

First-hand...

“When it comes to customer service, transparency is critical”

Each and every day, Aqualia strives to care for and satisfy the needs of its customers, contributing to their well-being, preserving the value of water resources, respecting nature and minimising the environmental impact of its activity.

Miguel Perea heads up the area dedicated to serving and caring for the company's customers. Given its activities, the term “clients” at Aqualia involves both public administrations and the end customer of its service. Following the company's international growth in 2022, this area has faced the challenge of both perceiving, in the 18 countries where the company is present, the quality of its management and the improvements implemented when it comes to access to water. Furthermore, this area also has a notable social impact, activating mechanisms such as the deferral of tariffs for the most vulnerable users or launching social tariffs in cooperation with the local authorities.

How does Aqualia respond to the different needs of its clients in the 18 countries in which it is currently present? What services does it offer to this end?

For a company that operates worldwide and that provides a service whose value is not

clearly perceived, as is the case of Aqualia, the commitment to making progress with a strategic orientation towards the end customer is key, as is focussing on the channels in place to communicate with them. At present, this is a challenging objective, as there are different circumstances in each of the countries in which we operate. For example, in Georgia, our most recent addition, we have to adapt to the fact that there is only one regulator.

To this end, we make huge efforts and are flexible when it comes to adapting our channels to the needs of our channels as much as we can. We have learned a lot over the years affected by the coronavirus pandemic. This year, we have also placed a particular emphasis on investment in technology.

Another critical factor is transparency. It plays a key role in getting citizens to understand the value we provide through our service. Furthermore, the legislation also requires that citizens be provided with more information about urban water, as indicated in Directive 2020/2084. To this purpose, in Spain we have launched an information channel for users that we will place on the local authorities' websites to which

we provide services. We believe that launching this channel as part of a public-private collaboration is really positive, as the water sector involves a variety of stakeholders and we must combine efforts to improve it.

Does Aqualia involve customers in its environmental awareness campaigns? Do the public administrations demand greater awareness when it comes to caring for this resource?

We have always performed awareness raising actions about the importance of caring for water and, by extension, the environment. We also undertake initiatives to promote e-invoicing, helping us to eliminate paper invoices and avoid the journeys that must be made for their distribution and, as a result, the corresponding emissions generated. In 2022, e-invoicing increased from 19% to 20.45% in Spain, with a total of 1,284,945 customers having chosen this option.

All these actions are considered by the administrations as offering added value. We see this in our daily contact with them, but also in our satisfaction surveys, which demonstrate that our customers are increasingly aware of the importance of these initiatives

MIGUEL PEREA CUSTOMER DIRECTOR

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and that they are interested in the environmental and social commitments assumed by water operators. Around 80% consider Aqualia's social and environmental commitment as either excellent or very good, with the score increasing every year. This serves to reinforce our commitment to the 2021-2023 Strategic Sustainability Plan. And, overall, satisfaction with the service offered by the company is very good: we received a score of 4 on a scale of 1 to 5.

Access to quality water is a factor when it comes to social cohesion. Our collaboration with public administrations and NGOs in relation to tariff mechanisms is extremely important. In 2022, our social action has helped us to organise more than 6,600 payment plans in response to the needs of each customer. In total, more than 2,300,000 customers across Spain have had access to subsidised tariffs and, in other countries, this number stands at more than 210,000 customers.

Looking back to 2022, what actions or projects would you mention when it comes to offering value to customers? What milestones have been achieved over the past year?

This year, on account of the company's internationalisation process, I believe that the milestone has involved acquiring enough flexibility to serve our clients everywhere that we provide services and maintain a high-level of communication with them. To this end, in 2022, we held the First International Conference on

Customer Management, where we shared success stories from different regions. I think this was a good practice that we should maintain in the future.

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When it comes to improving customer service, applying technology offers huge advantages. Our users can now consult their hourly consumption using Aqualia Contact, provided they have a smart meter. Furthermore, in 2022 they were offered the option of configuring their own alerts; for example, when there is no consumption in a vulnerable person's home or when there is consumption in a second home that is empty at the time. Another important point is that, if a leak is detected at a customer's home, Aqualia

contacts them so that they can check their installation for major damage as soon as possible.

Considering these achievements, what future challenges does Aqualia need to tackle to improve the service offered to its customers?

Without a doubt, I believe that the company's growth involves overcoming major challenges for us to adapt to the specific nature of each region. However, digitalisation will be a huge ally in adapting and offering a high-quality omnichannel experience. To this purpose, integrating all channels and the pursuit of resources and technology that facilitate more agile management is essential.

Furthermore, we want to live up to our users' expectations. We must strive to provide the most personalised service and information possible, in real-time. We believe that this would also help us to get users involved in caring for the end-to-end water cycle. By improving communication and transparency, we would like to convert users into allies when it comes to preserving and caring for water.