted UK insurer.

“As customer behaviour, an appetite for data sharing and technology advance, there are more opportunities for insurers to support their customers. And the exciting part for me is how do we join all that



detection service, partnering with a company called LeakBot. The free device is attached to the customer's mains water supply and will identify any leaks in the house, meaning a customer can take action, fast, before it becomes a bigger problem. Economically, it works for Covéa too by allowing the insurer to keep its claims costs low. Increasingly, other UK insurers are also offering this kind of service.

"What we're trying to do is stop water being wasted, but at the same time make sure that we also stop customers' houses being affected by water damage," Harrison says.

The insurer has also just launched a partnership with Vitality to offer a new motor insurance product aimed at rewarding safe drivers. It offers weekly rewards such as a free coffee. Again, it has multi-pronged benefits, reducing excess costs on insurance and keeping renewal costs down, if there are no claims. It also rewards customers when they drive well by offsetting up to 100 per cent of their carbon emissions.

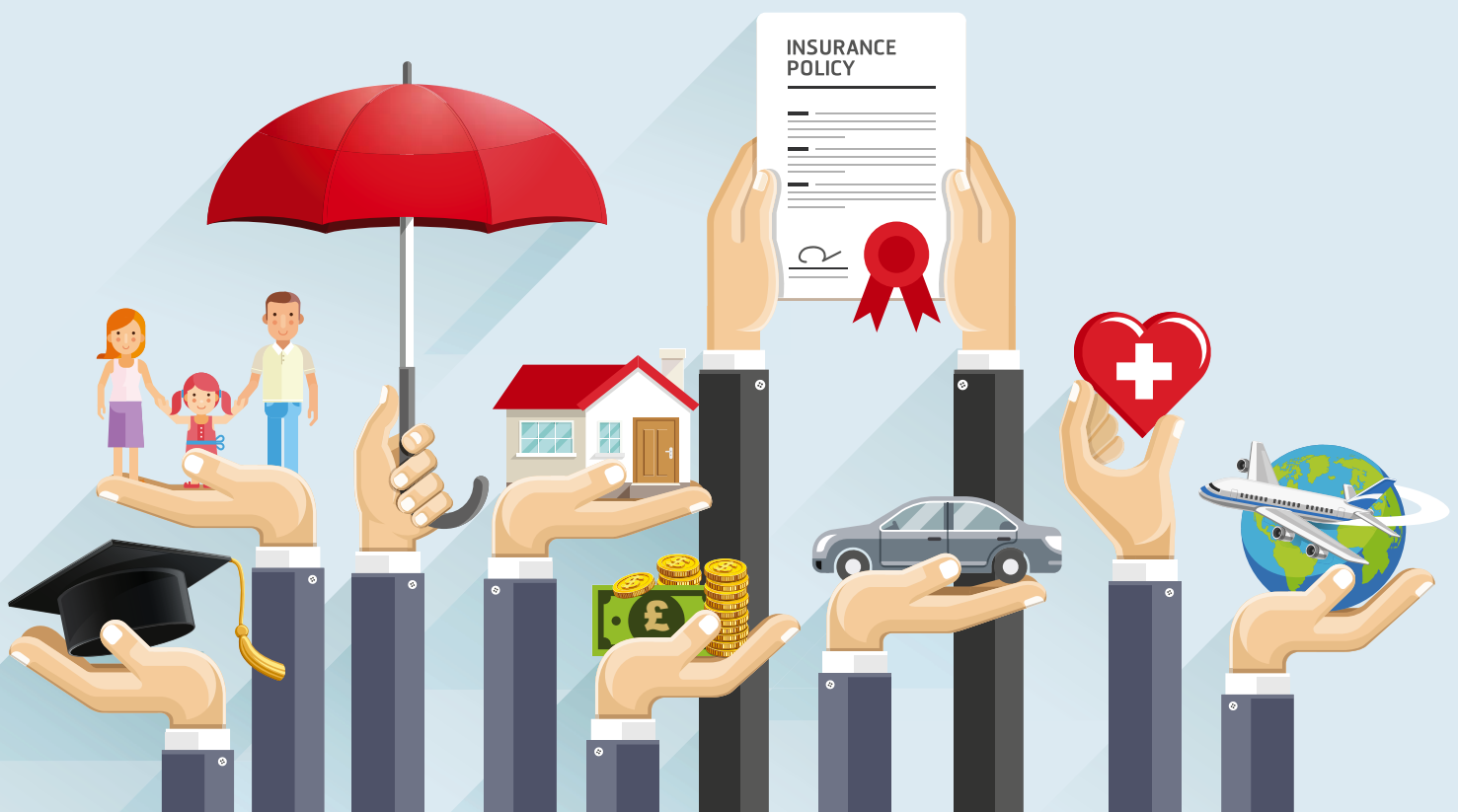
"The whole proposition is about rewarding customers for driving safely. We're developing new services and propositions that help protect the worst from happening to our customers," Harrison says.

