

Memphis Light Gas and Water



As the nation's largest three-service municipal utility with 429,000 customers, Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW) relies on innovation and hard work to support its customers, employees, and the communities it serves.

The utility supports a unique customer base of hardworking people across a range of socio-economic standings. MLGW is active in its communities, providing a range of services and educational programs, including energy and environmental courses, volunteerism, and school enrichment.

As a good community steward, MLGW wanted to improve customer engagement while modernizing its operation. The stumbling block was the existing service workflow system. Faced with the decision to upgrade or replace—and with the legacy system lacking a future-forward technology roadmap—MLGW chose to replace it with a more modern approach.

Along with driving improvements to the customer experience, a new workforce management platform would allow the utility to consolidate disparate workflows, increase efficiencies, and provide a safer environment for workers in the field.

About Memphis light gas and water

Although Memphis Light, Gas and Water has been in existence since 1939, its parent companies started more than 100 years ago. MLGW and the services they provide have come a long way since their beginnings not long after the Civil War. The city's first utility company was the Memphis Gas Light Company, formed in 1852. It served 10,000 people and covered just three-square-miles. The city's water supply came from cisterns and the Wolf River but today it is supplied by the artesian water under the city.

Today MLGW is the nation's largest three-service municipal utility, serving more than 429,000 customers. Since 1939, MLGW has met the utility needs of Memphis and Shelby County residents by delivering reliable and affordable electricity, natural gas and water service.



The search for a solution

MLGW created a detailed list of requirements for the new platform. One priority was consolidating how work orders are processed. As a three-service utility, each service area (electric, gas, water) used separate tickets to carry out its work. MLGW wanted to consolidate its work order configuration, providing all workers with a single workflow that could support all the various types of work and services the utility performed.

Additional capabilities included support for the utility's opt-out meter reading program. In order to save costs and consolidate mobile applications, MLGW wanted to shift this work to the new platform, obviating the need for costly dedicated hardware and software.

Another important requirement was to elevate the customer experience, providing an intuitive communication model for service appointments (booking, reminding, rescheduling) and satisfaction surveys immediately following a service interaction.

A better customer communication model would also allow MLGW to combat a rising fraud scenario whereby imposters were pressuring residents to make cash payments to avoid a service disconnection.

After reviewing various vendors, MLGW selected Clevest and the Clevest Mobile Workforce Management (MWFM) platform. The utility based its decision on the company's detailed and innovative technology roadmap, feedback from peer organizations, and its reputation of working in partnership with customers throughout the initial deployment and beyond.

Implementation

The project began in early 2018. Phase one consisted of the configuration of workflows for managing outages (electrical) and multi-task services such as meter services and locates—including opt-out meter reading. The project scope also included disconnects for light, gas, and water services.

The Clevest MWFM platform consolidates all of these requests, automatically routing work orders to the appropriate administrators. In turn, they can schedule and assign tasks to workers and crews with the necessary skill sets. The platform can also intuitively identify scenarios where a specific team is required.



Administrators can use responsive scheduling for work and route optimization as worker availability changes in the moment. Field workers can manage their schedules and interactions via mobile devices (versus paper forms), providing digital record-keeping for real-time data insights.

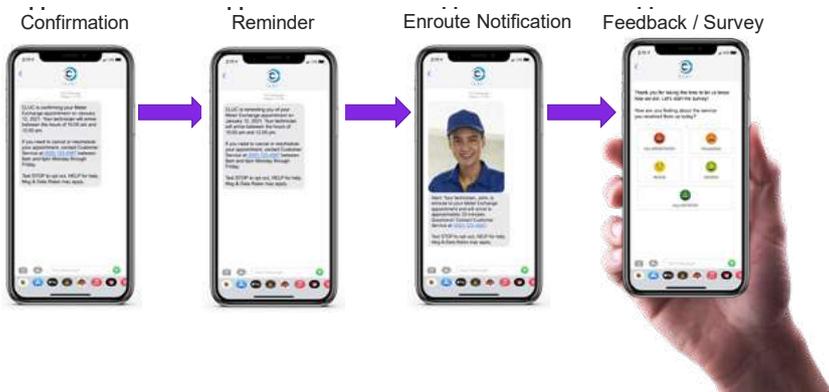
Additional efficiencies were achieved in meter reading workflows with MLGW's Itron mobile meter reading system. Today workers rely on the Clevest app and iPhones to perform this work in the field, collecting data and sending it back to the Itron system for billing.

With no reliance on paper-based systems, this digital data model provides workers in the field with optimum flexibility in how they work and share information with supervisors and administrators. Even in the most rugged conditions, workers can stay connected by relying on mobile devices, including Panasonic TOUGHBOOK® Tablets, laptop computers, and smartphones.

Customer communication & engagement

The MLGW and Clevest teams decided to create a dedicated track for customer communication and engagement work. The objective was to build an interactive communication platform that delivers a customer-first experience, leveraging SMS, IVR, and email to interact with customers on the platform of their choice.

The project also included survey capabilities to track satisfaction after each service interaction properly.



1. Formula for success

1. Engaged and satisfied customers: With a broad range of communication platforms, including self-service options, interactive reminders, and scheduling tools, MLGW can meet and exceed customer expectations. Surveys generate automatically to help the utility identify and replicate scenarios where satisfaction scores are consistently high while driving improvements where feedback is neutral or negative.

1. A real-time data-driven operation: With digital workflows, workers in the field can use a range of mobile devices (Panasonic TOUGHBOOK® Tablets, laptop computers, and smartphones) to stay connected and to collect and share data across the utility.

1. Cost-effective operation: The elimination of manual workflows has created significant efficiencies across the utility. For example, real-time data provides administrators with a cohesive view of the operation. Orders can be grouped geographically or assigned to the closest worker for fewer truck rolls, reducing costs and the utility's carbon footprint.

1. Collaborating on the future: Impressed by the Clevest product roadmap, MLGW is now an active member of the Clevest Customer Advisory Board (CAB). In partnership with other utility customers, MLGW can share experiences and provide input to the roadmap, ensuring that real-world requirements inform new features and capabilities.

Today MLGW continues to innovate, introducing smaller form factors for field workers, along with new workflows and scheduling measures.

MLGW is a member of the [AT&T FirstNet initiative](#) that provides utilities with dedicated access to the cellular network emergency band. With a modern mobile workforce management platform, the utility can more easily coordinate with larger-scale utilities and system operators during an emergency.

The next phase of the project will focus on provisioning additional workflows, including asset maintenance, inspection, and construction activities.

“Having reached the end-of-life of our existing legacy system, we went to the market for a replacement solution. We selected Clevest based on their strong value and exceptional product features including GIS asset information, AccuWeather integration, and support for iPhone and Windows tablets. Clevest’s previous experience in replacing the same legacy system at other multiservice utilities was also an important factor in our decision.”

Michael Faulk, Information Services Manager, MLGW

Clevest, an IFS company, provides innovative workforce management software that connects the mobile workforce to office operations, enabling utilities to rapidly automate and optimize any field work activity or process to improve response time, safety, productivity, and effectiveness. Clevest integrates with leading enterprise systems, with configurable solutions that can be deployed on-premise or in the cloud. Over 270 utilities have selected Clevest to manage their field workers, crews and contractors. Combined, the Clevest solution serves 100M+ consumers through 12,000+ mobile workers and 1,200+ dispatchers.

Find out more

Further information, e-mail info@ifs.com, contact your local IFS office or visit our web site, ifs.com

