

# Providing an unforgettable post-pandemic passenger experience

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*From train reliability to timetable information and onboard entertainment: technology is the key to ensuring that passengers returning to the post-pandemic railways have a positive, memorable experience, as systems architect **Nomad Digital** tells Rail Business Daily.*

The way we work and relax has substantially altered thanks to technology, which means train operators must innovate to meet new and rapidly changing needs. This has never been more important. Rail operators are working to bring back customers who have shied away from public transport following pandemic lockdown restrictions – and these same customers rely more than ever on digital solutions after two years of interacting with much of the world online.

However, the need to keep pace with technology is nothing new. Even setting aside the technological pace-change of the pandemic, the way we learn, work and relax has moved in leaps and bounds for decades.

We've all been a part of a connectivity journey that has revolutionised our lives, **Nomad's** Product Manager, Monika Singh, explains. Monika helps rail operators upgrade train fleets to be ready for the

sophisticated needs of its customers. “Look back 20 years, and the world was a very different place, with nothing like the sort of internet access we now use all the time in our homes, workplaces and schools,” she says.

And the bar, she adds, has never been higher. “Technology that was innovative yesterday, like good Wi-Fi, is expected by passengers today.”

## The power of information

Keeping up with the latest technology is at the core of Nomad’s offering; it is always aware of the growing needs of those who run the railways and their customers. That includes everything from helping operators live-monitor the condition of vehicles to ensuring passengers have the most up to date information and entertainment possible for the journey ahead.

The latter is not to be underestimated. “A huge part of being a train operator today is communicating with passengers,” Monika said. “Passengers and their wellbeing comes first and foremost, now more than ever. It is important they are kept happy and engaged.”

This need to engage customers includes updating people when things are going less than perfectly on the railway.

“Passengers need to know if there is a delay,” Monika says. “There is an urgency for travellers to pass on information if there is a holdup; commuters are expected to tell work if they are running late because of an unavoidable delay or let their family know when to expect them back.

“Knowing when a delayed train will get people to their destination has a powerful effect: it means both the passengers and everyone they know can get on with planning their day.

“Top-of-the-line connectivity enables reliable monitoring of rail traffic, and it powers systems like the on-board entertainment Portal we have developed to relay this information to the customer.

“Regardless of the operators’ starting point, we make sure they can make full use of all the technology they already have as well as our new [passenger information systems](#). That can mean a new lease of life for technology like information screens on platforms and trains, and it can likewise mean smarter use of other technology to increase the accessibility of passenger information .”

Nomad’s suite of software then adds to the level of sophistication passengers now need. “Our On-Board Information System (OBIS) means you can easily connect to customers,” Monika says. “As well as keeping people up-to-date with their train times, its ability to work in different languages helps people visiting or arriving in a new country to work for the first time. We believe everyone should know where they are on any of the world’s networks and enjoy the confidence that comes with that, thanks to good software and outstanding connectivity.

“And a good accessibility support also helps people arrange required assistance in advance, which means a better, less stressful journey.”

## Relaxing thanks to cutting-edge technology

When passengers aren't on work deadlines or rushing home to loved ones, they need to relax, and these days technology plays a huge part in that. With high-speed broadband being a part of work and home life, most people expect that a full multimedia experience can be extended to train trips.

"We imagine the same person who commutes to their 9-5 job, who needs their online newspapers and train schedule easily to hand, will still want to travel to see friends and family once Friday arrives," Monika says. "Those kinds of journeys can take hours, and you need to provide people with their favourite music, on seat ordering and a popular film. Without those things, a long journey can feel much longer."

That is why Nomad has its own [rail entertainment](#) portal, which passengers can access to enjoy the latest multimedia entertainment, including the very latest released TV shows and blockbusters. Keeping a finger on the pulse of popular movies and brokering licencing deals can be more difficult than it sounds — but Nomad is keen to make sure they do everything they can to cater for as wide a set of tastes as possible.

And Nomad is confident these efforts convert into a worthy investment for train operators. For those who already travel by train, it's an attractive bonus, but for those among a growing number of leisure travellers that are also helping drive recovery, this helps make the mode of transport on par with plane journeys. Monika says: "Having these facilities makes rail travel far more attractive – they are the reason people will pick the train over the car and other modes of transport."

## The future of the passenger experience

But where next for passenger entertainment and technology? "At Nomad, it's about using what resources are available to the limit to deliver a first-class experience for all passengers," Monika says.

"The ambition is for all public transport to provide supporting information in a way that works seamlessly across all modes of travel." She says the Nomad travel information and services app can cater for people hopping from bus to train and into a taxi. "We think this joined-up future is going to arrive sooner than many might imagine."