c2c Rail take a step towards the future with TRACS Enterprise

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Following closely in the footsteps of Transport for Wales Rail Services, c2c Rail and Tracsis are celebrating the successful implementation of Tracsis Information Manager (TIM), a module of Tracsis' revolutionary end-to-end resource planning and management system, TRACS Enterprise.

For many years, the control team at c2c have used a system known as Log to record the events and issues which affect the train service each day. Log was originally developed to meet TOC requirements. However, over time, these requirements and the needs of busy control rooms have evolved to the extent that a completely new approach was required to meet the high level of functionality demanded for the efficient future running of the UK railway. Users were unable to easily create new data fields, manage look-up tables, user permissions and other routine administrative tasks to ensure that the system was facilitating the quick and accurate capture of information.

Innovative, cloud-hosted and specialised mobile technologies embodied by TRACS Enterprise are now readily available to the rail industry and c2c recognised the need to move away from their legacy systems in order to remain one of the UK's most punctual and popular train operators.

Jack Rumbold, Acting Head of Service Delivery at c2c, decided to undertake a User Acceptance Testing (UAT) period for TIM in December 2020. UAT is where the system is tested end-to-end in real world scenarios to prove that that functional requirements have been met.

Mark Skinner, Service Delivery Manager, very quickly built nearly 200 templates for the UAT to c2c's own specification, ensuring that the control team can record information consistently and quickly. These were used to test that everything which was currently being recorded could be replicated in TIM and also that the new features and enhancements in TIM were all working correctly. For example, Sticky Notes, which enables the control team to keep checklists or other important information to hand in TIM and access it instantly.

A regular issue with the Log was the inaccurate description of a train headcode, especially during weekend engineering or other timetable changes. Using TIM, this information is always accurate for the day's train plan and saves busy c2c controllers a significant amount of time.

Tracsis' agile, collaborative approach in the delivery of the solution included regular review sessions with Jack, Mark and Gail Moore, Head of Service Delivery, to ensure that any requests for changes to functionality were addressed by fortnightly development sprint cycles. c2c then set about training the control team as well as raising awareness across the business of the forthcoming changes.
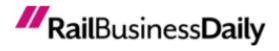
The web-based nature of TIM and its roles/permissions model has opened up the Control Log to the c2c business in a way that was not possible with the legacy system. This, in turn, can improve information flow right across the business. For example, enabling a fleet colleague to quickly build and save filters to get right to the data they need each day.

Benefits c2c are currently seeing from TIM include:

- User defined drop down lists providing log items with consistent wording, which enables users to find items more quickly and easily.
- Headcodes that are automatically updated everyday (rather than a manual process).
- The ability to build your own templates with ease and customise the fields. Any changes are very easy to make, ensuring important information is captured.
- The ability to create a PDF (to proofread, for example) is very easy and quick.
- The ability for users to customise the way the Business Events List is displayed, saving time, and focusing management attention.
- The ability to create a read only version for a Live Log ensuring sensitive information remains private.

Commenting on the implementation, Mark Skinner, Service Delivery Manager at c2c, said: "Both I and c2c staff at the Service Delivery Centre at Upminster have found TIM to be significantly more user friendly than the legacy Log system. In addition, I found it very easy to build templates and train staff to use the system, which has been adopted by our team quickly and seamlessly. The Tracsis team are extremely responsive and have been great to work with on this successful implementation."

Mike Holmes, TIM Product Manager at Tracsis, said: "Working alongside Jack and Mark has been a pleasure. They quickly embraced what TIM could deliver out of the box and also how they could configure

it to suit the needs of c2c. They have set about the configuration work, training and communications to the business in a thoroughly professional way which has paid dividends with such a smooth implementation and go-live. I look forward to working with c2c to take TIM to the next level."

Photo credit: c2c