



The power of people management

James Adeshiyan, route director at National Express-owned Wagn, outlines the qualities required to be a successful operational manager

Early last year, I was asked to give a presentation at an operational performance conference in London. As I was preparing my presentation, it became clear to me that terms such as leadership, teamwork, relationship building, culture of ownership, and alignment of objectives all figured strongly in the story I wanted to tell.

Operational management relies heavily on people management, the importance of which cannot be underestimated in managing the many operational interfaces that now exist in the railway. So, being asked by the IRO to write an article on operational management from a people-management perspective was a welcome assignment.

Wagn is a very different place to what it was when I arrived as route director in 2002. It's always been my belief that you do not become a bad manager overnight. Businesses need to respond to structural changes in their operational environment or pre-empt them; different situations demand different management styles and approaches. The last thing you should do is descend into a blame culture, which feeds the appetite for excuses and generally alienates the very people and organisations you need to contribute to find solutions. One of my main challenges was engendering a team spirit between various departments such as engineering, retail, operations and HQ support functions. What helped do this was a common measurement, combined departmental budgets and review regimes covering performance management and a joint performance management improvement plan system (PMIP), introduced by National Express Rail Division across all its TOCs. This



James Adeshiyan... 'In the final analysis it is people who make things happen operationally'.

is championed by the senior management teams and forms part of key objectives and performance-related remuneration. Not only did this force departments to talk to each other; it provided a mandate for me as a route director to drive route performance and culture change from the front across all key delivery departments.

Leadership is an important part of operational management. And having a plan is usually a good start. When things are not going well, it is root causes that need to be resolved, not their symptoms. In 2002, driver recruitment on Wagn was my main priority as we did not have enough to run our train service. The recruitment was the easy part of the process. Having a manpower plan is one thing; managing it is another. In the 10 months it takes to train a driver, it is easy for things to slip if we are not monitoring and reviewing the process. This is an important point: if you are not measuring progress, how do you know you are making any? I have found such models as the European Foundation Quality Model (EFQM) or balance score card frameworks do more than just measure progress; they monitor and review results and build management confidence as incremental continuous improvement is made. Also they contribute to forcing managers to take ownership of issues, share good practice and

carry out informed decision-making.

Being in an operational environment, where so much of what we use to deliver a service to customers is leased from a third party, building good supplier relationships becomes an essential part of operational management. I found that a major contribution to Wagn's improvement over the last three years has been due to the effort that has been put into creating an environment of dialogue and consensus, both with external suppliers such as Network Rail and internal suppliers within head office. Creating such an environment must come from the top of each organisation involved, if consensus is to be achieved. It becomes a lot easier to agree the barriers to good performance, to agree joint plans, align objectives, communicate them and celebrate improvements.

A core part of operational management is about removing barriers to teamwork and the sharing of knowledge. The sharing of knowledge must not just be across internal departments but across organisational boundaries. Co-operation can be achievable without compromising commercial interests. A good example of this was the joint performance plan with Network Rail in 2004. Wagn accepted disruptive possessions, which enabled NR to remove 21 temporary speed restrictions over six

months, along with the renewal of five miles of track and 20 sets of points. This type of cooperation and other joint performance initiatives have been rewarded with the resultant improvements in service punctuality and customer satisfaction shown below:

Charter Inner MAA	90.7%
Charter Outer MAA	90.9%
PPM MAA	89.4%
NPS Wave 11 Overall Satisfaction	80.0%

For period 9 (6 November–3 December)

It may sound like a cliché, but in the final analysis it is people who make things happen operationally – although leadership is essential in getting them inside. Whether it is operational safety management or performance management, I have found that taking a holistic approach to operational management and using the basic framework of such models as EFQM is a helpful tool in making sense of the many pressures on my managers and their teams.

It's my belief that the importance of cascading responsibility to all levels of an organisation, leading from the front not only from the top, and inspiring, supporting and modelling behaviour is the responsibility of all managers at all levels. I have said to my team on many occasions: 'More than 90 per cent of you were here in 2002 – now look at the difference.'

NEWS FOR IRO MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome Gatwick Express as our newest corporate member. All employees of Gatwick Express are now entitled to enrol in the Institution as associates or affiliates without paying a personal subscription.

The following employers operate a Corporate Membership scheme, by paying a one-off annual fee which covers all their employees' Affiliate or Associate membership subscriptions. Those with full Membership will continue to pay their subscription personally,

irrespective of whether or not they can subsequently claim it back: (Please note that, as the IRO's subscriptions are tax-deductible, a receipt will be issued for all payments, whether by cheque, standing order or internet payment).

Network Rail, Eurostar UK Ltd, First ScotRail, First Great Western, First Great Western Link, Railnews, Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail), EWS Railway, Northern Ireland Railways, Freightliner, Virgin Trains (West Coast), Virgin Cross-Country, Thameslink, Southern, Corus Rail Consultancy, London Underground Ltd, Docklands Light

Railway, Transport for London, Stagecoach Rail, South West Trains, Sheffield Supertram, Arriva Trains Wales, South Eastern Trains, Island Line, London Lines, Silverlink Trains, c2c Rail, WAGN Rail, Wessex Trains, Midland Mainline, First Transpennine Express, One, Central Trains, Gatwick Express.

