

Bring your quirks to work

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In this Q&A, Jenny Dempsey, business development director at Diamond Rail, explains how authenticity can be the key to great customer service, helping companies stand out from the crowd.

1. How important has great customer service been in influencing Diamond's success in recent years?

In recent years the supplier market has been extremely challenging. When passenger numbers dropped dramatically during COVID, suppliers across the rail industry were seen to get creative and diversify their offering. This came from a need to keep going through the unprecedented dip in spending from train owners, operators and maintainers. It also led to further competition amongst suppliers.

So how do you stand out when the supplier sea gets busier? Great, authentic customer service and building relationships with customers is key – but this has become more difficult in recent years, with fewer networking events and increasing procurement requirements. Most communication is via email and procurement portals; however, you can still get across personality, values and authenticity in text. Diamond's rebrand in February 2021 ensured that the brand remained consistent, making it stronger. Marketing campaigns must have continuous presence and a LinkedIn following, and when you're communicating through a screen, it's important to strike the right tone – a mixture of professional and personal. I believe this translates as the authentic customer care that Diamond Rail Services offers.

The work Diamond Rail Services is completing with Stadler at its Gosforth Depot proves how successful

this authentic approach can be. Diamond is completing aesthetics repairs and deep cleaning on the existing Nexus Tyne and Wear Metro fleet, and the service played a huge part in my life when I was growing up in South Shields. This fact is undoubtedly reflected in Diamond's commitment to making a difference to the customers of Nexus Tyne and Wear.

- Do you think there are some stereotypes or misconceptions about how people should present themselves in the business world (particularly in rail)? And how are you working to change this at Diamond?

There are many misconceptions and stereotypes about how people should present themselves in the business world, particularly in rail. The 'professional' work person will not make jokes in meetings, rarely swaps personal stories and is generally not their authentic self. This most likely stems from schooling and the fact that our education system was designed for factory workers. It led to strict start and finish times, uniforms, and not being able to speak out; if you did express yourself, there was punishment. I am challenging this and suggesting individuality should not be discouraged, but rewarded across businesses. At Diamond, the management team are currently attending sessions with Inspired Learning to better understand each other's personality types, development points and communication styles. In doing so, we hope to make it safer to bring your quirks to work.

- What are the next focuses for the business for the second half of 2023 and how will you aim to achieve your goals?

At Diamond Rail Services, our business goals are to expand our team, advocating our values with every appointment. We're also keen to see the start-up of more interior rail refurbishment projects and will continue to deliver our Front of House service to operators. We have an exciting time ahead with our sister business being rebranded, meaning we will sit under one big Diamond umbrella. This will happen in parallel to achieving our BS EN 15085 accreditation for welding and utilising CAD Design capabilities to offer a full package of works for rail projects.

I am very proud of the progression at Diamond Rail Services and excited to see what happens next for us all. We will continue to work as a quirky family who cares, as this approach has stood us in good stead so far.