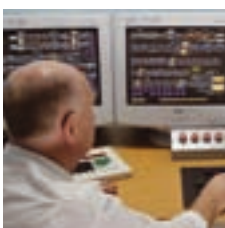


The Railway Engineering Company

Case Study Wimbledon Panel Box

Probably the most intense panel box in the UK, Wimbledon signals some 1,500 trains per day through five panels, from four operating companies, on the key Waterloo commuter link.



TRE



■ The issues

The signalling team had four key issues to crack:

- **reducing training time:** for Wimbledon, the 18 month standard time to develop fully qualified and experienced signallers was too long, given the complexity and intensity of the panels. Signallers needed to be brought up to speed quickly if they were to make an effective contribution to the operation.
- **how to make the unusual usual:** with such a complex operation, the team needed signallers to know how to react immediately to something which rarely, if ever, happens. They needed to be sure that the lack of the capability to deal with such rare events would not paralyse the signal box. They needed to expose signallers to the unnatural, and help them deliver the right response, naturally!
- **developing experience-based competence:** to ensure smooth changes to timetables or routing, and day-to-day efficient signalling, the team believed that hands-on experience was the best way to train - but how could this be done with only the live railway to practise on?
- **testing improvements and innovation:** in order to improve customer service, new ideas could be developed and thought through in detail but the moment of truth could only come from the live environment - would the new ideas help or hinder?

■ The solution

The Railway Engineering Company was approached to consider a bespoke signalling simulation solution for Wimbledon - TRESIM for panels. Working together to understand the objectives, The Railway Engineering Company believed it could create a panel simulator using a large, 24-screen indication display, 10-screen control desk and the latest in touch-screen technology to simulate the signalling operation.

But TRE took it further. The simulator included everything the real signalling centre involved - right down to "live" telephone calls from drivers.



To fit the budget, it was agreed that Wimbledon's most complex panel - panel 2 - would be the basis for simulation. This would ensure training and development of people in the most complex of situations would be possible. TRE built the simulator in its offices and the team from Wimbledon visited in the later stages to "reality-test" it and ensure that the highly localised elements would be accurately replicated.

■ Results and expectations

- rolling training programme for signallers through many different scenarios, from routine signalling to Category A SPADs
- list of scenarios developed which every signaller can work through
- programmes to expose signallers to the unusual and extensively train to make the unknown a natural environment
- monitor through Signallers Continuous Assessment Workbook
- unsurpassed quality of training environment
- used as positive relationship building programme, including sharing with drivers to help them and signallers better understand each other's needs
- positive morale boost for the signal box, and an incentive to train and become expert in their profession

■ Customer comments

"TRE are very rare in the rail industry. They deal to time, on budget and to specification - without a great degree of effort from the client."

"We asked TRE to quote and produce a proposal - and once agreed they just built it. It was very easy from our point of view."

"This simulation is so realistic that it warrants the expenditure."

Steve Knight
Area Operations Manager (Wessex)
Network Rail

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