If your company would like to explore the benefits of corporate membership of the Institution, please contact us. We welcome applications from all industry companies, suppliers and associations – please contact Chris Daughton on 01444 248931 or email admin@railwayoperators.org

NEW WEBSITE: Those of you who check our website from time to time may have already noticed its new look and content. www.railwayoperators.org should now prove a more useful and, eventually, interactive site that will enable you to keep up to date with our news, events and courses.

The members' area is still under development and we will let you know as soon as it has viewable content. When it is ready we will alert you and please note that you will then need your membership number.

● Have you got experience of operating the railway? Would you like professional recognition, development and work-based academic qualifications? The Institution of Railway Operators exists to provide a professional structure and qualifications for people with knowledge and experience of operating the railway, at all levels.

An information pack is available for anyone interested in finding out more about the Institution and its education programme. Please contact Claire Wickes at the address at the top of the page if you would like a pack for yourself or colleagues.

DIARY OF EVENTS

ANNUAL LUNCH

Please put **Friday 28 April 2006** in your diary. Our annual lunch information and booking form will be circulated to all members in mid-January. Any companies wishing for a corporate table of 10 are welcome to contact us in advance; please email a provisional booking to: admin@railwayoperators.org or call us on 01444 248931.

SCOTTISH AND IRISH AREA

Tuesday 17 January 2006 – ERTMS for Operators: Nigel Murphy and Paul Le Vesconte of Atkins Rail will present this key topic, with Nigel explaining the principles and rationale behind ERTMS, and Paul covering developments since 2002, in particular the operational design associated with the Cambrian ERTMS project. With The Scottish Executive beginning to stride forward with rail renewal and enhancement investments in Scotland, ERTMS will become increasingly relevant to the major schemes to meet the country's transport needs in the 21st century. This multi-media presentation will provide a sound working understanding of ERTMS, benefits, drawbacks and issues. It will enable professional railway operators to engage more readily in the debates and planning when options for fitment are proposed for Scotland and elsewhere. Atkins will also be sponsoring the refreshments on the evening, so it promises to be a stimulating and interesting event.

While important to everyone, it will particularly help those students undertaking the Train Movement Control Systems module of the degree course. The event will take place in Glasgow, starting at 5.15pm with the venue still to be confirmed.

Friday 3 May to Sunday 5 May 2006 – Study Weekend in Glasgow: The area group will be participating in the weekend activities for students who are coming to Glasgow for the launch of the next set of courses with Glasgow Caledonian University, and the programme of meetings and visits for the existing students from all over the country on their study weekend.

Monday 20 March 2006 – The work of the Rail Accident Investigation Branch: This event will be held in Glasgow, starting at 5.15pm, with the venue still to be confirmed.

Monday 24 April 2006 – We are hoping to arrange something with an emphasis on Ireland. For information on all Scottish events and matters, please contact Scottish@railwayoperators.org or phone Jim Summers, acting chairman on 01324 625284

MIDLANDS AREA

Monday 23 January 2006 – Visit to Stoke-on-Trent PSB: Due to restricted space in the box, groups will need to be small. To ensure no-one is left idle, we have arranged a guided tour of the GSM-R

facilities opposite the PSB. There will be the opportunity to look round the operations and maintenance sections, have a look at the diagnostic tools and graphic interfaces and then catch up with what happens next with GSM-R.

Other provisional dates for the diary:

Monday 20 February, Monday 20 March Monday 24 April (please note change of day) and Monday 15 May

To contact the Midlands Area on any subject, please call Julia Stanyard on 0121 345 5030 or email: Midlands@railwayoperators.org

SOUTH EAST AREA

Monday 16 January 2006

Details will be sent to SE area members as soon as possible.

Monday 20 March 2006 – Station Operations: Operations Master Class.

Monday 15 May 2006 Speaker (TBA)

Monday 10 July 2006 – Basic Signalling: Operations Master Class.

Monday 18 September 2006 –

Speaker (TBA)

Monday 20 November 2006 –

Track for Operators: Operations Master Class

All South East Area meetings take place at the Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, Waterloo. Doors open at 6pm and talks commence at 6.30pm. To contact the South East area on any subject please email: Southeast@railwayoperators.org

NORTH EAST AREA

All North East Area meetings normally take place at 5.30pm for 6pm, at York.

For further news on the IRO in the North East contact us by email at: Northeast@railwayoperators.org

NORTH WEST AREA

Please note the talk on the introduction of 185s to TransPennine Express, scheduled for Wednesday 25 January will now take place on Tuesday 24 January 2006. The venue will be in Manchester (exact details will be confirmed nearer the date) and it will commence at 6pm for 6.30pm. The Speaker is Nick Donovan, new trains director at TransPennine Express.

Our March meeting is on Wednesday 22 March and will include a talk on ERTMS by Paul Le Vesconte.

Our May meeting, on Wednesday 24 May, will be a visit to the new TransPennine Express depot at Ardwick. Please note this event is still provisional and we will keep you informed.

To contact the North West area on any matter, please contact Clive Evans on 01270-629009 or email us at: Northwest@railwayoperators.org

SOUTH WEST AREA

For information on all other South West events and matters, contact Lawrie Hall on 01453 822150 or email us at: Southwest@railwayoperators.org