

## Customer experience transformation makes a splash for Sydney Water

CUSTOMER  
**Sydney Water**

LOCATION  
**Sydney, Australia**

INDUSTRY  
**Energy, Utilities, Oil and Gas**





## Challenge

- Uplift digital capability to transform customer experience
- Modernise website and implement analytical capability to harvest user insights for improved customer communications
- Move existing website infrastructure from a hosted data centre to the cloud



## Solution

- Comprehensive experience design and user research; new website with customised marketing campaign functionality, analytics, and a customer self-service portal
- Adobe Experience Suite (Experience Manager, Forms, React.JS, Analytics, Campaign, Target)
- Microsoft Azure; Power BI; SAP Customer Data Cloud (CDC)



## Results

- First-class customer experience (CX) and uplifted brand image
- Complete transformation to targeted and personalised digital communications based on analytics; scalability to manage expected customer growth
- Ability for business users to maintain the website independently, speeding the pace of change and reducing reliance on IT





## Customer experience transformation makes a splash for Sydney Water

Sydney Water is Australia's largest water utility, supplying water, wastewater, recycled water and stormwater services to more than five million people across Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Illawarra. Every day, Sydney Water supplies about 1.5 billion litres of safe drinking water to its customers. From the health of the city and its people, to managing the environment and the health of the waterways, Sydney Water helps ensure the overall liveability of the city.

“We had strong aspirations to increase our engagement channels, to be more proactive in our communications, to increase our analytics, campaign and marketing capability and to make it easier for our people to deliver a digital experience to our customers. Those business aspirations did not match our existing technology suite.”

— **Kathy Hourigan**  
General Manager of  
Customer Services, Sydney  
Water

Water is an essential part of daily life. Traditionally an asset-centric business with a long history serving Greater Sydney, Sydney Water's vision and strategy focus on delivering world-class water services and creating a better life for local people, its business partners and the community while ensuring outstanding customer experience (CX).

### Business challenge

To achieve their vision and strategy, Sydney Water needed to implement a solid foundational digital capability that allowed optimum engagement with the broad customer base via multiple channels and approaches.

The business set a goal to uplift capability, transform CX, and modernise the website. As the primary form of customer interaction, Sydney Water's website was behind the times. Its branding was outdated and its lack of functionality restricted the business' ability to make changes at pace. It also lacked capabilities

for Sydney Water to communicate effectively with its customers.

Facing challenges that were negatively impacting user experience, Sydney Water decided to undergo a complete customer experience transformation.

Kathy Hourigan, General Manager of Customer Services, Sydney Water, explained, “Customer expectations continue to evolve as does the way they wish to engage with us. We had strong aspirations to increase our engagement channels, to be more proactive in our communications, to increase our analytics, campaign and marketing capability and to make it easier for our people to deliver a digital experience to our customers. Those business aspirations did not match our existing technology suite.”

In addition, Sydney Water could not leverage website usage data to improve customer communications, and the website was hosted in a legacy data centre, which was closing. This escalated the need for an urgent update.



Sydney Water engaged DXC Technology to help transform CX by designing and building a new website, deploying analytics so the marketing team could utilise data to inform future customer strategies, and enabling customer self-service.

Maryanne Graham, General Manager, Customer, Strategy and Engagement, Sydney Water, summarised, “We identified a need to evolve our culture and how our team was operating to bring customer benefits daily. A key issue was the inability to capture rich data and utilise it to enhance CX daily. We wanted to take our data and develop an excellent customer service platform that would allow us to really leverage customer information. And then tailor our communications to suit different needs. We needed a strong uplift in digital capabilities to provide a platform that allowed customers to interact with us efficiently and seamlessly.”

## Solution

Sydney Water engaged DXC Technology to help transform CX by designing and building a new website, deploying analytics so the marketing team could utilise data to inform future customer strategies, and enabling customer self-service.

After previously engaging with Sydney Water on several mini projects focused on cloud and data, DXC responded to a public RFP for the new CX project. DXC was awarded the project based on the innovative solution proposed, the delivery success already experienced on prior projects, and the existing strong executive engagement between the two organisations.

DXC proposed Adobe Experience Suite to deliver a complete cloud-based CX platform provided in three phases:

1. Website (driven by user experience research) and cloud foundation using Microsoft Azure.

2. Marketing campaign custom features to leverage customer data from the website and CRM.
3. Self-service customer portal to reduce dependence on the call centre.