Harrison is working to ensure that ESG becomes synonymous with Covéa not just for the obvious

environmental and economic benefits to both customer and company, but also for the purpose of attracting and retaining staff. With comparison websites, customers routinely look for the most competitive prices, but Harrison is certain that ESG factors are becoming as important as price.

**"If they were
volunteering for
critical services, we
made sure customers
were fully insured"**

"We're seeing the importance of ESG coming through from an insurance product perspective. Customers look on comparison sites and will see a selection of similarly priced motor products, but they are increasingly asking: 'How important is the environment, or social aspects, to this organisation?'" he says. In a recent survey, approximately 50 per cent of customers under the age of 44 said that it was



important that their insurance policy was with an environmentally considerate insurer.

Like many businesses, the past 18 months have been a challenging time for Covéa and its staff. Gross premiums written in 2020 were 6.9 per cent lower than in 2019. Commercial and protection claims were higher than expected, including net business interruption claims of £46.5m due to the lockdowns, and £7.1m of payment and income protection net claims.

Despite the pandemic and associated challenges, the insurer didn't pause its strategic change initiatives. It continued its investment in digital transformation, which also helped the business quickly roll out an effective

working-from-home solution before the start of the first lockdown ensuring a consistent service for customers.

What the insurer has learnt, Harrison says, is that customers are adaptable, and this has helped reassure Covéa that its digital transformation was well timed.

"Customers quickly adapted to working from home, socialising virtually and utilising their cars for different reasons. We responded to that change too." The insurer adapted its home insurance policy to make sure that home working was fully protected as too was car insurance.

"If you were volunteering for critical services across the country, we made sure customers were fully insured. Or if a potentially vulnerable customer wanted to add additional drivers to their policy so that they could be supported with their shopping and other essentials then we waived any fees associated," he says.

