

Heading up the UK's Innovative and Independent Water Retailer

With business customers in England now able to choose their water provider in the same way they choose their energy and internet provider, the world of water looks very different to what it did a decade ago. Helping customers to make the most of the possibilities this brings is ConservAqua. With Mark Hanlon, its founder and CEO, being named the Most Influential CEO 2026 – Water Retail Services (UK) in this feature, we caught up with him for more on his company's work.

As many people in the UK are aware, 2017 saw the water retail market open for competition in England, meaning that more than a million business, charity, and public-sector customers are able to choose their water and wastewater providers. The biggest industry shake-up since Margaret Thatcher privatised the UK's water industry in 1989, this change has meant that these customers can shop around and negotiate the best deal for them, rather than having to access water through their regional monopolies.

The exciting opportunities this shift has brought about has helped to keep costs down, raise awareness surrounding water efficiency, and improve customer services in the industry, not to mention increasing the competition and all the benefits that come along with the drive to stay ahead. It is from this competition that ConservAqua emerged in 2019, offering tailored packages to non-household, high-use customers concerning their water supply, specifically in reducing water and waste, thereby saving money and the planet.

ConservAqua may provide Water & Environmental Specialists who specialise in cutting down on water and wastewater, but this is just the beginning of how it helps save the planet's most precious resource. For example, it also delivers monthly reporting and analysis on water usage, smart water readings, water efficiency advice, e-billing/consolidated billing, and bill validation. The services of an expert trade effluent team are also available; with all water

enquiries a customer has being handled by a dedicated Account Manager.

Mark Hanlon is the man at the helm here, having founded the company and served as its CEO since it opened its doors in late 2019. Mark brings more than two decades of experience in developing businesses and managing teams to this role, with his primary responsibility being to oversee the delivery of these tailored water supply solutions, making sure the service attached to them not only meets but exceeds the expectations of customers.

Since day one, the aim at ConservAqua has been to reflect the relentless pursuit of innovation and customer satisfaction sought out in the utilities sector, and Mark has embodied this to the full. His journey here has been defined by the growth and



excellence he has fostered, a common theme over the course of his career. Mark spent almost 20 years at One Point Communications, which he co-founded back in 1999.

By the time the company was sold, it had a turnover of £6 million and employed more than 20 members of staff, a testament to Mark's ability to grow a business from nothing. ConservAqua has enjoyed similar success over the past 5 years, spurred on by initiatives including the user-friendly Aqua Manager online portal, released to give customers comprehensive visual reporting of their water usage. Just some of the companies to benefit from these services include football clubs, golf courses, and racecourses.

Mark Hanlon founded the company with only two members of staff. Five years later, ConservAqua employs over 30 members of staff and has achieved a turnover of approximately £30 million. His response to this success is simple:

"I don't build companies; I build teams that build my company for me."

With a very hands-on approach, he pushes his team to develop their skills and supports them in every way he can. His philosophy is clear: clients always come first, ConservAqua second, staff third, and he is always the last priority.

Personally, he enjoys seeing the development and progression of his staff within the organisation, offering direction and advice drawn from his

many years of experience as a CEO.

Taking a closer look at its work in action, one happy customer shared their story of working with Mark and the ConservAqua team: "We were called about six months ago by Mark, who alerted us to the anomalies in our water bills, and it turns out he was spot on. He was so sure that he arranged for a data logger to be fitted on our water meter and engaged his Technical Director to conduct a site survey at our hotel. The survey report confirmed the extent of the leaks, outlining that we could be due £8k in potential refunds."

On the back of this, the customer continued: "We have now switched our water supply to ConservAqua as they delivered on all their promises. I would recommend ConservAqua to any other businesses looking for a new water supplier in a heartbeat. The service we have received from the management has been outstanding and we are very happy." There are many more examples like this, with the team here handling issues with suppliers from all over the UK quickly and effectively for their customers.

Without Mark Hanlon, none of this would be possible. It is for this reason that we are delighted to recognise him as the Most Influential CEO 2026 – Water Retail Services (UK) in this feature. More on Mark's major impact can be found below.

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