Graham commented, “Sydney Water tries to partner with industry leaders. We had a strong relationship with DXC that we saw mature over this project. One of the things we’ve reflected on has been the ability to sit down with DXC as challenges were encountered and work through them together as one team.”

## Implementation

The project delivered progressive value in a series of stages. Initially, the DXC team established a high-level solution design before defining a detailed design, gaining approval to proceed, and estimating implementation effort for delivery within six months to meet the legacy data centre’s closure deadline. During the detailed design phase, DXC also undertook extensive user research that helped define the ideal user experience, with insights and recommendations presented to Sydney Water’s executive team.

Two months after starting, the legacy data centre provider moved its scheduled decommissioning date forward two months, creating a very tight deadline for DXC.

The website was released first, developed using Adobe Experience Manager (AEM), AEM Forms, and React.JS. DXC also implemented Adobe Analytics to collect, analyse and report on website traffic.



The move to the cloud facilitated many advantages, not least of which is the solution's scalability, with new functionality delivered at a scale and speed not previously possible for Sydney Water.

"The benefits for Sydney Water from this program are substantial. We've completely transformed our CX, significantly uplifted our brand image, and changed how we manage digital communications."

— **Dominic Hatfield**  
General Manager of Digital and CIO, Sydney Water

Integrations to existing on-premises systems were stood up at the same time and managed through Microsoft Azure.

For the second release, Adobe Campaign was delivered for marketing campaign capability, Adobe Target for targeted website information, and Power BI for reporting. These capabilities relied on an Azure data lake ('Customer Data Hub') created by DXC, which pulls data from the website and SAP CRM.

Finally, DXC delivered a cloud identity solution using SAP Customer Data Cloud for the third release, integrated into a self-service portal (SAP CRM add-on) provided by a third party.

Antoine Giraud, Practice Partner, Consulting, for DXC Technology in Australia and New Zealand, explained, "Our approach worked well for Sydney Water. We were very consultative, and leveraged our adaptive ways of working to integrate closely with the Sydney Water team for an optimal outcome."

The DXC team achieved a very successful go-live four weeks ahead of the data centre closure deadline, with Adobe acknowledging it was the "smoothest go-live they'd ever experienced in the region". DXC subsequently took on the role of managed service provider for the complete solution.

Sydney Water knew that working with DXC would ensure the best solution. Graham commented, "We

partnered with DXC to get to the crux of the problem, then the relationship matured throughout the project. It was part culture shift and part capability uplift. We had to ensure we weren't just utilising data but leveraging data insights to improve CX. DXC helped ensure the scope of the project was spot on, and the relationship between the two organisations demonstrated the importance of a one-team approach when working with partners to ensure success."

## Results

Sydney Water's website was refreshed and designed in a customer-centric way with current branding and a multi-platform experience for end-users. One immediate result was the significant increase of mobile use to visit the website. Additionally, business users can maintain the website independently, dramatically speeding the pace of changes and reducing the burden and reliance on IT.

Dominic Hatfield, General Manager of Digital and CIO, Sydney Water, summarised, "The benefits for Sydney Water from this program are substantial. We've completely transformed our CX, significantly uplifted our brand image, and changed how we manage digital communications."



“Sydney Water tries to partner with industry leaders. We had a strong relationship with DXC that we saw mature over this project.”

— **Maryanne Graham**  
General Manager, Customer, Strategy and Engagement, Sydney Water

Hourigan said, “The benefits to date have been excellent, for both our customers and our people. The new website looks amazing and its improved navigation is making it easier for customers to find what they’re looking for. The new campaign capability has been invaluable in transforming our customer communications to be more proactive, tailored and targeted.”

DXC also brought Sydney Water to the cloud for the first time, including standing up the required tools. The move to the cloud facilitated many advantages, not least of which is the solution’s scalability, with new functionality delivered at a scale and speed not previously possible for Sydney Water. As Sydney grows, so does the customer base, so this cloud solution provides the flexibility needed to manage and support Sydney Water’s expected growth objectives over the next five to ten years.

