

Great Rail Journeys appoints a new chief operating officer

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Great Rail Journeys, the York-based escorted tour and river cruise provider, has announced the appointment of Steve Lee as chief operating officer for the Great Rail Journeys family of brands.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, Great Rail Journeys also incorporates sister companies Rail Discoveries and the Chicago-based Vacations By Rail. Great Rail Journeys offers a range of over 200 escorted and independent rail and river cruise holidays in 50+ countries worldwide.

Steve joined the company in June 2021 as business development and operations Director, following 18 successful years as the commercial director of Jet2.com and Jet2holidays, where he was part of the senior management team responsible for setting up and developing Jet2.com into the UK's no.1 tour operator and third-largest airline.

Steve's 40 years of aviation and travel industry experience include commercial, operational and strategic leadership, as well as expertise in marketing, PR, e-commerce, retail, customer service, IT and sales.

The creation of Steve's new role makes him responsible for Great Rail Journeys' operations globally, a role

he is well-suited for thanks to his previous experience with both the UK and US branches of the business.

Dave Riley, Great Rail Journeys CEO, said: "I am delighted to announce that we have appointed Steve Lee as our Chief Operating Officer. As we continue to deliver more European tours to our US customers, creating a single operational unit was the logical next step. Steve has been an invaluable leader since joining us at Great Rail Journeys and Vacations by Rail, and his experience both within the company and throughout the global travel industry made him the perfect choice to step into this brand-new role.

"Steve brings with him a wealth of knowledge in customer experience and operational delivery, and I am confident that Great Rail Journeys will continue to thrive and grow under his leadership."

Steve Lee, Great Rail Journeys COO, said: "The experience of leading my team at Great Rail Journeys over the past two years has been one of the most rewarding of my career. It's a really exciting time to be taking on this new global role, encompassing both Great Rail Journeys and Vacations By Rail, as we reach our 50th anniversary.

"I'm looking forward to working with Dave Riley and our Executive team to ensure we continue to deliver a best in class customer experience, and to guide us into our next half century of providing memorable, escorted and independent rail and river cruise holidays."

Photo credit: Great Rail Journeys