



CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

# SouthWest Water

PILOT

[www.pilot.coach](http://www.pilot.coach)

## PILOT & SOUTHWEST WATER'S BACKGROUND

**SouthWest Water Company** is a nationwide utility company headquartered in Sugar Land, Texas. Serving over 500,000 residential and business customers in seven states, SouthWest Water's 500+ employees work together to deliver clean, safe, and reliable water and wastewater services to their communities. Learn more at [www.swwc.com](http://www.swwc.com)

**PILOT** is an award-winning employee development program designed to retain and develop employees through consistent weekly reflection activities, guided manager feedback, executive fireside chats, and group coaching. Employees are grouped into intra-company cohorts and coached in an innovative curriculum focused on core career skills. PILOT's mission is to make everyone feel powerful at work, with a program that is virtual, accessible, scalable, and proven. Learn more at [www.pilot.coach](http://www.pilot.coach)

In 2020, SouthWest Water's previous Chief Human Resources Officer, Mark Rodriguez, was searching for a unique solution to engage and develop employees. This led him to partner with PILOT and deploy the low-lift, high impact program for employees across the organization.

In three years, SouthWest Water has empowered more than 150 employees across seven cohorts to take charge of their careers through the PILOT program. Joanne Elliott, Chief Human Resources Officer, now leads strategy for the program.

Over the course of the partnership, PILOT has reached a variety of levels, titles, and departments across the organization. The accessible design of the program allows development for ALL SouthWest Water employees, no matter where they are located.

## THE IMPACT OF PILOT AT SOUTHWEST WATER

SouthWest Water's executive leadership team has been a strong supporter of the PILOT program, resulting in steady, consistent engagement over the years. Read on to see the aggregate of data for the 7 cohorts.

**All cohorts observed growth in PILOT's four competencies of career ownership, with the biggest growth in Self Advocacy.** The 4 competencies are: Inward Reflection, Solicit Feedback, Self Advocacy, and Taking Action. Employees assess themselves at the beginning, middle and end of PILOT.

**93% of surveyed respondents said being selected to participate in PILOT made them feel valued** by SouthWest Water. They found Fireside Chats with executives at their company particularly enlightening, and one employee said, "I found fireside chats with leadership provides invaluable insight to the direction of our company and how to take a more active role in the development of our careers."

**83% of SouthWest Water's Members Engaged Monthly with PILOT, above industry standard.**

PILOT offers a variety of ways for members to engage and grow, allowing for the majority of participants to consistently receive guidance, learning, and support during the program. For comparison, L&D online Product Usage benchmark is 10-15%.

**80% of SouthWest Water's Members were satisfied with their PILOT development, above industry standard.** PILOT deploys Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) surveys after every completed activity. The Gold Standard for CSAT is 80%.

Overall, SouthWest Water employees that went through PILOT have been consistently engaged, love the program, have charted notable self growth, and felt valued and invested in by SouthWest Water. For a company of this size and the variations in roles, these results are phenomenal.

### THE SOUTHWEST WATER AND PILOT PARTNERSHIP

PILOT has built a strong, strategic partnership with leaders at SouthWest Water. Executive leadership attends progress meetings, participates in exclusive chats with each cohort, and is at the forefront of efforts to engage and nominate their employees. Their commitment to making professional development accessible across the company has led to over 30% of employees completing the PILOT program.

The collaborative relationship between executive leadership and past participants with the internal PILOT team has resulted in impactful developments in the program. SouthWest Water's team advocated for the Live Session component of the program to be more accessible for in-the-field employees. Their suggestions led PILOT to create a new component of the program that allows for continued reflection and engagement with PILOT, wherever an employee is.

"The PILOT program has given our teams a common language to talk about their growth. This has opened the door for our leaders to have ongoing development conversations with employees who are going through the program. The participants have seen our company's investment in their career, and in turn they and their managers have demonstrated commitment to their growth and development."

**JOANNE ELLIOTT,**

CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER FOR SOUTHWEST WATER, ON PILOT'S IMPACT