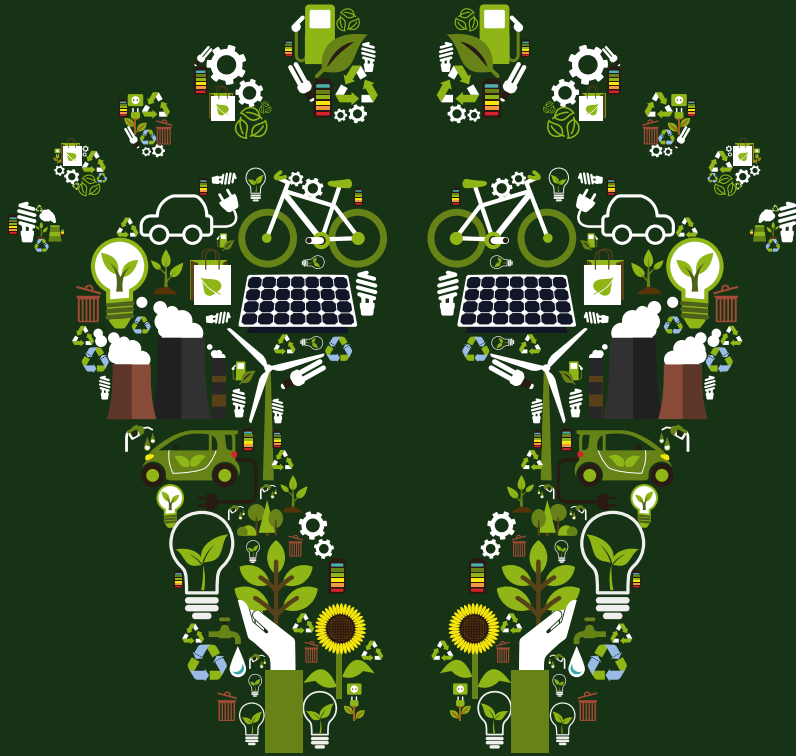
With a strong and ongoing focus on evaluating and measuring the customer experience and ensuring the measurement metrics are right, Harrison says Covéa will continue to evolve to understand the different parts of the customer journey.

As we exit lockdown and return to our everyday lives, the insurer's focus on trust, and how to measure trust effectively, will be critical at a time when trust in other institutions is in short supply.



INSURANCE MATTERS

- Covéa Insurance serves two million customers and has operated in the UK for 60 years
- It came out top personal lines broker in this year's *Insurance Times* report alongside Hiscox
- Its ESG initiatives include a leak detection service for homeowners and a reward scheme for safe drivers
- ESG-related services are becoming a conspicuous driver for consumers in a crowded insurance market



GREEN GOES MAINSTREAM?

Our experiences during the pandemic have connected us to our localities and prompted us to probe the purpose of the organisations we interact with.

Exploring more fully what consumers want and providing choices and information are the next steps. Liz Loxton reports

As we emerge, albeit somewhat shakily and unevenly out of the COVID-19 pandemic, a shaky and uneven economic recovery is underway.

At the end of the first half of 2021, food and drink companies reported increases in turnover and venues saw higher sales as hospitality reopened in the UK. Other businesses started to benefit from increased commercial activity. Exhibitions company Informa, for example, reported a steady uptick in its main markets as face-to-face events return. Other sectors – aviation, engineering, commercial property – also showed signs of improving conditions.

Few would underestimate the level of challenge, however, and economic performances will remain linked to the global health crisis for some time to come. The highly infectious COVID-19 Delta variant has hit India, Europe and Africa and parts of the US where vaccine-hesitancy is a significant issue. The inter-regional variances are stark. Meanwhile, the climate emergency continues to call bleak attention to itself, with flash floods and record-breaking temperatures in the UK, devastating floods in Northern Europe and in China and extended fire seasons in the US, Europe and Australia.



According to insurance broker Aon, insured losses from natural disasters reached \$42 billion in the first half of this year – a 10-year high.

We can scarcely require more evidence that our physical and economic health is intertwined with that of the planet. In COVID-19's chaotic wake, consumers are buying, and businesses are reopening, but our collective wellbeing remains in the balance.

In an economic recovery, particularly one such as this following a prolonged period of uncertainty, consumer expectations would normally have a particular role to play. As economic indicators improve and job numbers and productivity grow, we would expect to see spending pick up – albeit with an accompanying inflation risk. And while we see healthy levels of economic activity around the essentials, food utilities and leisure (especially home entertainment), we also see a change in sentiment in terms of consumer expectations.

Economic uncertainty prompted us to press pause on our spending habits. Disruption in supply chains has made a functional necessity of that and perhaps amplified a willingness to suspend previously unfettered spending habits in favour of conserving cash.

Lockdowns have kept us closer to home and reconnected us with our local communities, making it harder to ignore our impact on those locations. But as yet there is little to suggest that our improving intentions will be matched with good behaviour all round – from consumers and corporations alike. We may have slowed the fairground ride, but getting off entirely is not all that easy.

