

# FACT: operating principles for an efficient public service

See how value-based principles transformed the operation, saved £1.5m via automation and created the capacity to have life-changing conversations, supporting clients into sustainable work.

ingeus

## Summary

Ingeus has supported over 200,000 people into sustainable work since 2002, often overcoming significant barriers to employment. The need for efficiency in this publicly-funded service was directed into a change programme that's increased capacity by 59%. By automating routine activity, 92% of non-value tasks in 2015, they created capacity for a virtual, centralised team of flexible people, who offer the human touch. Delivery of change is supported by strong leadership and engagement; everyone affected had a voice throughout the project. Crucially, the removal of routine tasks has freed individuals to truly embody the organisation's values with their solution-focussed approach and passion for going the extra mile to make a difference to their clients' lives.



## Key initiatives

### Commercial realism, yet sustaining the service culture

Supporting the long term unemployed into sustainable work is the clear focus at Ingeus. Ingeus was founded by Thérèse Rein from Australia to make a difference to people's lives, inspired by overcoming the barriers her disabled father faced trying to find employment. Equally, the leadership team recognise that diversification of services and commercial realism are essential success factors. So, while Ingeus becomes more efficient and commercial, they retain the founder's values at the heart of their culture. A vital step in this was saving £1.5m by automating, with SMS messaging, a large number of routine calls. This time was then re-invested in people and customer outcomes, making a hugely important statement about what is valued in the business. "We want to make a difference to people" "We haven't lost our essence" "You can't lose sight of a person who has been out of work for 2 years".

### FACT: value-based principles transform the operation

When Ian Gibson, Director of Shared Services, joined the business in 2014 he introduced a new set of operating principles, FACT: First time resolution, Added value, Customised Service & Timeliness. These are now rooted within everyone's roles and objectives and embedded in the performance management framework (PMF). These value-based principles embody how clients are supported. There is a real passion at every level to go the extra mile for clients, helping them overcome fears and barriers to find sustainable employment. Whilst everybody is aware of the need to drive revenue by helping clients into sustained employment, this is only achieved through providing a genuinely great support service for them. "FACT is the bedrock of how we talk, appraise and go about change" "Every client is an individual" "We assist people who really need our help".

### Making time for life changing conversations

Payment for those in sustained employment ('sustains') account for the vast majority of revenue and confirmation calls are required to verify these outcomes. Clients were hard to reach in work hours, seeing little value in the calls, so since 2015, most confirmations are made by text messages, saving

*"When I started it was a job, now I love coming to work. I talk to someone every day. That makes me smile!"*

Sarah Butler,  
Customer Liaison Officer

*"Automation is not a threat – it is aiding what we do here. Lots of effort was put in to bringing the change home – it's about hearts and minds. You can sell efficiency much better in our culture now. People like clarity – stick to 4 or 5 things. You've got to be tenacious, persistent, persuasive and empathetic."*

Ian Gibson,  
Director of Shared Services

*"Automation has allowed us to increase the pace of cross skilling. We are all driven by helping people."*

Chris Gage,  
Resource Planning Lead

*"The business has got its confidence back."*

Rachel Walsh,  
Quality Lead

## Results

- SMS automated 30,000 monthly confirmation calls for sustainment payments
- 14% headcount saving was reinvested in people and customer outcomes
- Carry over of payments reduced from 3,500 to under 100
- Occupancy levels more than doubled
- Customer satisfaction over 98% and 85% of staff say this is a great place to work



*“Capacity planning is not just for contact centre work. If you have a target it is easier to set expectations. We are encouraged to take ownership.”*

**Chris Gage,**  
Resource Planning Lead

*“There’s an overwhelming sense that everyone wants to do their best to help the clients. It’s the little things that make a huge difference.”*

**Laura Anderson,**  
Team Manager Outbound In-Work Support

£1.5 million. This increased capacity by 59%, so that new activity is absorbed, with no increase in headcount. Now, advisors don’t spend all day chasing an answer, but, when someone is experiencing difficulties, they can spend longer and offer more support. As a result skills and job roles have changed hugely and the work consolidated from many local offices into a central hub in Birmingham. Automation could be seen as a threat, but engaging everyone, from design to testing, has helped people see the opportunities instead. By communicating with empathy, people felt free to voice concerns. Capacity planning has been key and Chris Gage has led work to implement workforce management, set up regular reporting and created focus on occupancy, which encourages time spent on calls, rather than rushing through the calls quickly. Time was scheduled for skills development and coaching, building the capability to support life-changing conversations, and regular outbound support calls are now scheduled, at the right time of day. “Planning brought a new level of insight” “We’re changing lives rather than chasing collections” “This wasn’t designed by managers – it’s a whole team process” “It’s been an opportunity to develop our careers”.

## Talent Development: inspiring people so they make the difference

Training & development has been fundamental to the success of this transformation in the business. This is aligned to the FACT model and championed by Mark Persard, National Contact Centre Manager. For instance, in the new 2-week induction, all except one day is focussed on values and the needs of clients. Overall, there is a big focus on sharing of skills, ideas and best practice between individuals and teams. The Quality process encourages self-assessment, supported by Team Manager coaching. The LEAD programme provides coaching in broader work and life skills together with outside of the box thinking. Individuals put themselves forward, pledging why they want to attend and what they want to do differently as a result. There has also been a conscious effort to recruit some of their own clients in to the contact centre. “Working here no longer feels like just a job” “We’ve reconnected with what Ingeus is really about” “A huge investment” “It’s really supporting me as an individual” “We can make a fundamental difference to peoples’ lives”.

*“We’ve refocussed the teams on helping clients ... developing our own talent. We’ve become more commercially focussed without losing our essence and culture. The skill is understanding every individual’s motivations.”*

**Mark Persard,**  
National Contact Centre Manager

*“I get much more variety of work now. We can go in to more depth with clients and give them career coaching. It is easier to hone in on client needs, putting the client first ... I have more autonomy now, more control over what I can do for the client.”*

**Emma Martin,**  
Customer Liaison Officer

*“FACT is the focus of everything we do, all training and upskilling. The integrity of the service is everything; we are here to help people who really need our support. We understand that our small team has a massive impact on how the company performs; we’re all very performance focussed.”*

**Clare White,**  
Work Group Leader (Verifications)

*“FACT is embedded in how we talk, appraise and go about change. Every customer is an individual. Before, we had no time and no tools to support clients effectively. Now, lots of effort and time goes in to coaching. Once you lose reputation with government it’s a long way back.”*

**Ian Gibson,**  
Director of Shared Services

**Ingeus** help people realise their potential, supporting over 200,000 people into sustainable work, since 2002, often overcoming significant barriers to employment. The 64 FTE Contact Centre, set up in 2011, operates as a virtual team based in Birmingham, with colleagues in Scotland & N Ireland. Systems include Injixo WFM.