

CASE STUDY

Unprecedented 12-Month Cloud CIS Implementation to Save DC Water **\$22 Million**

zero

priority 1
defects at
go-live

From contract
to go-live in

12
months

Estimated

\$22M

in savings
over 7 years



Customer Overview

DC Water provides water to the 680,000 residents and 20 million annual visitors in the Washington D.C. area, as well as all the federal buildings in the District of Columbia, monitoring in excess of 135,000 meters. It also provides wastewater services to the District and surrounding counties.



Problems and Challenges

“Our goal in selecting the VertexOne Platform was to move from an obsolete premise-based CIS to a customer-centric platform. We wanted to provide our customer service professionals with near real-time information on the status of every customer interaction, while taking advantage of mobile and cloud service offerings our customers have to come to expect.”

Charles Kiely,
DC Water Assistant General Manager

The team at DC Water had a vision:

Deliver world-class customer service to its customers. To do that, leaders knew they needed to upgrade their technology systems starting with a new CIS. But it didn't end there.

The utility also needed to upgrade its customer self-service portal and add mobile device access to meet customers' changing expectations for how they can interact with the utility. In addition, the authority needed to replace an aging mobile work management platform for field service. Finally, leaders wanted to bring outsourced meter-to-cash cycle tasks back in house while simultaneously replacing more than 90,000 AMI meters.

To tackle all these objectives at once, DC Water needed a partner it could trust. It found one in Vertex and its SaaS-based CIS.

Goals

DC Water wanted a tier-one solution that would allow it to not only engage its customers today, yet also adapt to an increasingly complex market landscape. That meant the solution needed to scale as well as integrate well with other business systems. It had to be agile enough to grow and evolve as the customer demands increase, while providing a minimum of 20 years of useful life to the utility.

Given DC Water's business and its service territory, security is also a top concern. The solution, therefore, had to provide robust controls for accessing, storing and processing customer and financial data, including appropriate authorization, review and approval processes to ensure the integrity of the data.

“To accomplish our goal, we needed a business partner that understood our core business and had a project methodology that allows for a rapid implementation while still minimizing risks and keeping costs in check. That's a tall order for any CIS implementation.”

Charles Kiely,
DC Water Assistant General Manager

Selecting a Solution

During a year-long selection process, DC Water evaluated 18 different proposals for both on-premise and Cloud solutions, narrowing their choices to two finalists—an Oracle solution and VertexOne’s SaaS-based-model built on the SAP platform. Some of the key considerations that led to DC Water choosing VertexOne over the other finalist included:



Tier 1 Technology:

VertexOne leverages Tier 1 technologies providing significant investment in R&D, so the technology evolves ahead of the utility’s needs.



Flexibility:

VertexOne lets utilities add the innovative capabilities they need, right when they need them. And with core platform upgrades twice a year, VertexOne solutions are always up to date.



Agility:

VertexOne helps utilities respond quickly to growing customer and transaction volumes, rising customer expectations, market changes and acquisitions.



Predictability:

VertexOne not only provides a prescriptive method to upgrading onto a SaaS platform, but also a predictable cost and support model with guaranteed service levels that align with its customers’ needs.



Insight:

