

# Case Study:

## Looking after customers

### Focus on the customer

#### ***Recommendations for future projects to improve the delivery of infrastructure projects to maintain a focus on customers***

Throughout the Thameslink Programme the top priority was to look after customers through:

- maintaining train service capacity wherever possible
- understanding the touch points prior to, during and after journeys
- identifying the best journey options
- providing an excellent communications campaign covering each stage of the programme
- highlighting the benefits achieved – ‘This is why...’
- providing ticket acceptance on alternative routes and types of transport
- recruiting additional staff to assist during the major engineering works
- encouraging volunteers from the Train Operating Companies (TOCs), Network Rail and Department for Transport to assist.

#### **Maintaining train service capacity where possible**

For each of the stages of the programme which required changes in train services both during engineering works and post the network changes, the TOCs and Network Rail focused on passenger numbers and journeys with emphasis on the peak hours of travel to develop timetables providing required capacity.

Major timetable changes, for example the Charing Cross run-throughs, where trains to Charing Cross did not stop at London Bridge station between January 2015 and August 2016 and the Cannon Street run-throughs, where trains to Cannon Street did not stop at London Bridge station between 29 August 2016 to January 2018 were fully consulted along with the May 2018 timetable changes. A marketing campaign ‘Times are changing’ was run;

<https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/travel-information/live-travel-information/may-timetable>

This covers details of the Southeastern May 2018 Timetable Consultation Response.

#### **Customer Journey Mapping**

One technique used successfully for the latter stages of the programme was Customer Journey Mapping. This used workshops to discuss all ‘touch points’ - that is, wherever a customer makes a decision on travel and meets with a form of communication. For each stage of the journey the following questions were answered:

- What have we planned?
- What will the challenges be?
- Key people & roles

From these work groups, Customer Charters were developed for each major station. An example worked through for Victoria station for the December 2017 blockade is shown below:

# December 2017 Blockade – Victoria Station Customer Charter

## What Does Success Look Like?

POSITIVE MEDIA COVERAGE: #no negative press #focus on opening of new concourse at W.C, not Victoria #positive tweets #positive media feedback on job done # positive live customer feedback  
 ONE STATION TEAM: #SE/NW/OTM seen in positive light # teamwork with other stations #colleagues feeling they had all they needed to do a good job #colleagues were engaged  
 STRONG OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE: #no train failures #no overruns #no platform changes #no overcrowding #no evacuations #no customer/colleague accidents #BAU following blockade  
 AVOID NEGATIVE PRESS: #excuse ticket holders (return customer) #success of blockade to minimize any criticism of price increase

