

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **WorkPlace Systems helps Severn Trent Water gain 'A' rating in Ofwat's Water and Sewerage service cost analysis**

**Milton Keynes – 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006**, Severn Trent Water has reduced operational costs and improved customer service as a result of implementing a new mobile workforce automated scheduling and tracking system from WorkPlace Systems, a leading supplier of integrated Workforce Management solutions.

The system has enabled Severn Trent to change its business process in the Operational Management Centre (OMC), enabling it to reduce costs and raise quality in the assessment of all calls coming into the call centre; which supports the company goal of 'right first time'. The new scheduling system provides a strong foundation for further planned improvement in Field Operations during 2006.

Prior to implementing the system, the field service team, some 1,000 plus employees, were manually scheduled from the centre. Calls coming into the call centre were passed to one of two Operational Management Centres (OMC's), where the job was assessed and then scheduled to the field. Severn Trent was using an internally developed planning system coupled to its job management system to help plan and schedule work that was either pre-programmed or reactive.

"The old system could not accommodate dynamic change or track the progress of each job leading to large inefficiencies and less than satisfactory customer service levels. The new system encourages users to complete work in the order that it is planned, thereby helping to achieve better compliance with customer promises", stated Mark Wood, Severn Trent's project manager for this initiative.

Understanding the need for change Severn Trent initiated a project to improve Field Operations from when a customer called in with a problem, through the analysis of the work to be done, to how the job was scheduled in with other pre-programmed tasks and then tracked to ensure service levels were met. A full Invitation to Tender was issued to a number of vendors and, after a rigorous assessment, WorkPlace Systems was chosen to implement their solution.

"We chose WorkPlace Systems because they demonstrated a real operational product backed up by a knowledgeable team of professional services and technical support, who understood our challenge and could make the solution work. We felt WorkPlace would be a good company to partner with and ensure the project was delivered", stated Mark Wood.

The solution is based on WorkPlace's Work Scheduling and Tracking software suite. Interfaced directly to Severn Trent's job management system, the WorkPlace software automatically schedules the work to the available field staff taking into account their capabilities, their availability and their geographic location. This automation removes the reliance on local knowledge and implements a consistent and controlled process which can be managed from a centralised call centre. Once scheduled, the jobs are issued direct to the field staff using rugged hand-held computers. Feedback on progress is viewed directly within the WorkPlace software, allowing real-time updates and rescheduling to occur throughout the day.

The new system has been in place for 18 months and there have been a number of key benefits. Through schedule automation, the whole field team schedules are now run in less than 90 minutes, which has allowed the OMC to reduce costs and divert more people from scheduling to assessing the incoming jobs. This has directly improved 'front of job' performance which supports the 'right first time' objective for the operation. As a result customer service has improved and Severn Trent is better able to comply with the increasingly stringent service levels expected by its customers and regulators. Work is now scheduled correctly, according to business rules that support the agreed goals of the company.

With Ofwat continuing to raise the bar on the water industry, Severn Trent is determined to make further improvements in its efficiency and customer service. Mark Wood concludes "WorkPlace's solution is a key enabler in making the next big

move forward in Field Operations to deliver even faster and more efficient service to our customers".

In their 2005 Annual Report Tony Wray, Managing Director of Severn Trent Water states: "Our relative efficiency in our operational activities was recognised by Ofwat with an 'A' rating in both water and sewerage service unit cost analysis. A substantial number of efficiency improvement initiatives have been undertaken during the year. These include energy efficiency improvements at water and sewerage treatment works, the introduction of mobile IT for our networks field staff, automated work scheduling for some field staff, annualised hours contracts for appropriate work groups and a reduction in the number of tiers of management. We have a defined schedule of improvements to allow us to both improve performance and reduce costs into AMP4."

### **About Severn Trent Water**

Severn Trent Water, part of Severn Trent plc, has an annual turnover of just under £1bn. Its principle business is the supply of water and treatment and disposal of sewage for an area of more than 21,000 square kilometres, stretching from the Bristol Channel to the Humber Estuary and from Mid Wales to the East Midlands. With around 5000 employees it services over 8 million customers and is the world's fourth largest privately-owned water company.

### **About WorkPlace Systems**

WorkPlace Systems was founded in 1986 and is listed on the London Stock Exchange (WSI), WorkPlace is a leading supplier of Workforce Management software and of consulting solutions which increase customer service significantly and reduce labour costs. The WorkPlace product set is a fully integrated, web-based suite of Workforce Management software which services the strategic requirements for Budgeting and Labour Modeling in addition to the operational demands of Labour Forecasting, Scheduling, Time and Attendance and Performance Reporting. With a particular focus in Retail, Hospitality, Emergency Services and Transportation, WorkPlace has been implemented in some of the largest and most complex Workforce Management environments in the world.

Clients in the utilities sector include: Scottish Power, British Telecom, Transco, Midlands Electricity, Severn Trent Water.

WorkPlace Systems is headquartered in the UK and has regional offices in Italy, Australia and the USA. For more information visit: [www.workplace-systems.com](http://www.workplace-systems.com)