SUCCESS STORY

MORRISON UTILITY SERVICES
Efficient business support operations

10-year strategic partnership for the provision of back office functions and regulatory-driven transactional processing. Outsourcing heavily transactional business support processes, including Safe Dig paperwork, helps utility services provider maintain focus on core engineering tasks.

Challenge summary

Morrison Utility Services sought to relieve significant cost pressure and improve its transactional processing efficiency with an outsourced partnership.

Key points

- Risk-free transition to outsourced support services
- Flexible resource pool provides extended hours of coverage and fast turnaround of work orders
- Wide ranging services, including Safe Dig and Survey pack preparation, billing and invoicing

The challenge

Morrison Utility Services is a leading UK utility service contractor. It provides engineering, repair and construction work to companies responsible for maintaining and operating the UK's utility network infrastructures (gas, water, electricity, telecoms).

In a highly competitive, low margin business, regulation demands significant investment in the infrastructure, especially in water and electricity. It is important, therefore, to find areas of the business where improved process efficiency can reduce costs to help free up funds for re-investment elsewhere.

Regulatory and health, safety & environment (HSE) requirements create significant volumes of paperwork both for Morrison Utility Services and the companies it provides services to. Billing and invoicing transactions add another layer of administration that ties up resources

and adds to costs. The company wanted to work with a partner able to take on much of this work and free up its own management team to focus on core engineering support activities.

Our solution

As a leading provider of outsourced business services to the UK utilities market, Sopra Steria offered a solution that would not only deliver tangible cost savings but yield continuous improvement in the services provided.

The solution is a 10-year strategic partnership in which heavily transactional processing is carried out by Sopra Steria's people offshore. It rests on the following:

- A well founded understanding of utilities support activities and the guidelines and regulations that govern their undertaking, such as Safe Dig requirements;
- The ability to access diverse sources to produce asset information from utility providers;
- Knowledge of civil engineering support processes, such as job validation, local authority noticing, etc. and the implications of these on overall programmes of work;
- Expertise in managing emergency and planned engineering work for water utilities – responding to Safe Dig packs with various priorities.

Delivering Transformation. Together.

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How we work together

Morrison Utility Services carries out renewal, refurbishment and maintenance work on infrastructure and networks for a range of utility customers. Each project is a standalone entity and managed as a separate cost centre. An internal Business Process Improvement (BPI) manager worked with Sopra Steria to define a framework for offering outsourced support services as required by each cost centre.

Today Sopra Steria works with the BPI team to draw up business cases and inform its conversations with these internal clients. They, in turn, are able to offer the cost and process efficiency gains to their customers.

A risk-free transition to Sopra Steria's delivery model was assured with a highly collaborative dual-running of the initial processes moved offshore. Morrison Utility Services has access to a wide range of transactional processes, including the following:

- **Safe Dig pack creation**: Sopra Steria collates all the necessary asset information before any planned or emergency engineering work is undertaken on public assets. The Safe Dig drawings are issued to field teams to enable safe and successful excavation;

- **Survey pack preparation**: all the right asset information for planned work is made available and tidied up, including maps, photographs, plans, etc. so that works planners can prepare their designs;

- **Validation**: information on jobs must be checked for completeness and consistency, and include all estimated components before being accepted;

- **Planning and scheduling**: Sopra Steria helps to maintain field force schedules, including subcontractors, so they are effectively deployed;

- **Noticing**: applying to local authorities for planning permission before any digging activity begins;

- **Distribution Network Operator (DNO) applications**: applications are made to DNOs for power to be provided to the telecoms cabinets carrying broadband and telephony circuits;

- **Job closure**: ensuring all the paperwork is complete and all necessary HSE and quality audit records are in place before a job is sent for invoicing. This process also supports payments to subcontractors;

- **Finance and billing**: Sopra Steria matches estimated consumables against actual consumed to enable correct billing and provides process support for preparation of invoices.

Results and benefits

Sopra Steria works with both Morrison Utility Services and its customers to define and deliver the Utility Support Services that are bringing a number of benefits:

- Reduced back office costs and improved transactional processing efficiency and speed;

- Ability to scale up services as and when required due to Sopra Steria's flexible offshore resource pool;

- Improved quality and performance-driven metrics;

- Better management information.