Appian

CASE STUDY:
GRDF

Powering France with a more agile technology platform

As the main natural gas distribution company in France, Gaz Réseau Distribution France (GRDF) distributes natural gas to more than 11 million customers daily. Gas is vital for everyone in France to heat, cook, travel, and to enjoy convenient, economical energy whenever they need it, regardless of their supplier.

To this end and in accordance with its public service missions, GRDF designs, builds, operates, maintains the largest distribution network in Europe (199,781 km) and develops it in more than 9,500 municipalities, guaranteeing the safety and the quality of the distribution.

In order to carry out its daily missions, anticipate changes in the gas distributor role, and manage its many projects in parallel by relying on a more agile system, GRDF turned to Appian.

THE CHALLENGE
In the early 2000s, French energy regulations evolved in the context of European convergence. One consequence of this led to a disjunction between the commercial activities of energy suppliers and the regulated actions of public service distribution. As GRDF evolved to become an independent subsidiary of Engie (formerly GDF-Suez), the company's existing information systems had to evolve to ensure separate management of activities.

THE APPROACH
GRDF needed a new central information system to replace multiple legacy applications. GRDF wanted to use new technology to ensure faster and better service to gas suppliers and their customers. The system also needed to comply with GRDF's rigorous safety and high quality standards.

Finally, the new information system had to be capable of responding to a wide variety of requests from service professionals and consumers. These requests trigger processes as different as a simple customer contract change, or complex validation of the feasibility and cost of energy-equipping a building, or notifying and monitoring field technician services..

Primary requirements for GRDF's Information System Department included:

- An agile technology platform to create and implement transformational business applications quickly

- Easy integration with existing systems and applications

- Central management and distribution of tasks to internal employees, service partners and contractors

- Collaboration tools to facilitate work handoffs between IT teams and for better communications between IT and business functions

THE SOLUTION
GRDF chose Appian to meet their requirements. As the only leader in business process management (BPM), case management and low-code application development, Appian accelerates the handling of all service request types while enforcing compliance and security requirements. Appian's BPM engine automates typical service requests that are straightforward, end-to-end processes with minor variation.

Appian case management deals with atypical customer inquiries that require team collaboration to determine unique responses. GRDF selected Appian for its flexibility and openness to support both use cases.

Appian's Quick Apps also provides a no-code solution for rapid creation of simple applications. It enables employees in various departments to prototype the functions or applications they need in just a few days, before handing over to the IT team for further development, testing and deployment to use across the enterprise with security and reliability. Using this approach, the team created a mobile app for their customers to test gas equipment at home to empower more end users to test and report issues, instead of contacting GRDF for a home inspection and service maintenance. Quick Apps provide a simple way to give business agility and allows IT to focus on more complex developments.

THE RESULTS
Implementation agility for operational efficiency and visibility

Every year, GRDF receives about 80,000 network extension requests and more than 2.5 million maintenance requests that trigger as many work files. With Appian, the natural gas distributor replaced the four legacy applications that managed them with a single solution.

In addition, the processes for implementing network extensions have been redesigned, automated and improved with Appian. The organisation has simplified and unified data across systems to avoid duplications and double entries.

For every customer service interaction, and across the steps taken to resolve every customer case, Appian generates real-time reporting for tracking and visibility. This makes it possible to better monitor coordination, manage costs, and provide audit trails and reports for regulatory compliance. Appian is integrated with accounting applications, supplier portals, work orders for partner companies, and more. GRDF internal measurements show that Appian has delivered strong ROI while accelerating GRDF service delivery.

To-date, GRDF has deployed seven Appian applications for enterprise BPM and case management. As of 2018, the company has more than 2,500 Appian users, and this number is expected to double by the end of 2019. GRDF executed more than one million process in Appian in 2017, and the target is 6 million per year by the end of 2018.

Operational Efficiency

- Four legacy applications replaced by Appian, reducing work complexity as well as system maintenance time and costs

- A single point of control to manage and orchestrate end-to-end activities within the gas network and beyond

- Real-time reporting of work, including monitoring costs, tracking energy suppliers equality, guaranteeing network security, enforcement of Service Level Agreements (SLAs), and more

"Initially, our need was mainly in the orchestration and automation of processes as part of our Information System transformation initiative. Appian provided the necessary know-how and enabled agile collaboration between business and IT. Our internal Appian Center of Excellence made it easy to access and build software applications very quickly, making it possible to manage a portfolio of projects efficiently while gaining IT speed."

– FRÉDÉRIC FERNANDEZ, MANAGER OF BPM CENTER OF EXCELLENCE, GRDF

Appian

Appian provides a leading low-code software development platform that enables organizations to rapidly develop powerful and unique applications. The applications created on Appian's platform help companies drive digital transformation and competitive differentiation.

For more information, visit www.appian.com