



Performance through engagement

The Challenge

Northern Rail operates 471 railway stations from the North West, North East, Humberside and Yorkshire with a fleet of 313 trains. They provide 2600 services per day and are the largest operator in the United Kingdom, delivering 240,000 passengers daily. They have four main depots, Neville Hill, Heaton, Newton Heath and Allerton.

Unipart Expert Practices were initially asked by Northern Rail to design and implement a standard B Exam process that would incorporate enhanced reliability work within the same exam lead time. Unipart developed and delivered a programme of Lean training and development to support improvement activities and Lean capability across of the depots.

The Solution

Unipart's standard approach was used to engage and develop teams in Lean tools and techniques. One week Lean Academies have been used to provide Northern Rail employees with an opportunity to learn and gain confidence in the use Lean tools and techniques in a safe environment before returning to their depots and becoming involved in improvement projects supported by an experienced Practitioner who coached them to:

- Understand current ways of working and identify opportunities for improving the processes
- Develop standard and transparent processes which are key to building the foundation for Northern Rail to continuously improve
- Implement visual management to monitor key performance measures allowing the teams to capture trends, identify issues and take corrective actions
- Build an internal Lean capability



“Unipart’s approach to implementing Lean was very different from what we had seen from other Lean Practitioners. They had a much better understanding of our industry and the problems we face and were able to engage with our people in a way that made Lean come to life. We now have our people challenging us to help them to do more with Lean as they see the benefits of applying the tools to improve the way they carry out their work”.

Phil Davenport, Engineering Change Manager



The Result

Through training and developing Northern Rail employees a Continuous Improvement capability has been established of circa 150 people. Northern Rail have implemented:

- **Introduction of a standard exam process that enabled key reliability work to be undertaken in the same lead time**
- **Communication Centres across all 4 depots that enable the teams to make key decisions based on real time data, analyse fleet material information, capture issues and drive business improvements**

As a result of the programme Northern Rail have produced excellent improvements in reliability and availability:

- **Improvements implemented that release over 800 man hours per month**
- **50% reduction in open defects**
- **46% Reduction in the time maintenance teams take to collect materials and tools**
- **150 Northern Rail employees trained in Lean improvement tools and techniques**

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