## Customer Journey Blueprint

	Journey Planning	Arrival at Station	Station Concourse	Queuing	Gate line	Platform and Boarding
What have we planned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Per-Genius campaign</li> <li>Communications at 500m and on train</li> <li>Leaflets @ 500m across 330 stations (under 5m)</li> <li>"Check Before You Travel" campaign (under 5m)</li> <li>Campaign for leisure travellers (journey enquiry sites updated (trainline.com used more than NRS))</li> <li>38 Twitter and NRS Genius Team at stations during blockade</li> <li>TSP stand in place</li> <li>Passage platform number team app</li> <li>Provide local information on alternative routes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TTL messaging regarding blockade (under 5m VC and in station)</li> <li>Leaflets @ 500m visible Customer Service Staff available to help</li> <li>Pass signs, via 500m and additional posters advising where customers need to go</li> <li>Onward travel advice leaflets available</li> <li>Delayed onward travel advice provided and printed at all station staff</li> <li>Press at the end of the staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRDs available to assist with ticket sales</li> <li>TTL signs visible on board</li> <li>SPD signs</li> <li>security awareness – all responsible</li> <li>Cleaning standards stayed up</li> <li>Debris team on site</li> <li>Maintenance team readily available on site</li> <li>STP and Land's End presence</li> <li>Christmas decorations, stands and special events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All passengers made to identify queuing systems on P1 and P2 if required</li> <li>Pass signs made for queuing system with direction in Hudson's glass panel @ the station main passage</li> <li>Portable sign systems with live updates</li> <li>Surprise &amp; Delight – hand out of free pens, small oranges etc. penalties during wet weather etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>P10 gates closed</li> <li>310 seats given open</li> <li>Full maintenance review</li> <li>Gate blockade communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trains emptied before they are able to load</li> <li>Trains depart in a timely manner to allow early boarding</li> <li>Conductor announcements and better platform if train are full</li> <li>Provide Delta Terrace to allow further board through</li> </ul>
What will the risks be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passengers may travel early only to miss the alterations to service</li> <li>PRDs 330m – unusual methods used at 11:40</li> <li>375 @ 12:00 normal hours, 380 @ 12:40 (train) businesses will close early</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wife to approach – lack of different uniforms</li> <li>310m/330m – staff to appear more to manage</li> <li>Customer Service Staff (if they are travelling) on board the train</li> <li>Numbers of additional staff required and management of them</li> <li>Ongoing underground issues at Victoria in closure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buying a ticket</li> <li>CG failures</li> <li>Passer failure</li> <li>Gate example – the system</li> <li>NRS is not available</li> <li>Weather event in heading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Station Ambassadors and Back of House must be given</li> <li>310m must be given</li> <li>Station platform or the queuing system will not work</li> <li>310m/330m – the passengers heading additional assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will the capture numbers if gates are open?</li> <li>Order and queueing required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trains being empty/overloaded</li> <li>Preloading platforms</li> <li>Agency staff not being able to handle</li> <li>Staff witness across the group</li> </ul>
Key roles & roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharon Wills</li> <li>Paul Capper</li> <li>OTM Cammie</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer Ambassadors</li> <li>Replaced 30 staff</li> <li>NRS 330</li> <li>33 and OTM Station Managers</li> <li>Additional 330 staff</li> <li>Customer Service Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central Point</li> <li>NRS 330</li> <li>33 and OTM Station Managers</li> <li>STP</li> <li>PRDs</li> <li>332</li> <li>Customer Service Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Top NRS 330s on duty – one to manage Station resources</li> <li>The other across the management of the station</li> <li>Buy, enhance manual in order to manage any serious access control (gate methods – agency) 38 (over 330s per shift, return 330 staff)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gate line staff</li> <li>CU 330</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dispatch Staff</li> <li>Agency Staff</li> <li>Central Point</li> </ul>

## Additional staff to assist with customer service

The importance of understanding the impacts of the Thameslink Programme on all stations was recognised early on. Where customers might change their travel patterns, stations that may not immediately spring to mind as being impacted became apparent. Following extensive analysis of passenger numbers and travel patterns at the following stations were identified as requiring extra support during the major engineering blockades:

Dartford, Greenwich, Hither Green, Ladywell, Lewisham, London Cannon Street, London Cannon Charing Cross, New Cross, Orpington, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Waterloo East.

Other London termini including Victoria, Blackfriars and Waterloo International (where Southeastern train services were re-routed for two of the engineering blocks) were also allocated additional staff. Staff at stations where services were reduced were reassigned to other stations and volunteers recruited to assist with customer service and supporting the permanent staff.

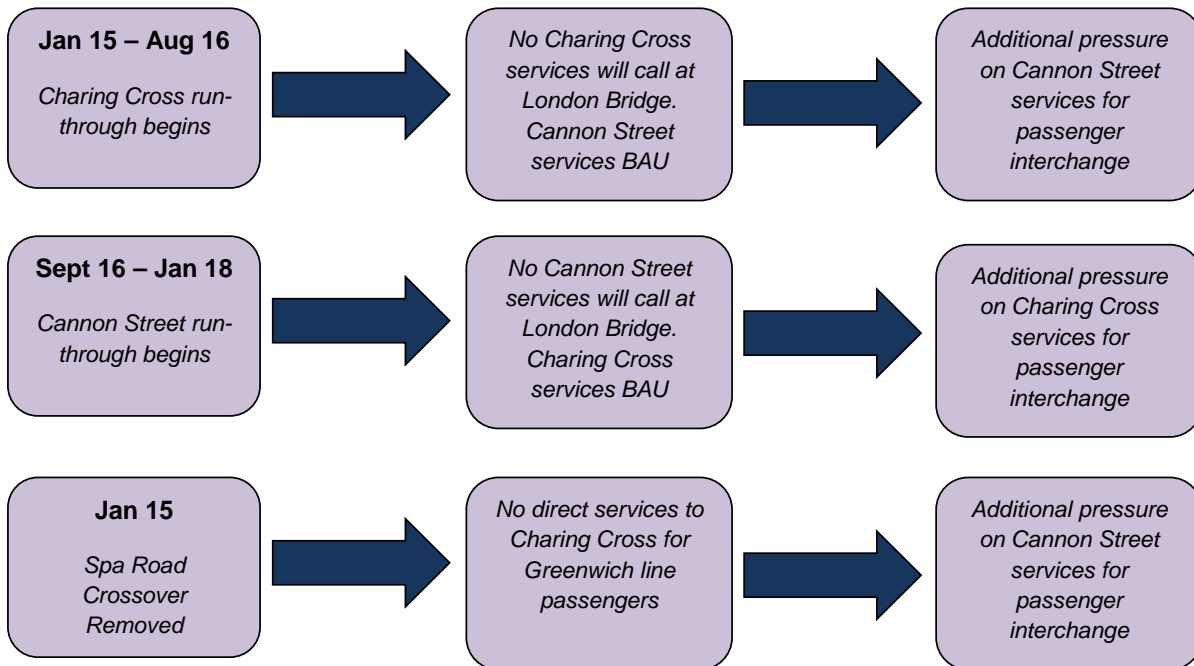
The following is an example of the detailed analysis and recommendations for agency staff at Cannon Street station:

