

Proactive partnership provides ticket to future efficiency

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Steve Howes – Managing Director of RSP, ATOC



Challenge

The Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) manages many activities on behalf of the UK’s 22 Train Operating Companies (TOCs) in order to improve the planning, operation, delivery and marketing of rail services. One of ATOC’s four operating companies is Rail Settlement Plan Ltd (RSP), which provides central retail support services to the TOCs. This includes the distribution of fare and timetable data and the allocation and settlement of rail revenue totalling nearly £5 billion a year.

In 1998 RSP commissioned Fujitsu to develop an innovative new application called the Rail Journey Information Service (RJIS). By incorporating a series of ATOC’s legacy systems onto one integrated platform, RJIS created a single source of information combining the timetables, fares, route planning, ticketing and transaction services needed to buy rail tickets and complete travel enquiry requests.

Having operated successfully for 10 years RJIS is a critical application for all TOCs, the National Rail Enquiry Service, two online retailers and nearly 500 other retailers of rail tickets, as without it no-one would be able to buy a train ticket. In 2008 RSP and Fujitsu began discussions about the evolution of the service in order to ensure that it had sufficient flexibility and capacity to meet the changing needs of passengers and TOCs as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

Steve Howes, Managing Director, RSP, says, *“Over the years since RJIS first went into service the rail industry has evolved to meet the needs of its passengers. So, working in partnership with Fujitsu, we wanted to identify which elements of RJIS were still important to us, which could be phased out and what new functionality we needed, so that we could refocus our resources and investment accordingly.”*

Solution

ATOC agreed a five year, £13 million deal with Fujitsu to refresh, enhance and streamline the hardware and applications technology used by RJIS, so that it could be supported until at least 2014 and also had the capacity to handle an increase in workload.

In addition, Fujitsu wanted to ensure that the new solution met the requirements of the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI-DSS) and provided the functionality necessary for ATOC’s “Positive Audit” - an enhanced accounting audit statement used to show that it is controlling tickets sales effectively and transparently.

To achieve these aims Fujitsu redeveloped the core Data Factory that holds the source information for fares, timetables and route planning to ensure that everyone across the industry uses a common set of data. It also created a completely new user interface for the journey planner element of RJIS, in order to make it faster and easier to use and require less training.

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

Organisation

Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC)

Services delivered

Refresh, update and manage the hardware and applications needed to operate The Rail Journey Information Service (RJIS)

Key metrics

- Processes 1 million rail journey transactions a day
- Responds to 820,000 enquiry requests every day
- 100% SLA achievement for 2 years

Benefits

- **Improved customer experience** – have timely access to accurate fares and timetables and more choice how to buy
- **Reduced operational costs** – simplification and consolidation of the system will save over £1 million
- **Increased productivity** – will improve operational productivity by making it easier for users to access and process information
- **Ensured stability** – a modern and resilient platform delivering 100% performance and supported until at least 2014
- **Greater capacity** – operations can now be scaled to ensure sufficient capacity to meet growing demand
- **Increased flexibility** – can exploit future opportunities such as changing travel patterns and new technology
- **Ensured compliance** – provides the tools to meet prevailing industry and retail standards, such as PCI-DSS

CASE STUDY

ASSOCIATION OF TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES (ATOC)

In response to the needs of TOCs, Fujitsu further enhanced the journey planner to improve operational effectiveness and productivity. New functionality includes displaying more information relating to fares, such as alternatives and restrictions, and the ability to view search results as a matrix for simple comparison. Customers can also now supply seat preference and check multiple availability of fares.

Finally, Fujitsu is completely updating the underlying technology, including a new version of the Oracle database, new Java front-end and back-end applications, the refreshment of datacentre hardware and introduction of a new shared storage system. As a result, the RJIS infrastructure will be capable of delivering the new functionality required by the industry, including PCI-DSS compliance, is more secure and has the flexibility and capacity to meet continuing growth and changes in demand.