The pandemic simultaneously connected us more strongly to the organisations we interact with. We learned to value our supermarkets and other local food providers, looking to them for information and support.

A steady state, where we can depend on local providers to limit delivery miles, market sustainable goods and undertake to reduce the use of plastics and seek to limit pollutants, however, is still some way off and will require collaboration and innovation.

Who will go first? There is a mismatch, it seems, between what we expect to change ourselves and what we expect from the companies we engage with.

According to The Institute of Customer Service's *Green Goes Mainstream?* research, consumers expect providers to take the lead and communicate both specific personal benefits and broader environmental benefits attached to products and services.

Among customers:

- **39%** of customers said it was critically important and **40%** said it was very important "that we all make decisions based on what is best for the environment."
- **18%** of customers said the environment was the important factor in their purchasing decision, while **50%** said it was important, but not necessarily more important than price, availability, quality or service standards.
- **20%** made a purchasing decision based on sustainability in the past year and **12%** stopped buying a product or service because of an adverse environmental impact.
- Some **55%** of customers said that environmental sustainability would remain or become the defining factor when choosing products and services in the next five years.

The sentiment is emphatic, but for these sentiments to solidify into clear trends, consumers need to be met by providers. The Institute's research has other encouraging findings.

Among providers:

- **27%** of senior executives said they believed their organisation should lead on green issues, while **34%** said they should help customers become greener.
- **30%** of senior managers felt that sustainability would continue as one of their organisation's highest priorities, and **38%** said it would become a leading priority in the next five years.

How does this translate into action? According to The Institute research, customers are recycling household waste (68%); reducing plastics use (51%); reducing electricity (48%) or water (47%) consumption; and buying fewer goods (33%).

Some 20% said they had deliberately chosen an environmentally sustainable product or service in the past year, while 12% had stopped buying a product or service due to its adverse environmental impact. Utilities, health and beauty and retail were the sectors most likely to be the subject of those buying decisions based on environmental impact. Younger customers (aged under 44) and those with a relatively higher household income were more likely to stop buying a product or service due to environmental impact.

Where customers have wanted to make sustainable choices, but have not done so, the most common reasons were price, reliability, quality or lack of transparent information on environmental impacts.

For these hopeful impulses to accelerate, they must be supported by committed businesses, regulators and governments. Business, in particular, has a great opportunity here. According to Edelman Trust Barometer's 2021 Spring Update, business outperforms government, media and not-for-profits currently when it comes to responding to the health and public safety aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, on guarding information quality and addressing inequality. According to the Barometer, employees are now corporates' most important stakeholder and nearly eight in 10 employees expect their companies to act on societal issues including climate change (81%). Business is the only one of four institutions viewed as competent and ethical, according to the Barometer.

To capitalise on this current zeitgeist, business will need to act consistently and continually – and in concord with its consumers.

As Jo Causon, CEO of The Institute of Customer Service, says in her introduction to *Green Goes Mainstream?*, "Like customer service, environmental sustainability is a long-term commitment that cannot be faked or turned on or off."



You can download the research report at
<https://www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/research>





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IN SHORT SUPPLY: A SHORTAGE OF SKILLS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

by **Oliver Hazell**, senior account manager, **Cavendish Advocacy**



The situation

Back in July, the country finally reached the final Stage 4 of the government's COVID-19 roadmap. For many in sectors that had continued to be severely impacted by the pandemic in Stage 3, especially nightclubs, wedding venues and theatres, this was a welcome announcement that allowed them to start getting back on the road to recovery. But for others, the announcement caused confusion, especially as we've seen on the mask-wearing front. But bubbling away between Stages 3 and 4 of the roadmap was a larger societal concern: the continuing, yet growing, shortage of skills.

