

British Gas Services

Alvaria™ Workforce helps build an integrated resource strategy



The Organization

British Gas Services (BGS) is the largest domestic central heating and gas appliance installation company in the UK, directly employing more than 8,000 engineers to carry out servicing and breakdown services. The BGS contact center operation comprises five Area Service Centers (handling inbound and outbound service contacts) and a National Center (handling new business, membership and retention calls). BGS' 1,690 full-time contact center personnel deal with more than 3.4 million British Gas customers.

Motivation for Change

Eighteen months ago, resource planners were bogged down in processing exceptions and managing holidays rather than in forward planning and there were attrition and performance issues in BGS' contact center operations.

Clearly, this was not a recipe for success. A root and branch investigation of operations identified several areas that needed attention – from the way employee schedules were created and implemented, to the manner in which candidates were identified and recruited.



“When you handle 14 million customer calls a year across a broad range of services, every second counts – and having efficient workforce optimization tools is absolutely essential to delivering quality service. Alvaria Workforce has helped us deliver substantial cost savings, as well as improve satisfaction levels amongst both our customers and employees.”

– Paul Milloy, National Resource Planning Manager,
British Gas Services (BGS) Contact Centres

Why Alvaria

In the resource scheduling area, BGS introduced new training to upskill its resource planners and invested in new workforce optimization tools.

Already a heavy user of Alvaria technology, BGS decided to upgrade to the latest version of the workforce management tool, Alvaria™ Workforce. As well as gaining a new user interface, BGS also invested in two enhancement modules for Alvaria Workforce:

- **Perform:** provides management with an at-a-glance view of agent activity in real time and compares that to scheduled activities.
- **Empower:** gives BGS agents the ability to make holiday and some in-day exception requests on a self-serve basis; plus enables BGS Team Managers (TMs) to schedule one-on-ones and team time. The Notification Server part of Empower lets TMs and agents know about changes when requests have been approved.

The Results

BGS has realized substantial benefits through its technology investments. Overall, costs have fallen by more than £600,000 per annum.

Through more efficient resource planning, introducing self-service for agents and Team Managers and upskilling its planners, BGS has cut its local resource planning team from 40 to 28 heads, an annualized cost saving of £252,000 – while bringing about greater employee empowerment and schedule adherence.

In addition, by introducing resource scheduling self-service, the business has been able to localize systems access control within the resource teams at an additional annualized saving of £50,000 and to absorb some additional resource planning activity (e.g. manpower reporting for other areas at the sites) at no additional cost.

And, in 2007, BGS overall Employee Engagement scores leapt five percent to 4.2 (on a 5-point scale) while annual attrition fell by 21 percent.

Alvaria Workforce has also enabled more flexible working by tracking employees that are contracted to do:

1. **Swing contracts:** employees do extra hours during the busy winter season in exchange for time off during the summer months or extra holiday.
2. **Reserved hours contracts:** employees are contracted to work overtime hours, calculated at 'time and a half'.
3. **'Take five' contracts:** employees get five hours bonus pay for working five occasions of five overtime hours.

In the future, BGS plans to extend its use of Alvaria Workforce Engagement Management (WEM) tools by developing personal accounts for staff so that they can monitor and track their investment time, public holiday working and seasonal hours working. It also plans to extend self-service facilities to cover shift trades and develop the scope of workforce optimization to cover the whole of the Area Service Center footprint.

In recognition of its achievements, BGS was listed as one of the top 50 places to work in the 2007 Best Workplaces list – a very rare achievement for a company of its size. BGS’ Retention Department also recently picked up the UK Customer Contact Association (CCA) “Best Use of Certification” award and won the 2008 Professional Planning Forum award for Innovation.



“Alvaria™ Workforce gives us really good visibility of what’s going on in the contact center. It enables us to closely manage intraday performance and make changes to improve performance. In particular, the Perform and Empower modules have had a major impact. Perform enables us to see real-time variations and exceptions in the resource plan as they happen (rather than after), helping us to improve Real Time Adherence, compliance, utilization of FTEs and agent productivity – and consequently reduce headcount. Empower has also played a key role by empowering our employees to ensure they get their vestment and breaks at the best time for customers and for them. Overall, workforce planning is more efficient, service quality has improved, and costs have fallen.”

*– Paul Milloy, National Resource Planning Manager,
British Gas Services (BGS) Contact Centres*

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About Alvaria

Alvaria™ was founded through the merger of Aspect Software and Noble Systems, technology leaders in Customer Experience (CX) and Workforce Engagement solutions. Our name is derived from Latin for “hives” – nature’s perfect form for millions of years – bringing you solutions that are scalable, resilient and secure, with efficiency, speed and pinpoint accuracy. ALVARIA™. Reshaping Customer Experience™. For more information, visit www.alvaria.com. Follow Alvaria on Twitter at [@Alvaria_Inc](https://twitter.com/Alvaria_Inc). #ReshapingCX

