



60 Seconds with Duncan Henry

Hi Duncan, tell us a bit about your role and what you're working on?

I'm RDG's Head of Ticketing which means I can get involved in everything we do with ticketing. This covers the exciting and innovative things we're working on in the smart area like Barcode, ITSO Smart Card and NFC ticketing on mobile phones, and also the more mundane but vital hygiene factors like terms and conditions and retailer accreditation.

What are your key priorities for the next 3 months?

The first is to create a long term industry strategy for ticketing that all can agree. Different stakeholder groups have valuable input to this and we want to get to a coordinated position that gives the industry direction whilst allowing innovation and flexibility. This all needs to take in to account the changing industry dynamics in other areas such as fares and information so it's partly about anticipating what is coming in the next 10 years.

The second is the ask from DfT to outline a proposition for Pay as you Go and there is a lot of work going on in this area to achieve customer desires, whilst balancing its complex and potentially disruptive nature.

Outside of the Ticketing day job, I've been asked to represent the Customer Portfolio Directorate within the RDG response to the Williams Rail Review. This is a once in a generation opportunity for the industry to address any systemic issues which have developed since privatisation and I look forward to playing my small part.

Finally, I've just agreed to become a Women in Rail mentor. I've spent my career working with, building and empowering diverse teams and I'm really looking forward to being able to help push that further through Women in Rail.

What do you feel will be the biggest challenge for you / your project in the next 3 months and how do you plan to work through this?

There are clear commercial challenges around many of the things we are being asked to look at and change creates uncertainty. It's no secret that customers want Pay as you Go, for example, and that this will change the revenue of the industry where introduced. As an industry if we are not to be left behind we need to find a way to accept the uncertainty that change brings, make it less scary and manage the disruption it can cause so that we can innovate much faster than we do today. However, I'm not underestimating that change can require a leap of faith and I recognise that it is a big task.

As a customer, what would be the one piece of innovation you'd like to see in the rail industry and why?

I'd like an integrated, on demand way to get to and from stations at low cost – which I believe will arrive with the invention of autonomous vehicles. I live in a small village and lots of places I go are rural too. Bus services are irregular and unreliable, taxis are expensive and it's a bit too far to bike (especially in winter). It will be great to be able to use greener transport options and get rid of the car. It's not an innovation by the rail industry per se but will make accessing rail so much easier and reduce the carbon footprint of living in the countryside.

On the flip side of course autonomous vehicles will be disruptive for rail and may even present an existential challenge to parts of the industry. We need to ensure that the benefits of rail mass transit are understood and articulated and that the industry is flexible and responsive to the challenge ahead.