

Top tips for Service Quality Rectification

August 22, 2022



Jenny Dempsey, business development director at [Diamond Rail Services](#), explains why service quality and the customer experience will be directly linked to profitability in a way not previously seen before.

The Rail industry is experiencing a huge shift in what is required at every level to change the way the railways work. Through the Williams-Shapps Report, the government identified that big changes were necessary in several key areas to help future-proof rail and entice more commuters back.

Several key areas have been highlighted including customer satisfaction and meeting customer priorities. Traditional franchises will be replaced by Passenger Service Contracts similar to the ones already in operation with TFL. Operators will be paid a fee and will have objectives and targets to meet and will be rewarded if they are reached. Service quality and the customer experience will be directly linked to profitability in a way not previously seen before.

As this can have a direct impact on profit, many operators are already thinking about the challenges they may face and how they might best address them.

But what does this mean in practice? Looking at this from a customer perspective, what should operating companies be focusing on and how can this be done quickly and efficiently?

We know that service quality will be measured in three main ways: customer perception, mystery

shoppers and inspection regimes.

What should operators be looking for?

The customer journey is a wide and varied one that includes lots of different touchpoints. There are also so many factors that can affect it. Whether an in-house or specialist service quality rectification service provider is looking after this, the operator needs to ensure that all bases have been considered and covered.

1. A service provider that understands your challenges

If you decide to use a “Front-of-House” specialist, making the right choice is critical. Service providers need to put operators at the centre of their offering with a bespoke and flexible approach, rather than a one size fits all ethos. All operators have different setups and unique challenges. Make sure they understand the challenges your organisation faces and ensure they have robust strategies and plans to guarantee that you are prepared for any eventuality.

2. A capable and reliable service

You also need to know your chosen provider is capable and reliable, as you need to put your trust in them to maintain and achieve your high standards day after day. There are two areas to consider: the day-to-day regimes and the reactive elements and how will these be managed? In this area, you cannot ask too many questions and any good service provider will welcome your engagement and be happy to discuss this with you at length to ensure you are happy with the approach.

3. A turnkey maintenance service

It is also worth bearing in mind when choosing the right partner, that the more your service provider has to offer, the easier it will be to spot potential issues before they happen. So, if for example, they offer a complete turnkey service for refurbishments as well as just asset management and maintenance it should become apparent that a refurb project can be spotted from the distance and factored into future budgeting.

4. Good use of technology and real-time responsiveness

Should your specialist use technology, this is a big plus point as it allows them to be responsive in real-time to any unexpected issues that require handling quickly and efficiently. Dashboards are also a great visual for all stakeholders involved. This quick communication pipeline will keep issues to a minimum and resolve things quickly and efficiently, minimising impact.

5. Testimonials of a job well done

Knowing how the organisation has approached other operators previously and if they have client testimonials they can share is often a great way of gauging how this supplier has worked in the past; and more importantly how their customers felt about the service they provided. Providers are usually very happy to share this information and if they aren't this should be a red flag. At Diamond Rail we are always happy to share our testimonials with potential clients.

6. Strong company values

Finally, ask your supplier why? Why do they want to provide the service? This is, after all, completely for the travelling customers and when values align, that is when the biggest impact is made.

Should you have any further questions or just need some advice about Front of House Services, feel free to drop me a line.

Jenny Dempsey Jenny.Dempsey@diamondrail.co.uk