**Case Study - Customer Perception improvement project to address Advantage Report performance challenge**

**Situation** John West were performing strongly within their category, but in early 2013 the Advantage Survey results indicated a number of underperforming areas, with Supply Chain and Customer Service scoring in the bottom third of their supplier category.
In early 2014 their Supply Chain Director, following a recommendation from another client, asked SSC to review their supply and customer service operations and to identify why their customer perception was so much poorer than their competitors.

**Objective** Review Customer Service and Supply Planning process and communication effectiveness and recommend changes to organisational structure, people, processes and systems to improve their customers’ perception.

**Approach**  SSC started by building a value stream map and a customer experience map, with the team, to reflect how the internal functions impacted John West Customer Services team’s perceived quality of service to their customers.
This immediately identified a number of internal processes that were heavily reliant on manual administration and communication. The time taken to collate and check the data, or simply use the data available, meant that customers were receiving partial, old or untimely information on too many occasions – inferring a lack of control, undermining confidence and leaving little time for the team to be proactive.

A review of the end-to end processes revealed multiple challenges, from the transparency and timeliness of data used to make decisions, through the decision and escalation processes, and including the clarity of roles and responsibilities of the demand, supply and commercial teams – all of which contributed to making it harder for the Customer Service team to provide accurate and timely information to their customers.

Developing a map of ‘desired’ tasks, processes and data and reporting requirements with the team, using our experience of working with many best-in-class clients, enabled us to design the future operating model to meet the business and team needs. By stream-lining the processes and reducing duplication of effort, we were able to incorporating many of changes the team had wanted to make, but were unable to, investing more time in developing customer relationships pro-actively.

**Benefits** The 2015 Advantage Survey result showed a significant improvement, with John West leading the category overall and upper tercile performances for Logistics, Supply Chain and Customer Service.

Greater transparency of stock movements and improved decision making processes have translated into greater consistency of supply information and higher confidence

Clarifying the roles and responsibilities cross-functionally has improved the quality of communication internally, as well as to customers, and re- investing the freed-up resource in customer-facing supply roles will further consolidate and build on the progress already made.

**Client quote**

John Tomlinson (Supply Chain Director) : The 2013 Advantage Survey result was a real shock for us as a business, we took a lot of time to consider the detail and commentary behind the results and realised that we had to do something very different, very quickly. It was clear that our focus was too internal with not nearly enough focus on what our retail customers wanted. Once we engaged the SSC team we began a long journey to break down and analyse our business processes and understand how they matched and didn’t match our customer’s processes. Jonathan has a great network of retail heavy hitters and we were able to develop a plan to realign our team and build much better contacts and routines with key customers. It is almost a year since the good scores in the 2015 Advantage report and we have continued working with Jonathan and his team to make sure that we are continually improving.