

The service quality challenge and why customer perception is everything

March 30, 2022



Jenny Dempsey, of Diamond Rail Services, explains how a customer's perception is make-or-break for their quality of service when travelling by train.

The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail has set out a vision of a future that looks vastly different for train operating companies (TOCs). New incentives and penalties for service quality performance are now written into national rail and passenger service contracts, meaning customer experience and service quality are more important than ever.

TOCs should already be considering solutions to this changing landscape. If they are to make a profit and avoid expensive fines, they will need to level up their service quality regime imminently.

So, as a TOC, how is your customer's journey perception influenced by their quality of service?

Expectation vs reality

A conflict between what your customers expect and what they actually experience is clearly going to have a negative impact on their perceptions and trust in your service.

For example, a customer who is apprehensive about travelling by rail following the pandemic has been assured by the TOC stating they follow a strict cleaning regime to ensure its services are Covid secure.

How is this customer's perception affected by sitting at a table with a cracked tabletop during their journey, with dirt traps that show visible soiling and peeling labels? Will they feel safe and secure during that journey? Does it give the impression of a train that has been rigorously cleaned?

Etching and graffiti are other issues that present to customers that anti-social behaviour could be present during their journey. How does this make customers feel about rail being a safe and welcoming method of travel for them? And how does it reflect on the effectiveness of visible staff and CCTV systems being able to provide a safe and secure travel environment?

A new approach

At Diamond, we have responded to the details outlined in the Williams-Shapps plan and in January 2021 we launched our Front of House service, which fills the gap between train presentation and maintenance and tasks that have previously been neglected, including painting, graffiti and etching repairs, seat cover changing and general wear and tear rectifications. At Diamond, we recognise that these are tasks that have an impact on train interior service quality and should not be ignored.

This service has also evolved to include auditing and reporting, providing a clean cycle and complete turnkey solution for TOCs looking to enhance their user experience to their full potential.

Digitisation is another approach we are bringing to our services. By collaborating with mpro5, we can maximise the opportunities to transition to a fully digital quality management system. A modern yet simple-to-use app is used by our auditors to provide complete service quality inspections.

The app-based solution also allows the vast number of data points collected to feed into a structured rectification and long-term asset management program. The dashboard and outputs for rectifications and stakeholders are engaging, user friendly and can bring multiple benefits to TOCs and their customers.

The Diamond Front of House service offers TOCs the opportunity to enhance processes by bringing data to a single point of focus and enables the implementation of measurable improvements to their overall service quality delivery.

Service quality is completely taken care of, giving the operator peace of mind and freeing up their resource to complete heavier maintenance tasks which leads to higher availability of units. All this to take the passenger experience to new levels.

Delivering for your business and your customers

Diamond can completely customise our service to work alongside your existing internal processes to fill any gaps or implement a new dedicated set of processes. We understand that lines of route and geographical locations can have different operational requirements that differ on service quality performance, that's why we are proud of flexibility being our USP.

We use service quality data to build the initial Front of House scope of work, and then review this in a data-driven manner throughout the lifecycle of the service.

This new data-led approach is already becoming reality for the rail sector. Several train companies are already leading the pack in connecting their departments to deliver a clean, safe, and passenger-focused customer experience.

If your service quality regime and rectifications need some help in getting it on track speak to Diamond today. We'll provide you with a solution that delivers for both your business and your customers. Small tasks, low cost, high impact!

Jenny Dempsey, Business Development Manager at Diamond Rail services

email: Jenny.dempsey@diamondrail.co.uk phone: 07983043804

Visit www.diamondrail.co.uk