Graham said, “Our customers will always benefit from Sydney Water being more effective in the way it delivers products and services. Every saving or efficiency we achieve internally flows through to our customers. For example, it might impact their ability to receive

information in a timely way, pay bills online, or quickly locate information needed. Our people are no longer caught up in that and can be delivering services and helping create a better life for our customers.”

The ability to monitor how the contact centre and marketing department interacts with customers and report on campaign results via analytics dashboards has opened up significant new opportunities for Sydney Water to drive future communication or promotion decisions. Website usage data is collected and linked to complex CRM databases, allowing personalised targeting – either on the website (with relevant banner ads) or through email campaigns delivered to customers matching pre-defined criteria. The business process efficiencies empower a greater focus on tailored customer content and messages.

Hatfield explained, “We are a customer-centric organisation with much to learn from our customers. With this new solution, we can build identity graphs of customers and measure interactions with marketing and campaign material. These customer profiles enable a much richer understanding of what they’re



This new platform enabled the delivery of digital communications to around 50,000 customers in one Sydney region within a few hours, with exceedingly high (90%) open rates.

interested in, to support tailoring of content and strategy to deliver what they're looking for."

An excellent example of Sydney Water's ability to distribute critical information to different customers occurred during a recent Sydney flood crisis. Graham said, "With more than five million customers, we must tailor communications. In particular, for minority groups or culturally and linguistically diverse communities to enable better understanding."

That wouldn't have been straightforward or quick previously, and there may have even been the need for physical doorknocking by Sydney Water personnel. However, this new platform enabled the delivery of digital communications to around 50,000 customers in one Sydney region within a few hours, with exceedingly high (90%) open rates.

Graham continued, "We received excellent feedback from flood-affected communities. We could communicate in real-time to provide continual updates to the people who needed information quickly. As a result, everyone was well aware of what was happening. For the future, it means our people can focus on providing the relevant and critical information in customer interactions, rather than the process to achieve that interaction."

The website's improved self-service capability has reduced calls to the contact centre and is prompting more users to move from paper to electronic bills - easing the burden on multiple areas of Sydney Water's business and reducing costs. Identified as a key customer demand in the user research conducted in the design phase, live chat will also be integrated into the website, allowing users to get in touch with actual contact centre staff without calling, further improving CX and reducing costs.

Staff are also benefiting from the removal of many manual processes, so energy and effort can focus on engaging with and serving customers. One of these was manual management of 'unsubscribes' which is now automated, also driving improved compliance with national consumer law.

Hatfield continued, "My digital team is benefiting in a big way. Moving our energy away from operational support of an aging platform allows us to quickly bring more capability to the new platforms to iterate and grow. We've moved away from big releases to iterative change. It's much more exciting and enriching for the team to work on platforms that allow them to engage customers (both internal and external) in more meaningful ways. They can concentrate their energies in places that make the most impact."



Staff are also benefiting from the removal of many manual processes, so energy and effort can focus on engaging with and serving customers.

“This is a game changer for Sydney Water, both internally and for our customers.”

— **Maryanne Graham**  
General Manager, Customer, Strategy and Engagement, Sydney Water

The other significant benefit is reduced risk. With the previous aging technology came increased risk in delivering on strategy and ensuring operational stability and availability. That risk is now removed.

Graham concluded, “This is a game changer for Sydney Water, both internally and for our customers. For me, digital transformation is the ability for us to remain at the cutting edge in operational capacity, and this new

digital platform is taking us to the next level. We’ve always had excellent customer service and outstanding brand advocacy, but now we can optimise that and leverage the great work of our people every day. This solution helps optimise customer relationships and ensure we stay focused on our vision of creating a thriving, liveable and sustainable city with world-class water services. DXC helped us deliver that.”

Learn more at  
[dxc.com/au/en/services/consulting](https://dxc.com/au/en/services/consulting)

Get the insights that matter.  
[dxc.com/optin](https://dxc.com/optin)



#### About DXC Technology

DXC Technology (NYSE: DXC) helps global companies run their mission-critical systems and operations while modernizing IT, optimizing data architectures, and ensuring security and scalability across public, private and hybrid clouds. The world’s largest companies and public sector organizations trust DXC to deploy services to drive new levels of performance, competitiveness, and customer experience across their IT estates. Learn more about how we deliver excellence for our customers and colleagues at [DXC.com](https://dxc.com).