## Thameslink Programme – Cannon Street

### Background

- Approximately 21.6million Southeastern passenger journeys are made through Cannon Street station each year (MOIRA March 2013)
- Annual footfall is recorded at 21million with 442,000 interchanges made (ORR 2011/12)
- Currently 47% of Southeastern passengers either complete their journey at London Bridge or use London Bridge to interchange onto other transport nodes with 14% completing their journey at Cannon Street
- There will be significant changes to the way in which Southeastern can operate during the Thameslink Programme of works
- Cannon Street station will be required to operate 24/7
- Southeastern will operate reduced availability of services but with the same predicted passenger numbers, minus growth (YOY)
- For a period of 20 consecutive months, Charing Cross services will not stop at London Bridge until services resume in September 2016
- For a period of 15 consecutive months, Cannon Street services will not stop at London Bridge until services resume in January 2018
- Estimated cost to provide 10 weeks of agency support throughout key stages of the Thameslink Programme is £x

### Timeline of key events:



### Assumptions

- Cannon Street will become more of an origin and destination interchange for many more passengers during the Thameslink programme, even with suggested alternative travel advice
- Passengers will join their 'usual' service from their home location and worry about the interchanges once in London

- Passengers on Cannon Street services wishing to alight at London Bridge during the run-throughs will over-carry and alight at Cannon Street to utilise London Underground
- Train strengthening on all peak Cannon Street services will reduce capacity on Charing Cross services
- Passengers who alight at Cannon Street as their destination station are in walkable distance from their place of work
- Peaks will become longer in duration with passengers opting to start their journey earlier or later to try and beat the crowds
- Performance issues include extended dwell times at London Bridge causing delay to services arriving and departing Cannon Street
- Off route tickets will be accepted on all reasonable routes identified – across TOC
- Gate lines will be configured to accept ‘reasonable routed tickets’ to avoid overcrowding upon access/egress

#### Predicted Agency Staffing Levels & Associated Cost

- Cannon Street requires agency support to focus on the non-staff availability and operational areas of the station, specifically areas of information retrieval and decision points within the station footprint.
- This allows Southeastern personnel to concentrate on their specific duties of train despatch, performance and safety of passengers
- Costs could be further reduced where locations have support from Travel Champions.
- Review of staffing levels can be undertaken as the phasing progresses

#### When Required?

- |                                       |                           |           |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| ▪ December 2014 – January 2015        | Full roster               | (4 weeks) |
| ▪ <b>Feb 2015 – July 2016</b>         | <b>No requirement BAU</b> |           |
| ▪ August 2016 – September 2016        | Full Roster               | (4 weeks) |
| ▪ <b>October 2016 – November 2017</b> | <b>No requirement BAU</b> |           |
| ▪ December 2017 – January 2018        | Full roster               | (2 weeks) |

