

# Bord Gáis Networks Modernise Field Operations with ClickSoftware



## Background

Bord Gáis Networks (BGN) is responsible, through an Operating Agreement with Gaslink (The Independent System Operator), for the network infrastructure that distributes gas across Ireland. This agreement covers the construction of new gas connections and all work on service pipes and meters at customer's premises on behalf of the country's gas suppliers. BGN manages a full 24-hour emergency response service, handling almost 20,000 call-outs each year.

BGN is totally committed to the further development and maintenance of the necessary systems, processes and resources in order to promote continuous safety improvement and performance across its 13,229km of gas pipeline.

## The Challenge

BGN is a commercial, semi-state run company that must balance commercial operations with commitments to both the regulator (CER) and obligations under the Customer Charter. These commitments include the requirement to respond to all reported Gas Escapes within 60 minutes and to all reported No Gases within 24 hours.

Invariably success or failure in meeting these obligations results directly from the efficient management of field operations. Historically 17 BGN dispatchers used a range of paper and spreadsheet systems across 13 locations to direct resources in the field. It was an administrative process; taking up to two days for updates to be received from the field after work completion. Furthermore, the excessive administration needed to access operational data made it challenging for the company to act proactively and effectively plan preventative maintenance activity. Without real-time data it was impossible to pre-empt jeopardy situations. The process was expensive to support and difficult to adapt quickly to evolving business needs.

Engineer works in the field were carried out by five large Sub-Contractors. Without a single scheduling system procedures in the field varied significantly. Productivity also suffered, only 60 % of working hours were spent on core work at customer sites.

While BGN managed to meet over 92% of appointments within the timescale required by the Regulator, it was a constant challenge to stay within criteria and avoid potential financial penalties.

## Benefits

- **Delivering Strategic Objectives:** The scheduling programme has been central to BGN hitting its Network Transformation Project Targets
- **Increased Productivity:** Engineers spend 20% more time on core tasks
- **Regulatory Compliance:** The company's compliance on appointable activity is now at 97%
- **Reduced administration:** The Company redeployed 75% of part-time Dispatchers away from administration to more strategic tasks
- **Improved Customer service:** BGN's Engineers react faster to call-outs and provide even better, standardised services, to meet its Customer Charter obligations
- **Visibility:** ClickSchedule provides dispatchers with a real-time view of Field Resources and incidents across the 13,000 km of pipeline it manages
- **Adaptability:** BGN can rapidly mobilise its Workforce to be aligned to market forces
- **Reduced costs:** Improved operational productivity and less administration results in reduced costs to the end Customer

"It was time to act, we needed to achieve greater operational efficiencies without impacting safety standards," said Liz Shouldice, Workflow Progression Manager at BGN. "With this in mind and the coming together of the transmission and distribution businesses we began a 'Network Transformation Project'."

The Network Transformation Project (NTP) set out the following business objectives:

- **Out-perform against regulatory targets**
- **Enhance the customer experience**
- **Meet requirements of key stakeholders - Shareholders, Shippers, Regulator, Producers**
- **Transform the BGN / contractor interfaces and relationships**



*"We identified the requirement to modernize our work management system and associated scheduling capabilities, to facilitate timely asset and work management, and deliver exceptional customer service. As such we went to the market looking for the best available solutions to sit at the core of our operations." continued Shouldice.*

## Solution

After a rigorous procurement process Clicksoftware emerged the clear winner. BGN selected their ClickSchedule solution to efficiently deploy 375 engineers to carry out planned, emergency and reactive work that is critical to the business.

*"ClickSoftware has a fantastic heritage and reputation in our sector," explained Shouldice. "Their expertise in Utilities meant that we could take the product out of the box, adapt our business to it, and be sure that we were operating best practice field operations."*



## The Implementation

BGN formed a Project Team from within the business to work full time on the implementation. The team, with support from Senior Management, had the responsibility of safely and economically delivering and deploying the new processes on a planned, phased basis, while ensuring operations continued as normal for BGN's wide customer base.

In parallel with the phased rollout, a structured training programme set expectations amongst users of the new system and ensured that they could hit the ground running as the technology was introduced.

## The Results

Following the successful implementation BGN has, with ClickSchedule, achieved the company's aims of operating best-in-class systems and standardised processes for the Schedule & Dispatch function and field operations across all business streams: Emergency, Siteworks, Metering, Maintenance, Construction and Repair. The solution is delivering against the business objectives set out for the NTP - to outperform against the regulator's targets, to improve the customer experience and to meet stakeholders' expectations.

*"The project has been a resounding success," remarked Shouldice. "We now have operational clarity to manage the asset infrastructure and our customer's expectations. What's more we can plan, manage and execute work with optimal efficiency."*

Scheduling & Dispatch is now centralised and managing all the allocation of work to all Field Operatives. ClickSoftware is used to manage a wide variety of job types, from short duration work such as meter activity to managing crews for projects that can span multiple days. ClickSchedule optimally balances a number of complex factors including business rules, work type, location, Service Level Agreement's, skills and crew availability, to automatically deploy work to BGN staff and the sub-contracted workforce. As a result engineers spend 20% more time concentrating on their core roles at client's sites.

Previously where 233,000 paper job cards were produced per annum, this has been reduced to just 15,000. The centralising of dispatch has allowed BGN to reduce the dispatch team by 73% to just 15, allowing the redeployment of staff to higher value-adding roles within the organisation.

Work is dispatched through ClickSchedule to the operative's hand held terminals, which allows for real time data receipt and return (circ 20 secs for data return) upon work completion. This improved real-time, verifiable visibility of work, with capability to re-schedule appointments in jeopardy has seen the company's compliance on appointable activity increase to 97%. Emergency work is also allocated and controlled using the new solution to focus on optimal efficiency, timely travel and service provision.

A ClickSchedule interface is provided directly to BGN's sub-contracted Field Workforce. This enables a standardisation of processes so that BGN's customers can expect the same level of service no matter where they are. With data readily available it also means that the company can monitor sub-contractor performance levels with greater accuracy and drive through better value for money from its suppliers. It also means that BGN can easily access and provide the regulator with the information it needs to demonstrate a robust service and value for money to its Customers.

*"We have new levels of adaptability. We use team meetings to continually make incremental process improvements to ensure consistent adherence to new procedures at every level."*

*"During the recent economic woes ClickSoftware has been particularly effective at allowing the business to rapidly adapt to changing market conditions. We have for instance been able to plan and execute more maintenance work for existing assets rather than new build."*

*"The solution has provided BGN with a platform that has delivered impressive tangible business benefit and the ability to improve and adapt our business at almost every strategic level." concluded Shouldice.*

- For more information on Board Gáis visit [www.bordgais.ie](http://www.bordgais.ie)
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