60 Seconds with Simon Moorhead, CIO, RDG

Hi Simon, please tell us a bit about your role and your involvement with smart ticketing?

As RDG's Chief Information Officer I'm here to help set the direction for information and technology change in our industry and build a roadmap to deliver that change. I'm also responsible for the technology services we provide to our members and direct to the travelling public. Importantly this includes the services we deliver through the CBO which will become an increasingly important part of RDG's support for the industry. There's nothing more important than "keeping the lights on" – or the gates working – collecting data and allowing paying customers to travel with ease. But we also have an eye on the future to make sure our service can grow with customer and train company demand.

What do you see as the key benefits of smart ticketing for rail customers?

We can rightly call out customer convenience and lower operational costs of smart ticketing compared to magstripe, but for me the game changing benefit comes as we start to draw insight from smart ticketing data. This is the change that has the potential to upend our industry as retailers and train companies begin to understand customer travel behaviour at a scale and detail never seen before. Combining with other data sources will give operators the chance to improve their propositions to better meet customer needs and grow use of rail across the country.

What do you see as the biggest challenge to realising these benefits?

There are many moving parts to realising the benefits of smart ticketing and to achieve them we must be realistic about the size of the challenge ahead. With a range of issues from industry fragmentation and multiplicity of suppliers to information security and customer consent, it is not easy to pick the biggest challenge. If I need to pick one out it's probably the simple idea of *synchronicity:* making sure all the cogs are turning at the same increasing speed – including our ambition, customer demand, TOC support, TOC commercials, supplier capability, and policy alignment. I don't fancy having to learn how to "double declutch" the industry to make smart ticketing a success.

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

A virtual reality on-train skin which would transform my journey through Milton Keynes to Manhattan, Watford to Rio, and Bushey to the Serengeti plains. Or maybe more prosaically a shift to Real Journey Settlement, so that we can abandon the apportionment rules that lock the industry to franchise-driven budgets and create better incentives for train companies to attract more customers.