

# Case study: Centrica

## QAS Pro boosts customer acquisition



### Centrica

Centrica was formed in 1997 following its de-merger from British Gas Plc (now BG Plc). Centrica is now the parent company of a number of utility based businesses.

The Centrica vision is to become a leading integrated energy company in its chosen markets committed to delivering top quartile shareholder returns. It uses strong brands and distinctive assets and capabilities to achieve success in markets in the UK, North America and Western Europe. One of those strong brands is British Gas.



#### Situation

Under the Centrica umbrella, British Gas undertook one of the largest CRM migration projects of its time in 2002. The project involved migrating 20 million customer records into Siebel. In a migration project of this scale, good data quality is essential and Experian QAS' point of capture address validation tool, QAS Pro, was chosen in conjunction with the new CRM system.

In 2007, Centrica decided to upgrade its version of QAS Pro to take advantage of the new features and datasets, specifically utility and electoral roll data. The project was designed to reduce operational costs and improve some of the key business processes that were put in place with the original implementation.

One of Centrica's main objectives was to reduce the amount of exceptions generated from the sales channels that prevented contract packs from being issued to customers. When a new customer contacts British Gas to switch over their supply, vital details such as name, address and meter point number (MPRN) must be collected.

This becomes problematic when you have a number of properties sharing the same postal address, such as Victorian buildings that have been converted into flats. Each property has its own meter so it's essential to identify the sub-premise information (i.e. Flat 1B, 2 High Street) to sign up new customers effectively.

The exceptions were mainly created due to the agents being unable to locate the MPRN or sub-premise information during the initial call. This exception delays the sale from passing through into the seven day cooling-off period, during which a customer can decide to cancel their agreement. This prolonged the customer acquisition process and impacted Centrica's revenue through lost 'days on supply'.

Centrica also wanted to use the project to refresh its prospect database. This would support future marketing activities and ensure that the most complete and accurate prospect records are given to the sales channels, thus increasing opportunities to sell.

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**“Thanks to Experian QAS, we have seen an impressive reduction in the number of properties that our Field Sales representatives are unable to locate, due to missing sub-premise information. This is fantastic as it means there has been a reduction in customer leakage levels.”**

Eddie Edwards, Data Manager,  
Centrica

### Solution

The project involved working with Experian QAS consultants to change the integration so that Centrica's CRM system used the new QAS Pro V6 software. The consultants also configured the software so that when people were entering contact information it was as user friendly as possible.

The searching within QAS Pro V6 is also far more sophisticated and granular. It searches across PAF and a broad range of additional datasets, such as Names Data, Utility Data and NotYet Built Data, which contain over three million extra sub-premise details. This helps generate an uplift in match rates and assists in identifying the customers during the account creation process. As a result, only the most accurate and complete contact record is returned. In addition, the depth of the data files means that only 0.02% of gas meter numbers can't be matched to an address.

### Results

After just one month, Centrica was already seeing some good results from the Experian QAS product. Eddie Edwards, Data Manager at Centrica, comments: “We received a lot of support from Experian QAS, who were always available to provide assistance and expertise.”

“Previously, missing sub-premise information had affected up to 35% of our address searches in some postcode areas. Using the new version of QAS Pro, we have seen an impressive reduction in the number of properties that our Field Sales representatives are unable to locate, due to missing sub-premise information.

This is fantastic as it means we can more easily match customers to their MPRN number and get them signed up quicker, which has really helped to boost our customer numbers.”

There have also been significant improvements in sales exception processing and an uplift in data quality, with more accurate prospect and sales information being inputted to the marketing database. This, in turn, has increased the accuracy of Centrica's mailings, which has resulted in fewer accounts falling into arrears and the collections process.

Having the most up-to-date software across the IT infrastructure was paramount to Centrica. Using the latest software from Experian QAS has enabled it to standardise processes used across the British Gas infrastructure.

### Future plans

Centrica plans to make further use of the reverse search function within QAS Pro V6 to identify addresses from MPRN data.

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