



Case Study - South West Trains – Right Time Railway

Right Time Railway – engaging employees in meeting demanding targets

South West Trains is Britain's busiest commuter railway, with over 5,000 staff delivering services across 207 stations for 143 million passenger journeys every year.

In 2006 South West Trains and Network Rail agreed a joint ambition – 'more trains running Right Time across the whole service' – and launched the Right Time Railway (RTR) programme. Their target was that 70% of trains would achieve Right Time arrival at destination. This target exceeds the Public Performance Measure set by the Government.

Over 40 roles are involved in running every train, so RTR needed to change the behaviour and approach of all who affect train performance and not be seen as just another performance drive.

HarknessKennett were asked to support South West Trains and Network Rail in the delivery of a joint internal communication programme to engage employees in meeting the targets of RTR.

Research showed that people didn't know how their role fitted into the bigger picture. The wide range of creative materials adopted the theme of teamwork and featured real people in real jobs. HarknessKennett also developed a communications toolkit to support managers in onward briefing of RTR.

Six months after launch, HarknessKennett were asked to measure the effectiveness of RTR communications. The research showed that 93% of people surveyed understood how their actions could help colleagues in other roles deliver RTR. Understanding of the importance of trains being on time at all points in their journey had increased from 65% to 92%.

Performance figures published in April 2007 show that South West Trains achieved a best ever result of 94.2% 'time to 5' (the Public Performance Measure) and a record high of 74% Right Time arrivals, 4% above the original target.

"From the beginning, HarknessKennett were an integral part of the team, developing messages that have resonance for all our internal audiences. Their very practical advice helped us to get those messages right into the frontline of both organisations."

Natalie Brown
HR Strategy Manager
South West Trains