MCL with SOUTH WEST WATER

Asset Management Development in South West Water Operational Maintenance Strategy

In April 2002 South West Water launched an initiative to modernise and improve its internal service provision of Engineering Maintenance. The initiative was called the Operational Maintenance Strategy, and formed part of South West Water's overall development of Asset Management within the business.

Prior to the launch, engineering services were provided by an Engineering Maintenance team who managed the budget, provided the services, planned the work and owned all the asset repair process. The South West Water management team knew that efficiencies could be made by reviewing and re-engineering the key processes and transferring ownership to the client functions.

MCL Consultancy Limited was engaged by South West Water to support analysis of these processes and help management identify the key step changes required. They were chosen for their expertise in developing operational and maintenance processes with their Water Industry clients. The first stage identified the improvement opportunities before a series of workshops with all the internal South West Water parties to support development of ideas and formulate the OMS Strategy. Further workshops were held with Operational Supervisors and Maintenance Craftsmen so they could embrace the methodologies and ensure their requirements were effectively translated into actions on the ground.

Rather than a standard training approach to workshops and implementation of a change process of this nature, MCL tailored the workshop exercises and action plans to meet the ongoing developmental need of the participants. Speaking of the role of MCL, Dr Stephen Bird, South West Water Operations Director, said

"The way the teams were facilitated made it feel like we had control and ownership of key decisions in the workshops. The workshop processes also helped us to identify the key cultural changes needed in both the service provider and client functions".

One of MCL's core philosophies is the introduction of planning of maintenance work as being a key operational activity. It is an operational responsibility to ensure that failures are reducing, planned maintenance is being carried out, craft productivity is being maximised, and effective spares supply chain processes are operating. Two years after launching the OMS strategy, a 10% saving on the total engineering service provision has been delivered. Further savings are being targeted as the programme rolls forward accompanied by associated investments in new technologies such as telematics and mobile computing.

"Without the support of MCL and their consulting and workshop processes it is unlikely we would have achieved the benefits delivered as MCL brought a new dimension to facilitating change in South West Water."

said Dr Bird