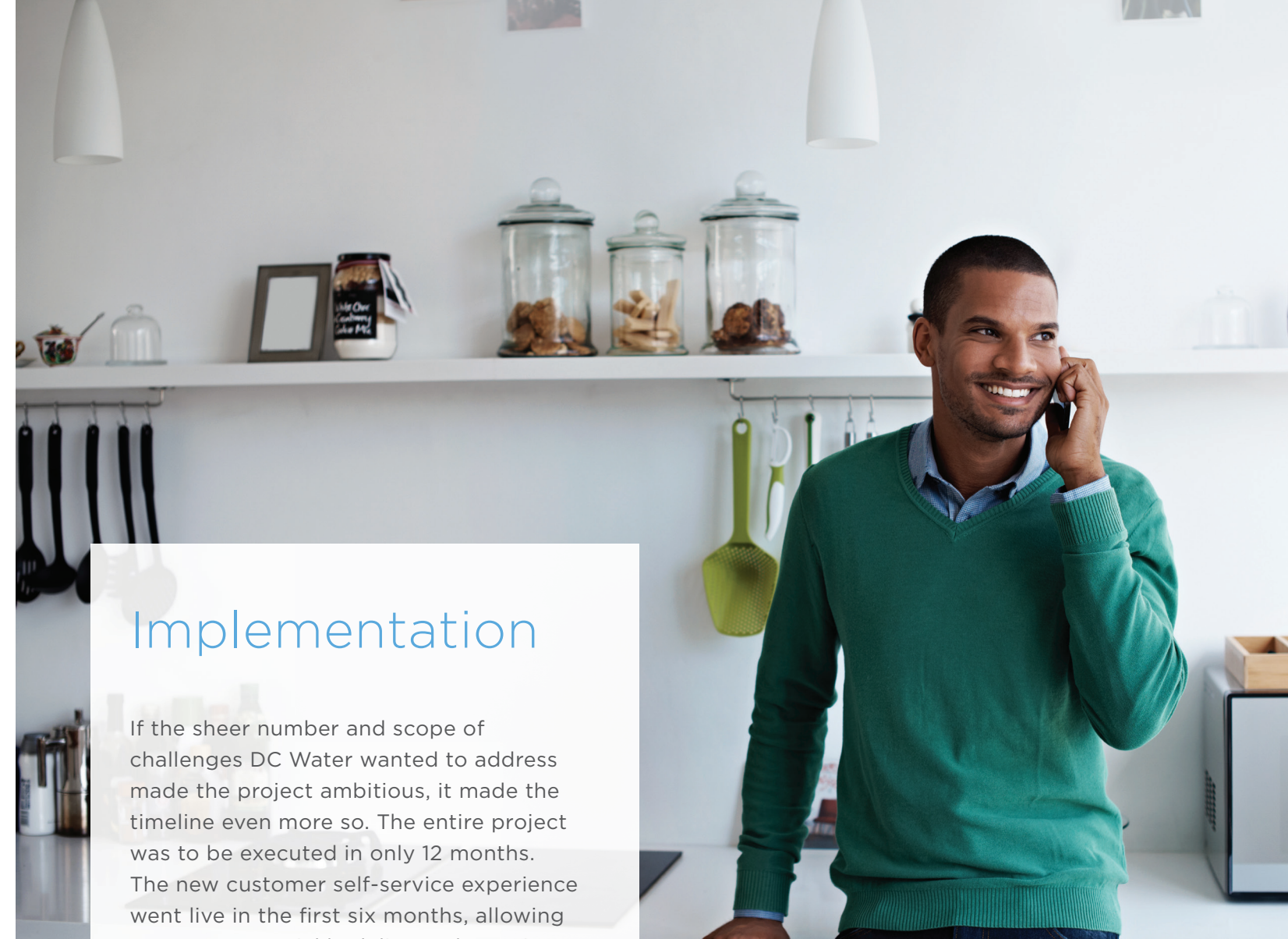
VertexOne helps utilities optimize their business processes with a suite of operational and advanced analytics.



Rapid Delivery:

VertexOne’s unique SaaS model and project approach allows unprecedented speed-of-delivery for a utility CIS implementation.

In the end, selecting VertexOne gave DC Water the flexibility and scalability it was looking for, while also allowing the utility to focus more resources on serving its customers and improving its operations.



Implementation

If the sheer number and scope of challenges DC Water wanted to address made the project ambitious, it made the timeline even more so. The entire project was to be executed in only 12 months. The new customer self-service experience went live in the first six months, allowing DC Water to quickly deliver value to its customers while also easing the transition for the staff.

Delivering the new customer experience well in advance of the larger CIS and mobile work management solutions significantly reduced the risk of the implementation. This allowed customers to become familiar with the new applications long before any changes to the back-end solutions were made. Call Center staff could focus on addressing specific customer experience issues without simultaneously transitioning to a new system, reducing overall stress to staff while not adversely impacting wait times.

“Working side by side it was impossible to distinguish between VertexOne and DC Water Team members. Everyone was focused on a common goal: the success of this project. VertexOne’s can-do attitude was the high-octane fuel we needed for success.”

Thomas L. Kuczynski,
DC Water CIO

Deployment

Delivering on time, on budget and on target are hallmarks of any successful deployment.

DC Water met all three with its VertexOne implementation. That includes installing a Tier 1 customer information system, a new customer web and mobile portal, a new bill payment and presentment solution, and a new mobile field work management and dispatching system.

Using a unique implementation methodology, this project sets a new industry benchmark for implementations of this type. Unlike CIS vendors that design each solution “from scratch,” Vertex uses a “design-by-exception” approach. This unique SaaS platform covers about 70 percent of a typical utility CIS business processes.

“I have been through four CIS projects in my career, and this one was by far the best executed. Doing in such a short timeframe what many thought was impossible is a testament to the commitment of an incredible team.”

Thomas L. Kuczynski,
DC Water CIO

The remaining 30 percent, driven by the uniqueness of each utility, is largely accomplished via configuration, reducing the amount of coding and testing required. The iterative delivery approach means that testing and data migration aren’t “left to the end.”

Besides resulting in an accelerated implementation and rapid payback, the methodology complemented DC Water’s extensive change management and training programs to avoid significant operational impacts to the call center and back offices.

Results

Not only was DC Water’s implementation and deployment done in record time—reducing the overall cost—it allowed the company to see some immediate benefits in the first month of the new system’s life.

