



Powering the transition of energy supply

Improving customer service and optimisation opportunities for a renowned supermarket chain

drax



With 900 UK stores served by 13 regional distribution centres, a renowned supermarket chain was approaching the end of a three-year contract cycle. It was therefore looking to review its suppliers for benchmarking purposes.

The chain embarked upon tender processes – including one to find a new provider to power its estate.

Firm plans for flexible supply

The supermarket chain's energy team wanted renewable source electricity supply on a flexible contract that provided opportunities for optimising efficiencies and cutting costs. It needed to make sure the business adhered to its parent retail group's strategy for EU energy trading, too.

When shortlisting suitable providers, clear communication and efficient project management were also key criteria.

Drax ticked the chain's boxes:

- Renewable source electricity, enabling declaration of zero Scope 2 carbon emissions
- Ability to localise the parent group's trading-strategy requirements to the UK energy market
- Expertise to support with strategy implementation and next steps
- Experience managing large rollouts efficiently
- Scope for helping with development of sustainability credentials



It was handy having Drax be able to almost translate our parent group's trading strategy requirements into something that would work in the UK.



Customer's Head of Facility Management





A tailored approach to implementation

Drax met with the supermarket chain's energy team to develop a bespoke plan for managing the transition. Together, they validated site lists, prioritised ready-to-connect locations and mapped out a monthly invoicing structure.

The first four weeks – starting mid-August 2021 – saw Drax connect 1,220 meters. The chain's energy team was impressed by the standards of communication and customer service Drax provided – a stark contrast to the business's experience with other bidding providers.

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The communication from Drax has been excellent. We're confident that if we've raised something, the whole team will know and we won't need to have the same conversation multiple times.

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Customer's Head of Facility Management



An efficient transition

Drax delivered on its service level agreement (SLA) to complete new connections within 25 days, often beating it. Its ability to manage the project administration and issue accurate and timely invoices also led to saved time for the supermarket chain's energy team.

The Drax service relationship team continues to manage new connections for recently acquired stores – as well as for electric vehicle charging facilities. The chain's expanding at a rapid rate, so effective project management and clear communications continue to provide the foundation for efficiency.

Impressive results

The upfront planning and prioritisation exercises Drax had supported with enabled the supermarket chain to reap the benefits of a swift and smooth supplier transition process. Beyond the initial rollout, Drax continues to bring more meters online every week – split between new connections and site additions. The total at the end of September 2022 had reached 1,319.

Invoicing accuracy runs at over 99%*, and the average time for getting new-connection flows over to the data management provider is 5.9 days* – an improvement of over 75% on the SLA!

As well as enabling the supermarket chain to declare zero Scope 2 emissions, Drax has laid the foundations for future sustainability claims. The energy expert's already connected a few of the chain's stores with its local renewables generators (see 'Cutting carbon, p6).

*October 2022

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Previously, invoicing was messy and new connections had become more difficult. We were pulling our hair out over what should have been standard tasks that we just wanted off our desks. The switch to Drax dealt with that. It enabled us to look forward, to plan and to do the work we want to be doing.

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Customer's Senior Energy Consultant



So... what's next?

As well as continuing to support the supermarket chain's new-store connection process, Drax is looking into optimising the use of its electric assets, such as refrigerators and ovens. This will initially involve understanding more about energy requirements in regional distribution centres and finding opportunities to 'shape' consumption without negatively affecting business-as-usual operations. Doing so can help the chain both avoid costs (like transmission and time/date-sensitive costs) and trade electricity efficiently – particularly given current high wholesale prices.

Sustainability's a focus, too – see 'Cutting carbon' (p6). Combining peer-to-peer direct renewables supply and further on-site generation assets will enhance the chain's carbon reduction credentials.





Cutting carbon

The supermarket chain already employs sustainable practices in the way it ethically sources its products, supports its producers and works to reduce plastic pollution.

But, with the supply of Drax renewable source electricity enabling the retailer to declare zero Scope 2 carbon emissions, the foundations are in place to target further carbon reduction.

Drax has matched a few of its renewable generation export customers to the chain's stores, and has already fed through early savings. The energy expert will continue to look for further potential 'peer-to-peer' relationships. This helps the supermarket chain to reduce costs by taking advantage of government incentives and provides opportunities to promote corporate social responsibility (CSR) stories about local, direct renewable sourcing. It also helps reduce the strain on the electricity grid.

Get in touch to discuss how we can help you.



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