Skills shortages have been a problem brewing away long before the summer. Indeed, the understanding that the skills agenda needs review, reform and improvement has been acknowledged by the main parties for a while now. Skills featured strongly in all the main political parties' 2019 election manifestos, so this is not a new issue. However, as the country gradually reopened through the stages of the roadmap, it became even more stark that policy intervention would be needed, and quickly. Many businesses – who are on their knees because of the acute impacts of the pandemic – have found out over 2021 that reopening has only served to place another challenge in front of them; a desire to hire skilled staff but a slew of other businesses needing the same staff and a dearth of talent.

The cause

COVID-19 has clearly played a strong role in causing a skills shortage in the UK. There are reports aplenty detailing how the lockdown policies domestically and the closing of borders internationally sparked a return to home of some foreign nationals from Britain. Yet, Brexit has also played its part. Free movement with the EU ended on 31 December 2020 and new immigration rules are less appealing to EU workers than the free movement available before, stemming the flow of skills supply from the EU.

But there are also domestic COVID-19 support packages such as furlough to consider. Within the hospitality sector, where excellent customer experience is obvious to a business's success to the average consumer, employees put on furlough have not returned and instead are searching for employment in other sectors.

In the real world

As skills shortages rage, there will certainly be some organisations that pivot towards automated services, further diminishing the roles available. I wrote in the last edition of *Customer Focus* where this could happen, including automated booking services for appointments, chatbots online that can answer basic customer questions and more self-service checkouts.

However, some roles simply cannot be filled by automation. High-end restaurants are one place where automation, past an online or automated telephone booking service, simply won't work. Fans of haute cuisine are paying for the food and drink but also for the service and experience. Automation simply can't deliver the same front of house service and customer experience that a well-trained maître d' can. It is here where the importance of customer service as a vital skill within the economy comes to the fore.

While other skills in digital, construction and engineering are certainly needed in the UK economy, customer service skills are almost wholly transferable, will always be able to be used by humans far better than automated services and should be prioritised by organisations and by government. In addressing skills shortages, the government should look to integrate customer service training as a core skill for as many in the UK economy to learn as possible. Addressing open-ended questions, managing teams and dealing with challenging situations are all key customer service skills. They're all skills that an automated service would struggle with. But they're all skills that will bleed seamlessly into internal company discussions, the boardroom of organisations and day-to-day life.

In prioritising customer service skills, the government should be safe in the knowledge that as skills shortages rise and fall for varying reasons, customer service skills will always help workers find rewarding employment.

What is more, the skills one learns from customer service training will help them in a myriad of situations and scenarios, in turn creating a more productive and thriving UK economy.

UK Customer Satisfaction (UKCSI) July 2021

This has been the most unusual and challenging year for customer service since the UKCSI began in 2008. Customer attitudes, behaviours and preferences have evolved and are likely to fragment further as the consequences of the pandemic unfold. This is therefore a critical time to take stock of lessons learned and redefine future priorities.

This UKCSI shows a welcome, if modest, improvement in overall customer satisfaction. **The July 2021 UKCSI is 77.4 (out of 100), 0.4 points higher than in July 2020 and 0.6 points higher than Jan 2021.** Much of the improvement can be attributed to better complaint handling and service recovery. **Indeed, satisfaction with complaint handling is at its highest-ever level (6.0 out of 10), even though record numbers of customers (14.9%) have experienced a problem with an organisation.** This suggests that organisations have got better at dealing with issues but not necessarily better at preventing them impacting customers in the first place.

However, 24% of customers feel that organisations have sometimes used COVID-19 as an excuse for lower levels of service. Lack of adherence to COVID-19 rules, excessive queuing, lower quality of products and services, delays, stock shortages and difficulties contacting an organisation were cited as reasons to avoid using an organisation in future.

The July 2021 UKCSI includes key recommendations for organisations based on the trends that emerged in customer experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Three core themes in particular stand out.