Back Office Benefits

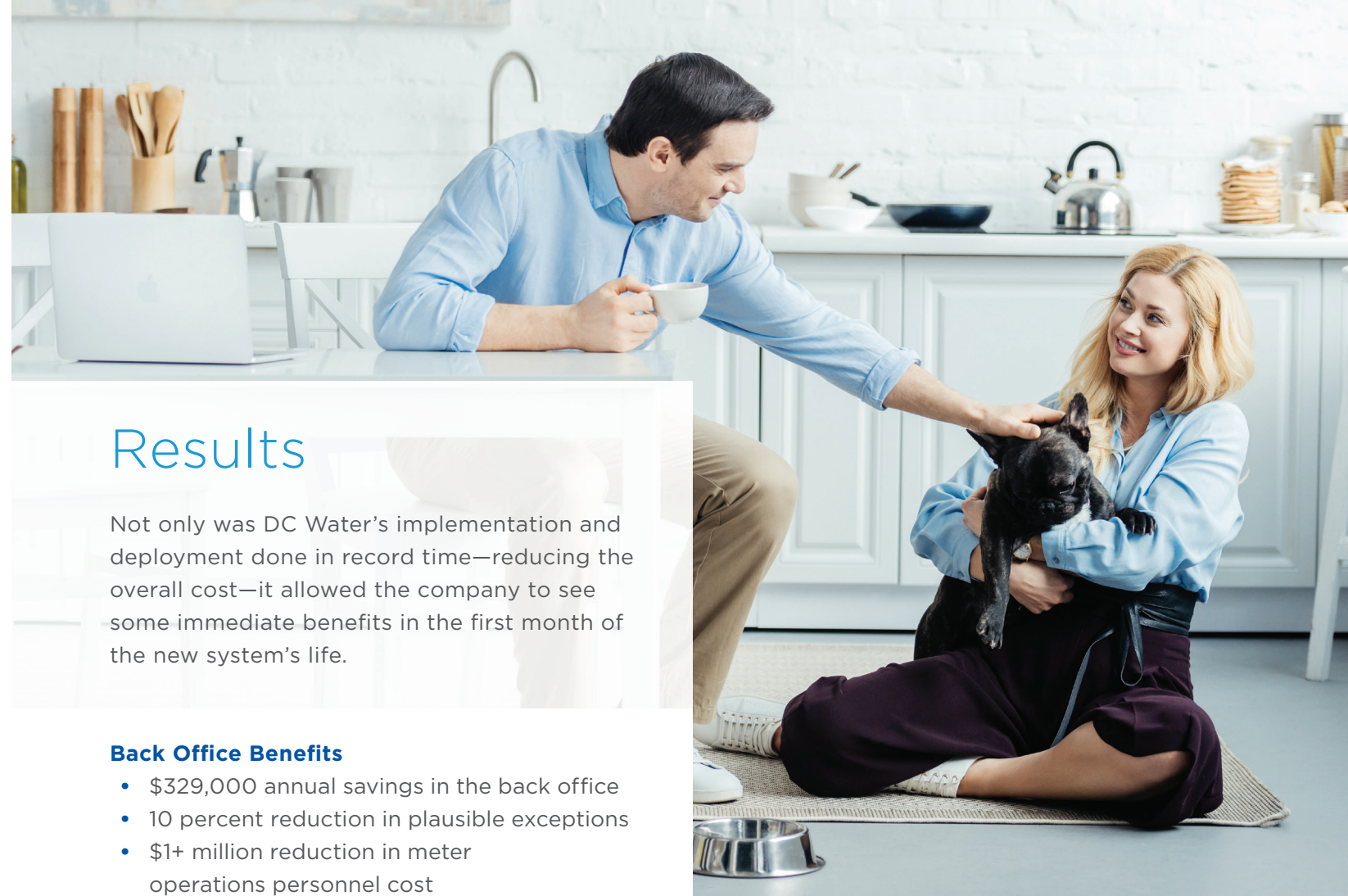
- \$329,000 annual savings in the back office
- 10 percent reduction in plausible exceptions
- \$1+ million reduction in meter operations personnel cost

Front Office Benefits

- 14 percent reduction in billing related customer calls
- 10 percent improvement in average speed to answer without adding staff
- More flexible bill presentment and payment options for the customer

The CIS implementation is only the first major milestone in a continuing partnership between DC Water and Vertex, but it will save DC Water an estimated **\$22 million** over the seven-year contract. Over the remainder of the contract and beyond, the two companies will continue working together to plan and execute a number of exciting new programs to further enhance the overall customer experience platform.

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VertexOne takes on the heavy lifting of keeping current with the rapid pace of technology changes, so utilities don't have to—leaving our customers more time to focus on core utility business, and leaving the technology to us.

For more information,
visit www.vertexone.net

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