

Taking the Unipart model Down Under

In early 2009, Unipart Rail and Unipart Expert Practices began working with RailCorp, Sydney, Australia, to introduce 'Lean' principles into its depots. One year later, Unipart has secured a further major contract to continue this partnership.

RailCorp is responsible for delivering, maintaining and providing a safe and reliable passenger rail service throughout the Sydney metropolitan area and rural New South Wales and the contract is to support its Continuous Improvement programme.

David Filipetto, Director of Lean Six Sigma, RailCorp, explained the company's aims and why Unipart was the successful bidder. 'RailCorp is embracing the 'Lean' and 'Six Sigma' philosophies as key drivers of organisational change. The goal is to improve asset reliability and make processes more efficient. The rolling stock division is at the forefront of implementing these tools to drive

workplace reform and ensure it can meet the challenges of maintaining assets to the highest standard. The review of the supply chain, utilising the expertise of Unipart, will go a long way to satisfying these goals.'

After an extensive interview process, RailCorp selected Tony Metcalfe from Unipart to support delivery of the improvement activities. Tony was chosen for his extensive knowledge of 'Lean', his track record in its implementation and his 22 years' experience in the rail industry.

'My role within the contract is to deliver process improvements and knowledge transfer, utilising the tools and techniques of the Unipart Way and 'Lean', he said. The first project was to improve a logistics process at Hornsby Maintenance Depot. Using a number of 'Lean' tools, a baseline was agreed and waste identified within the current process.

The Unipart Way tools used included:

- Value stream mapping.
- Process trials.
- Layout and work sequence.
- Seven wastes.
- Insight stars.

Expert practices in Sydney

Future State workshops were then held to establish a new way of working. The members of the workshop all worked within the current process and had over 200 years of rail experience. After training, the team established a future state that was then trialled and later implemented. To ensure the future state was sustained, the team used standard operating procedures and adopted Unipart's workplace audit process. It is intended to make the process of providing parts flow to the right place at the right time, making peoples' jobs easier and getting trains back into service quicker.



RailCorp's Hornsby Maintenance Depot prior to the adoption of the Unipart Way (above left) and following its introduction (above right).

Big expansion in Ireland

Unipart Rail supported the official opening of its Irish agent Rivval's impressive new facility by Noel Dempsey, Ireland's Minister for Transport. During the ceremony, the Minister unveiled a plaque to commemorate the official opening. David Kierton, Business Development Director, Unipart Rail, also presented a plaque embracing the Unipart Rail/Rivval partnership which commenced in 2003.

Unipart Rail's support included 'hands-on' product demonstrations which showed product innovations such as Dorman's new integrated lightweight signal and low energy train lighting solutions from Unipart Rail. Key industry partners to Unipart Rail and Rivval also gave presentations at the event - these included TfL, Signalling Solutions, Collis Engineering, Selectequip and HallRail.

Michael Murphy, Managing Director, Rivval, commented: 'The new premises provide the ideal facilities for the continued development of the rail supply business in Ireland. In addition to the comprehensive administrative offices, indoor and outdoor storage and manufacturing areas, the site also incorporates substantial test and demonstration track facilities.'



With the strengthening of the partnership between Rivval and Unipart Rail, Michael is confident that Rivval has the capability to lead the Irish railway industry into the next decade.

New axle counter cable gains Network Rail product approval

Network Rail approved axle counter cable is now available exclusively through the Unipart Rail cable team. It is designed to replace the existing specification already used for train detection across much of the UK rail network. By using a unique layer of glass



fibre to protect against rodent attacks, the cable no longer requires steel tape armour, meaning it is more cost-effective, flexible, easier to strip and does not require metallic bonding. 'Eland Cables has worked hard to create a product that will both reduce installation time for engineers and increase efficiency across the rail network as a whole,' said Chris Barnes, Technical Sales Manager, Eland Cables, who has worked closely with Network Rail on the new design.