The daily operation of the RJIS application continues to be undertaken by Fujitsu as an application managed service, which includes planning 80,000 rail journeys and responding to 820,000 enquiry requests each day. It now stores up to 140 million fares, the timetable for 19,000+ trains and details for 2,500+ train stations across the UK. It also processes 1 million transactions daily, manages over 300 million possible fare combinations, and supports around 4,500+ terminals and 1,600 ticket vending machines. Despite the scale of the RJIS application Fujitsu has a record of 100% achievement of its Service Level Agreement targets for the last two years, both before and after the new contract.

“RJIS is key to our ability to deliver a modern and efficient service to our passengers and Fujitsu’s contribution has been key to its continued success,” comments Steve Howes. *“Fujitsu worked with us to develop a clear vision for rejuvenating and enhancing its operation and then delivered what it said it would, when it said it would and how it said it would. It has maintained its reputation for delivering on time and to budget.”*

Benefits

RJIS provides consistent, accurate, current and impartial rail journey information that is updated daily and available online 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Its rejuvenation and management by Fujitsu is enabling ATOC to:

- **Improve customer experience** – customers have timely access to accurate and consistent fares and timetables and more choice of where and when to buy tickets
- **Reduce operational costs** – simplification and consolidation of the system architecture will save over £1 million, so the project will be self-financing over the life of the contract
- **Increase productivity** – the enhanced user interface, new functionality and greater standardisation will improve operational productivity by making it easier for users to access and process information
- **Ensure stability** – have a modern and resilient platform, with complete disaster recovery facilities, that is delivering 100% performance and can support future business requirements until at least 2014
- **Greater capacity** – operations can now be scaled to ensure sufficient capacity to meet growing demand being driven by new service improvements, such as Ticket-on-Departure
- **Increase flexibility** – enables the TOCS to exploit future opportunities such as changing travel patterns, evolving customer demand for integrated and multi-modal travel and new technology changes

- **Ensure compliance** – provides the tools to meet prevailing industry and retail standards, such as PCI-DSS.

“The improvements made by Fujitsu on behalf of RSP to RJIS and its efficient management of the service are making it easier for rail passengers to get where they want, when they want,” explains Steve Howes.

Approach

By listening to ATOC’s requirements, Fujitsu was able to restructure the RJIS contract using Lean application services principles, so that it only invested in the services that were most important, while also enabling a strategic change in direction to meet evolving customer requirements and ensure maximum longevity.

In particular, the massive growth in online sales (25% year-on-year) has led to much greater demand for Ticket-on-Departure vending-style machines used to collect tickets following online purchases. While around 40% of stations already offer a Ticket-on-Departure capability, by improving the database for these machines Fujitsu expects a greater uptake among RJIS users. This shift will also make Ticket-on-Departure machines more cost-effective for smaller stations to operate, which will be beneficial to both the TOCs and, most importantly, the customer.

In addition, the new system is designed to be more commercially flexible, so that it can be rolled out anywhere, including use by third party Internet ticket retailers.

Steve Howes says, *“The renewal of the RJIS contract reflects the ongoing commitment from both parties to this long-running and successful project. Over the period of the contract we have increasingly come to see Fujitsu not just a supplier, but as a partner with a deep understanding of the business objectives of both RSP and its stakeholders.”*

Expertise

With over 40 years experience of supporting the needs of customers, Fujitsu has a proven track record in providing complex systems integration and application development and management services that reduce costs, improve productivity and customer services and deliver a compelling return on investment.

Fujitsu has a long-standing relationship with ATOC and the rest of the UK rail industry and its technological skill and market insight have made it a market leader in rail retail. Furthermore, Fujitsu’s extensive retail experience offers rail organisations the opportunity to leapfrog a generation of development and investment by leveraging its knowledge of successfully deploying innovative retail solutions.

To deliver the improvements in RJIS, Fujitsu was also able to draw upon its extensive technical and project management expertise and close working relationships with other leading IT companies, such as its strategic partnerships with Oracle and Microsoft. Fujitsu’s global capability also enabled it to bring in a team of experts from Fujitsu in Japan to configure the new Eternus storage system array, so that it delivered optimum performance and benefits.

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