Firstly, organisations need to be realistic and clear about their core purpose – who they serve and the sustainable impact they seek to achieve. Many organisations face difficult choices in the unpredictable and challenging months ahead. A clear organisational purpose creates a coherent base from which to energise employees and stakeholders, strengthen core capabilities and make appropriate strategic and operational choices.

Secondly, COVID-19 has heightened the importance of flexibility, adaptability and innovation. Organisations need to learn from the enforced changes of COVID-19, retain the benefits and develop the mindset and capabilities to enable ongoing innovation.

Finally, organisations need to engage proactively with their customers, providing timely and relevant communications that demonstrate a genuine care for their wellbeing.

The July 2021 UK Customer Satisfaction Index: the state of customer satisfaction in the UK is available at www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/ukcsi

The Changing World of Work

Our next Breakthrough Research project, on the changing world of work, will be published on 29 September 2021.

At a time of significant change and disruption in the economy, the research examines how work culture and the environment will change in the future, including: implications for how we work, for job design, skills, training, careers, organisational culture, structures and measurement. The research will draw on the perspectives of senior leaders, managers, employees and customers and is sponsored by Aster Group, HMRC, O2 and United Utilities.

Recent Breakthrough Research publications, which are available to Institute organisational members at www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/research include:

Who Do You Trust? Improving trust through customer service and Green Goes Mainstream? Customer service and the green agenda



The Procurement Partnership: Developing relationships to deliver excellent customer service through procurement

The Institute's Annual Conference 2021: Redefining the Service Nation – Building a Better Future and the UK Customer Satisfaction Awards will take place on **Tuesday 19 October 2021 at the London Hilton on Park Lane**

Our Annual Conference is the biggest forum for customer service thought leadership and best practice in the UK. The event draws together hundreds of service professionals and business leaders to learn from examples of global service excellence.

Speakers on the day include:



Ayesha Hazarika MBE

Columnist and Broadcaster



Joanna Jensen

Founder and Chairman, Childs Farm



Nick Jenkins

Founder, Moonpig.com



Chris Stylianou OBE

Chief Operating Officer, Sky



Lord Karan Bilimoria

Founder, Cobra Beer



Dr Peter Carter OBE

Former CEO, Royal College of Nursing

<https://www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/conference>

The UK Customer Satisfaction Awards follow our Annual Conference, and they celebrate service excellence at its best. This year will see the introduction of the Sustainable Customer Service Award. This is open to any organisation that has introduced a sustainability/green agenda initiative into its business which has had a demonstrable impact on customer experience. Sustainability can encompass environmental impact, corporate governance, fair treatment of employees, suppliers and customers and proactive engagement with local or global communities.

We look forward to seeing many of you (in person at last!) to celebrate our UK Customer Satisfaction Award winners. We hope to see you there.

Grab your ticket now!

For more information visit: www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/conference



Dates for the diary

29 SEPT 2021	Breakthrough Research Launch – The Changing World of Work (TAN and DR Members only)	15 OCT 2021	Handling challenging interactions with confidence (TAN and DR Members only Virtual Event)
04 OCT-08 OCT 2021	National Customer Service Week (NCSW) [several activities and events]	19 OCT 2021	Annual Conference 2021 Redefining the Service Nation – Building a Better Future
04 OCT 2021	Managing Your Team for Success (TAN and DR Members only Virtual Event)	19 OCT 2021	UK Customer Satisfaction Awards 2021
06 OCT 2021	Discovery Roadmap Meeting (DR Members only)	20 OCT 2021	QPM/Assessor Forums
12 OCT 2021	Head to Head with Michael Lewis (E.ON UK plc)	22 OCT 2021	Introduction to effective complaints handling (TAN and DR Members)
14 OCT 2021	Introduction to Vulnerable Customers (TAN and DR Members only)	17 NOV 2021	Introduction to Customer Journey Mapping (TAN and DR Members only)
		09 DEC 2021	TAN Meeting

For details of our events programme, please visit: www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/events

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