

# Supply chain for projects - the next generation

Challenged strongly by the need to keep pace with developments in modular approaches to rail projects, Unipart Rail, in close partnership with its customers, has introduced a set of supply chain management tools and services, which can be applied to any size of project.

The key features of the new approach are based upon ideals frequently talked about but rarely achieved. The main features are:

- Real time, view from anywhere, internet-based visibility of a project stockholding, incoming materials and past usage on the project.
- Elimination or bringing to an absolute minimum, the time spent by engineers in document preparation for required management of delivered materials.
- Customer project cash flow optimisation through 'pay as you use' from Unipart Rail project dedicated stocks.
- Involvement of designers with inventory planners to identify the project needs at the earliest possible dates, and manage any later design or specification changes.
- Near elimination of project surpluses through rollover of materials to the next project, direct transfer to alternative projects or return to Unipart Rail's central stockholding.
- Consolidated billing based upon stock usage, with near elimination of invoice queries.

The 'next generation' processes are already in place with Balfour Beatty Rail at sites south of the Thames, Carillion Rail at Birmingham Moor Street and Banbury as well as Atkins Rail for modular signalling and LUL's District Line Third Party Immunisation projects.

## Kitting solutions for Balfour Beatty Rail

The Balfour Beatty Rail operation involves a Unipart Rail supply chain manager, being co-located with the site engineers and agreeing directly with them the complete kits of materials required for each specific work package. The kitting solution provided to Balfour Beatty Rail has resulted in the elimination of the need to carry inventory making Unipart Rail responsible for assembling the complete kits into clearly labelled, site ready deliveries, at dates pre-planned with the engineers.

Balfour Beatty Rail utilises Unipart Rail's remote warehouse web-based system, which provides them with clear visibility of stocked materials and movement of materials. This internet portal is password controlled and can be accessed via any internet enabled device.

## Restricted space and security solutions for Carillion Rail

Carillion Rail's Birmingham Moor Street project has very limited site storage and there is also a risk of theft and vandalism, should materials be stored locally. Unipart Rail has provided pre-kitted-out secure storage containers for those materials required for day-to-day usage, with all clearly identified and labelled allowing engineers to locate their required item quickly and with ease. All other planned material is held at Unipart Rail's distribution centres to be called upon as and when required by the project.

Carillion Rail managers and the site engineers also have access



to the remote warehouse, again providing them with visibility of all stockholding for the project, including the locations of the materials along with detailed information on dated arrivals into the stockholding. Unipart Rail is responsible for the transfer of materials from its distribution centres to the site of work and all material movements are clearly visible at all times by Carillion Rail engineers and billing is generated solely by the usage of materials by Carillion Rail.

## Large scale projects with Atkins

In addition to the smaller scale projects, Unipart Rail has been developing similar approaches on larger projects with Atkins where there is now a section of Unipart Rail's SAP distribution centre stock control system dedicated to materials management for Atkins. This has been developed over a number of years and is now being further enhanced for modular signalling along with the Third Party Immunisation and Evergreen 3 projects.

## The future

Further advances in kitting and modular supply chain technologies are also being considered with major industry partners and include options such as:

- Utilisation of electronic product tagging.
- Greater input ability at design and drawing stages.
- Optimisation of delivery modes.

Unipart Rail is committed to delivering a complete solution, tailored to create the leanest approach to delivery of all project requirements regardless of size and complexity.

