Foreword

Our industry’s customers are consistent and have been since the birth of railways. They give us a very simple message whether they are passengers or businesses that send freight by rail. The message is ‘run my train on time’. Added to this there is a strong correlation between customer satisfaction and punctuality and in turn customer satisfaction has a strong correlation with rail businesses’ revenues. It is important therefore to all of us that we do run punctual trains.

The industry’s National Task Force (NTF) brings together TOCs, FOCs, Network Rail, the DfT and the ORR with the purpose of agreeing and then delivering levels of punctuality that meet or exceed customers’ needs. Fleet has a major role in this, at the time of writing, 1 December 2017 it causes as an MAA, 17% of all industry delays.

TOCs, FOCs, RoSCos, and their suppliers, large and small, were instrumental in the years of national PPM improvement from 2002 – 2012, but since then punctuality has declined each year. In 2013 the NTF set, and the fleet community accepted, a national passenger fleet performance challenge of 11 500 MTIN for the years 2014 – 2019 and improvement in reliability over the five years of 20%. The reality is that we are likely to deliver 10 200 MTIN and, with shortfalls in planned performance in other parts of the industry, we continue to fail our customers and funders.

Changes to the electrification plans for the country and changing rolling stock cascades present a reliability challenge as does the significant introduction of new fleets. This means that the national fleet reliability performance remains a top priority to improve.

The 20 Point Plan remains, as originally conceived, a member content driven tool to help businesses deliver improvements in their rolling stock performance through willingly sharing hard earned knowledge. The continued evolution of the Plan is a visible demonstration of the will that differing businesses have to collaborate in the challenge of providing reliable punctual journeys for customers, be they passengers or those consigning Freight by Rail.

Focusing on both reducing incidents further and faster, how to reduce their impact when they do occur, are both necessary to meet our customers’ needs on our increasingly busy railway. The Fleet community, through prediction and prevention, and having good information when something does go wrong has continued opportunities to improve the most basic and consistent need expressed by our customers: ‘run my train on time’.

Gary Cooper

Director: RDG Planning, Engineering and Operations

Meeting the Challenge

The Fleet Reliability Focus Forum (ReFocus) was introduced by Engineering Council in November 2010 and was tasked with identifying best practice and sharing knowledge amongst rail industry partners such as TOCs, OEMs, RoSCos, Network Rail and others. This forum has successfully contributed to the fleet delivery over this time and continues to provide an evolitional good practice guide to support the industry.
ReFocus captures this knowledge through peer groups who are experts in the area of discussion, this knowledge is then transferred to the Fleet Management Good Practice Guide.

ReFocus has developed new sections of the guide and has revised sections already contained within it. Sharing this knowledge and best practice ultimately allows TOCs and their partners to deliver a reliable and on time service to its customer.

However, the railway still faces many challenges. With the increase in demand and society’s expectations continually evolving, more and more customers and businesses are being attracted to use the railway. This creates significant challenges, with historic methods of delivering continuous improvement only able to provide marginal benefits. A more holistic view covering not only the technical aspects but the people and culture aspects will need to be explored and captured in the guide. Integrating new technology, data, people and process all together to allow for more trains to run on an increasingly busy network.

ReFocus has made progress in tackling some of these problems by working with industry partners and not just in a fleet centric group. This allows ReFocus to examine generic railway issues from an holistic perspective by working with its operational colleagues and Network Rail as well as other industry partners such as the OEMs and the RoSCos. Collaborative working enables ReFocus to deliver new or revised sections of the Fleet Management Good Practice Guide which reflect today’s thinking.

ReFocus also takes a holistic view of society and cultural challenges to drive change, it looks at technology and innovation which allow new processes and practices to be developed and it also looks at the gaps where clear value can be added. This knowledge is used to inform other industry strategy groups such as ‘Fleet Challenge’ and RDG’s ‘Supply Chain Forum’ of gaps and shortfalls which may need addressing now or in the near future.

Other industries face similar challenges to the railway with an ever increasing demand from users and the constant need to move forward and deliver a reliable and safe service. By benchmarking with other industries members have opportunities to transfer knowledge gained and incorporate it within their own business.

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