



CASE STUDY

THE UK'S SECOND LARGEST BOILER INSTALLER NOW GETTING TO CUSTOMERS FASTER WITH FLS



FAST LEAN SMART (FLS) is living up to its name in more ways than one. In Summer 2018 it enacted a faster-than-usual deployment of its scheduling and route optimisation software for the boiler installations division of HomeServe (formerly Help-Link) so it could be ready for autumn and winter, the company's busiest time of year. Now it's improving operational efficiency to such an extent that HomeServe is getting to its customers 25% faster than before.

HomeServe is the UK's second largest boiler installer and the operations have two distinct components. First, a sales surveyor will conduct a video, telephone or in-home survey to assess what kind of boiler a customer needs, recommend one, and produce a quote. Secondly, field engineers will attend a customer's property to install a boiler once a quote is accepted.

This presents a complex mix of sales surveyors who attend many jobs in one day and engineers with one job that could require one day or several days for installations. So, when searching for new scheduling and route optimisation software, HomeServe needed a tool that could do both.

More than white-space-filling

Sparking the search for a new scheduling solution was HomeServe's desire to work smarter, not harder. In particular it sought to bring greater efficiency to the way it scheduled its workforce and remove some of the pressure from its back-office staff.



Industry:

Heating, Ventilation and Refrigeration

FLS products:

FLS VISITOUR / FLS MOBILE

Requirements:

- Introduction of a software-based appointment and route scheduling solution as well as a mobile solution
- Short implementation phase and rapid go-live
- Scalability of the scheduling solution
- Complex dynamic real-time scheduling

Benefits:

- HomeServe is getting to its customers 25% faster than before
- Increased scheduling efficiency
- Transparent service processes
- Increased customer experience

More information: www.homeserve.com

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Richard Wilson, IT Director for HomeServe boiler installations, explains, "Previously we had always relied on the personal knowledge of our planning team to know which sales surveyors and engineers would be best suited for a job in terms of geography, availability and skill set. We wanted software that could make smarter, faster decisions than our planners were equipped to."

It was on speaking with other field service and scheduling solution providers that HomeServe first heard of FLS. Richard says, "A lot of the scheduling tools we looked at were just about filling white space. In other words, finding gaps in people's diaries to fit in appointments. We wanted a more dynamic tool, one that could continuously optimise, looking at every appointment and every field worker collectively and scheduling everything in the most optimal way. The providers we talked to said, 'We can't really do that, but we know a solution that can: the one offered by FAST LEAN SMART'."

A tool that thinks on its feet

Richard and his project team investigated FLS and discovered that its real-time scheduler and route optimiser, FLS VISITOUR, was the solution they were looking for. An intelligent tool that evaluates a company's entire resource pool and effectively 'thinks on its feet', FLS VISITOUR makes smarter, quicker and more efficient decisions than humans and other scheduling technologies. It works in conjunction with FLS's platform-independent mobility solution, FLS MOBILE, to ensure that field-based staff get to where they need to be and have the information they need when they get there. Together they cut the administrative burden considerably and automate a process.

The company proceeded with the proof-of-concept pilot project that FLS offers all new customers. This demonstrates the value of FLS VISITOUR in terms of functionality and versatility, in particular its ability to integrate with existing back-end systems.

Richard explains, "Integration was a key requirement for us. We needed to know that FLS VISITOUR could integrate with our service management software. This is why FLS's pilot projects are so helpful. They're not just demos where you have to guess and imagine how it's going to work in the context of your business. With an FLS pilot, they wire it all in and prove it to you. We saw immediately that FLS lends itself to integration. We were also able to see first-hand how feature-rich and multi-faceted FLS VISITOUR really is."

“Most software will do about 80% of what you need or really want it to do,” says Richard. “The ability to link jobs is a great example of the fact that FLS VISITOUR will do a lot more.

Richard Wilson, IT Director HomeServe

Richard goes on to refer to a feature that has proved particularly useful for HomeServe: the ability to link jobs. When HomeServe installs a boiler, it needs to schedule a field engineer to do the installation and an electrician to do the wiring. FLS will link the two jobs, even if they take place on different days. This means that if the installation appointment needs to be changed, FLS will move the electrician appointment simultaneously.

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Faster-than-usual implementation

Winter is the busiest and most challenging time of year for HomeServe boiler installations. The company needed to go from concept to pilot to live very quickly, so that everything could be in place before the temperature dropped and the calls for new boilers started flooding in.

Implementation happened in a much shorter timescale than normal. Thanks to strong teamwork between FLS and HomeServe's in-house developers and back office teams, FLS VISITOUR was live, integrated and scheduling hundreds of multi-disciplined field resources within just weeks.

"We're so pleased by how well everyone worked to get FLS VISITOUR in place for autumn" says Richard. "It was a big team effort and FLS really helped us get it in the air. Our back-office staff deserve a lot of credit, too; they worked very hard and very quickly."

Richard points out one reason why FLS is generally a quicker-to-implement program than many other scheduling software packages: "FLS is very good on configuration without the need for customisation. We didn't have the appetite, time or the resources to develop our own boutique functionality. We needed a solution that was already fully functional, which we could tweak to fit our requirements without writing code. That solution was FLS VISITOUR."

A growth facilitator

HomeServe went live with FLS VISITOUR in September 2018. Since then the company has been scheduling its people more optimally and cost-effectively and planning better, smarter routes to each appointment. This has enabled HomeServe to get to customers quicker.

"FLS saves us time in the office, gives us total visibility of who is doing what, and has enabled us to get to our appointments 25% quicker than we were," says Richard. "It's really highlighted how efficient your scheduling can be when intelligent software does it for you. We see FLS as a growth facilitator. The efficiency gains are such that we're now in a position to scale up."

HomeServe plans to adopt more FLS functionality to better serve its customers, including form-capture on FLS MOBILE and automated email/text functions.

“We're a customer-centric company,” says Richard. “That’s ultimately why we’ve done this. We wanted an easy, smart and efficient way of reshuffling appointments so that the customer gets a survey or installation appointment at a time that’s convenient for them. Now that we’ve enabled this, the automated emails and texts will be to keep customers in the loop at all times. We’re all about improving the customer experience and we’re grateful to FLS for helping us do that..Richard Wilson, IT Director HomeServe



FLS contact:

Jeremy Squire · Managing Director · FASTLEANS SMART UK LTD.
T +44 1183 800189 · jeremy.squire@fastleansmart.com
www.fastleansmart.com/en

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