



CASE STUDY



KEEPING PCI COMPLIANCE FLOWING

Pennon Water Services is a joint venture between Pennon Group Plc and South Staffordshire Plc; both with over 25 years' experience in regulated water supply and committed to delivering simple, accurate and timely billing for water retail services.

It serves over 160,000 customer accounts across Great Britain and is recognised as one of the top four 'champion' performers in the water retail market, based on size and growth, by consultants, Brodick.

Pennon Water Services also delivers a wide range of water related services including leak detection and repair, Legionella testing, water monitoring and treatment, alternative water sources, contingency planning and 'smart' meters with a high level of expertise and service.



THE COMPLIANCE CHALLENGE


With its main retail service centre located in Bournemouth and a satellite office located in Walsall, West Midlands, Pennon Water Services has a team of around 30 contact centre operatives handling anywhere between 500 to 800 calls every day. They manage all call handling enquiries including payment collections.

In 2017 the non-household retail part of the water industry was opened up to competition. The Pennon Group created Pennon Water Services to compete in the new retail market, One of its first actions was to award a contract to a national telecoms company to handle the set up of its telephony and associated systems.

The organisation was facing a number of issues, as Stephen Wright, IT Engineer explains, “With our previous telco provider, we had nothing but issues. Our call centre systems would fail, the payment system would go down and the service we experienced was unsatisfactory. Another issue was that we could only transact one payment per call, which was embarrassing for agents when a customer would call regarding switching a portfolio of 20 addresses to us for example, and we would have to initiate a new call to process a payment for each address. The customer experience sadly didn’t match what we wanted to provide and so we urgently needed a big change.”

Another challenge facing Stephen was that a number of manual interventions were required to ensure the provider remained compliant with PCI DSS rules.

“If our telephone payment service had failed, we had to ask customers to either go and pay online, or we would have to manually process the payment,” explains Stephen. “This meant that I would have to go into the call recording system, identify the call in question and delete the recording to ensure no payment information was retained. As you can imagine, this was not an ideal scenario. I would receive tickets requesting for calls to be deleted, and I was spending so much of my time doing this that it became frustrating.”



“We haven’t looked back since – the comparison from our previous supplier is like night and day.”

Stephen Wright
IT Engineer, Pennon Water Services

THE SOLUTION

After a market review, Pennon Water Services selected Vonage’s NewVoiceMedia (NVM) service to take over its contact centre telephony infrastructure.

Continues Stephen, “I attended Salesforce conferences and always noticed that our previous supplier was never in attendance. I did however always notice that NVM would be visible, with a large presence and knowledgeable staff. Everything I saw from them was professional and I was impressed with what I saw.”

Pennon Water Services began working with NVM in October 2019 and everything went live in January 2020 – this included its telephony, including Salesforce integration and use of the

Vonage IVR (Interactive Voice Response) system, and payment security from its go-to partner, PCI Pal.

PCI Pal’s Agent Assist solution is a cloud-based payments solution that utilises DTMF (Dual Tone Multi Frequency) masking technology. This provides companies with a secure way of handling payments by phone without bringing their environments in scope of PCI DSS. It has the added advantage of being able to integrate with the Vonage IVR solution, providing Pennon Water Services with a seamless service.

Confirms Stephen, “We haven’t looked back since – the comparison from our previous supplier is like night and day.”

RESULTS

Since working with Vonage and PCI Pal, Pennon Water Services has already seen a number of benefits for its contact centre agents – and the organisation as a whole.

“One aspect we hadn’t necessarily anticipated is the boost in morale this would have with our team – our agents love the change as the overall experience they can now provide is far superior. Everything is fully integrated into Salesforce so we have better access to transactions and have visibility of each customer, their payment plans and this means we can be more actionable on calls.”

In terms of the way telephone payments have changed, Stephen is quick to celebrate PCI Pal’s solution, “A big thing is that we can now handle multiple payments on one call. It’s seamless, PCI DSS compliant, with no manual intervention needed from me to remove any payment data from call recordings. The team were great at getting everything in place ahead of go-live and worked to our deadline without any query. We didn’t need to raise support tickets and wait for help like our previous supplier; instead they are just there, on the end of the phone or email, whenever we need them. It was a great team effort by all involved.”



“For Pennon Water Services, we are committed to delivering simple, accurate and timely billing for water services within one bill, one payment date and one telephone number to call. Working with Vonage and PCI Pal enables us to deliver on this commitment, in a secure and compliant way, satisfying both our clients and our staff in the process.”

Stephen Wright

IT Engineer, Pennon Water Services

OUR ACCREDITATIONS



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