

SEP Rail: “I’m hungry to make a big impact on the rail industry”

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SEP Rail Services' Managing Director, Rikki Morrow, discussed his exciting plans for the future of the business.

Rikki Morrow says there's a fire in him that's burning and he's hungry to make a big impact on the railway. In just three years with Rikki as its MD, **SEP Rail Services** has grown into a multi-million pound company employing 47 staff, called upon by the likes of Colas Rail, Keltbray, Network Rail and more.

They may be one of the fastest growing rail surveying firms in the UK, but Rikki is adamant the company is nowhere near its full potential. So much so, that even during the coronavirus pandemic he launched two new companies under the SEP Rail banner – SEP Rail Design and SEP Rail Engineering.

“I’ll make no bones about it – I want us to be seen as the UK’s leading rail surveying firm, to continue to build on the huge growth we’ve seen since launching SEP Rail Services three years ago,” he said.

“The expansion we’ve seen has been amazing, with a really strong calibre of staff and a list of over 100 clients that we work for within rail. We’ve worked, the whole team has worked, incredibly hard to build up

an incredible reputation within the industry, delivering exceptional work time after time. And we're at the top of people's lists for this type of work precisely because of that reputation.

"The idea behind setting up SEP Rail Design and SEP Rail Engineering was to bring all three disciplines together, working as one unit and with one point of contact. So far it's exceeded every expectation."

Engineering has 12 staff and has seen a turnover of around £1 million in its first year, whilst over at Design there are five staff and roughly half the turnover.

"Looking to the future, design and build is very much where we want to be" said Rikki. "From a rail point of view, it's about offering that three-dimensional approach, covering the full life-cycle of any project – from survey and design right through to installation.

"Absolutely, the plan is for significant growth – but this isn't just about making a quick buck. We're in this for the long haul. We'll make sure we have the right contracts and people to further build upon the incredible reputation the whole team has worked so hard to achieve."



People and technology

At the heart of this growth will be the company's people and technology – with a commitment to consistently investing in both.

Rikki said: "Our people are our biggest asset – we wouldn't be where we are today without them. So, we've put in place an in-house training programme to help each team member achieve their goals, remaining passionate and at the top of their game.

"At the same time – with regular upgrades to our survey equipment and software – we remain at the forefront of railway surveying, delivering our clients' data faster, more cost effectively and in higher resolution than ever before."

Thanks to their relationship with SEP Geospatial – a survey equipment supplier and another part of the SEP Group – Rikki's team have on-demand access to the very latest survey kit. Available at short notice and often ahead of the competition, this puts SEP Rail Services in a unique position, giving them a real advantage over many other firms.

He said: "If we're going to be the best – and we are! – we need the best staff, the best equipment and the best training. I've gone heavy on technology and equipment, revolutionising how we work as a business to streamline and fast-track the collection of data.

"Every day, more and more, we're understanding how to make incremental improvements to our processes. Tiny adjustments that, when combined, make a massive difference to our clients' projects. Having access to the very best equipment plays a huge part in that."



People and partnerships

Rikki has nearly two decades' experience working on the nation's railways, more recently as Senior Operations Manager before leaving to become Survey Director at a competing railway surveying firm.

In 20 years he's been involved in the likes of CP5 S&C Northern and Southern Renewals, Great Western Electrification Project, the Northern Hub and more.

He said: "I'm a firm believer in the value of collaboration and strategic partnerships. Don't get me wrong – we never simply shop in contractors, we build relationships built on trust, we make sure there is one point of contact in everything we do. Someone who'll always be accountable.

"Strategic partners are sponsored and managed by us as is the rail interface side of things. When it comes down to it, they're bringing in their own unique set of skills to add value to our clients.

"Looking to the future, the plan is very much to keep doing what we're doing, focussing on people, understanding clients' requirements and delivering and growing as the opportunities come.

"What we've achieved so far is just the tip of the iceberg – as I said earlier, eventually we'll be out there on a design and build basis, but we're not going to rush. We'll do that only when we're ready and have a team in-house that can fully support that.

"Always at the forefront of my mind will be improving and protecting the health, happiness and general wellbeing of the team. Our people are the future of the business, and we'll keep investing in and supporting their ambitions and abilities.

"I'm all about the people – if I haven't got them, if they don't care about what they're doing and don't give me 110%, I've got nothing. For me it's about supporting the team and getting the best out of people."

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