#### Full agency staffing requirements – Total: 10 weeks (£x)

24hr coverage	Stewards CS		Totals
Mon - Sun	22	£x	<b>£x</b>

#### Full Requirement Agency Staffing Locations

##### Monday – Sunday Total staffing requirement per shift: 11

- Main concourse area 1 x Customer Service
- Platforms 1, 2&3, 4&5 and 6&7 – 2 x Customer Service located at country and London ends of platforms
- Station entrances/exits 1 x Customer service
- Gate line – 1 x Customer Service located along the gate array

#### Training Requirements for Agency Teams

Best practice indicates for multi-site agency staff to attend a one day workshop. This will be undertaken in-house by our Learning and Development team. An approximate cost is as follows:

The workshop will cover:

- Company Overview
- Presentation on Thameslink Programme and what it means for Southeastern and our passengers
- Customer Experience training

- Safety and security briefing inclusive of HOT procedure
- Phonetic alphabet training for radio use
- Station Operational awareness (dos and don'ts when working within an operation environment)
- Ramp deployment
- Local induction at assigned location of work

### **Agency staff duties**

Customer service assigned staff will relay onward travel information and alternative journey options, directional assistance for passengers in and around the station environment, assistance for persons with restricted mobility and ramp deployment.

Agency staff within the role of security will assist the station team with security sweeps, directional assistance as well as to ensure all station areas of operation are crowd controlled where necessary, that passenger safety on stairwells and boarding and alighting is conducted in a controlled manner.

### **Additional Equipment Requirements**

- **Radios**
- **High Visibility Vests**
- **Station Working Books**
- **Mess facilities**
- **Staff ID**

### **Key Events impacting London Terminals**

- London Marathon (annually)
- Tour De France 2014
- Prudential Ride London 2014
- Burns Night
- Trooping the Colour
- Winter Wonderland (Hyde Park)
- Notting Hill Carnival
- Mayors Thames Festival
- Greenwich & Docklands International Festival
- New Years Eve
- New Years Day Parade
- Chinese New Year
- FA Cup Final (dependant on teams)
- The Boat Race
- Bonfire night
- Remembrance Sunday
- Pride in London (formally Gay Pride)

Volunteers were also recruited to provide customer service and give out information. They provided essential support to local staff allowing staff to carry out safety checks and other important duties. The volunteers received help and guidance for their roles with training where appropriate and local inductions. Having head office staff assist at stations not only provided much appreciated support to the station teams but helped the volunteers understand better what life is like working out at stations.

## Alternative travel options and ticket acceptance

The Train Operating Companies worked well with London Underground Ltd (LUL) and various bus operators to identify where extra services were required and what was possible for ticket acceptance. Where a customer was routed to a different station to that required e.g. Cannon Street where they wanted Charing Cross, they had the option of catching the underground. For those who did not have a travelcard, their tickets were accepted for this part of the journey.

The principle adhered to was that 'where through no option to the customer, they had to travel via an alternative route or ended up at a station which was not their required destination', they should not be out of pocket to complete their journey. Detailed communications covered the scenarios with the appropriate briefing being given to all transport operators' staff.

*For example:*

Where train services between New Cross station and Cannon Street station were suspended, London Underground stations at which National Rail tickets were accepted were: Victoria, Cannon Street, Charing Cross, Waterloo, Southwark, Bank, Monument, London Bridge and North Greenwich.

### 1. Key challenges

- Balancing the 'what is possible' vs the 'what is required'
- Enabling everyone the opportunity to be consulted with
- Protecting the train services that are operating as far as possible
- Understanding the customer – they did not always behave the way that was expected
- Managing the number of agency staff and volunteers – recruiting, training, behaviours and supervising
- Consistent messaging; briefing other Train Operators and LUL. Making sure messages were relayed to staff
- Making it simple for customers.

### 2. Recommendations for future projects

The following recommendations, based on the direct experiences of the Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies involved, will result in a more operationally-focussed delivery of infrastructure changes:

- Early consultation on proposed timetable changes with responses to anyone who asks questions to explain reasoning for decisions.
- Keep looking at options to provide some type of train service e.g. single line working.
- Use mystery shoppers to provide feedback and identify areas for improvement.
- Keep a log of feedback and review after each main event using to improve service and training in the future.
- Understand who the decision makers are.
- Key messages and scripts to be agreed centrally and used for communications – ask parties to confirm that all staff are briefed.

#### Author

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#### Further information

For more information on this Learning Legacy case study please email [contact@thameslinkprogramme.co.uk](mailto:contact@thameslinkprogramme.co.uk)