



First  **Rail Consultancy**

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About First Rail Consultancy

“ Our teams at First Rail Consultancy are led by experienced professionals who enthusiastically support clients with any operational, commercial or technical assistance. Their experiences cover the key considerations for every transport operator; they are able to seamlessly embed into wide-ranging industry projects and deliver value, while keeping clients at the heart of everything we do.
Graham Stockbridge, Managing Director ”



Our Clients





Graham Stockbridge
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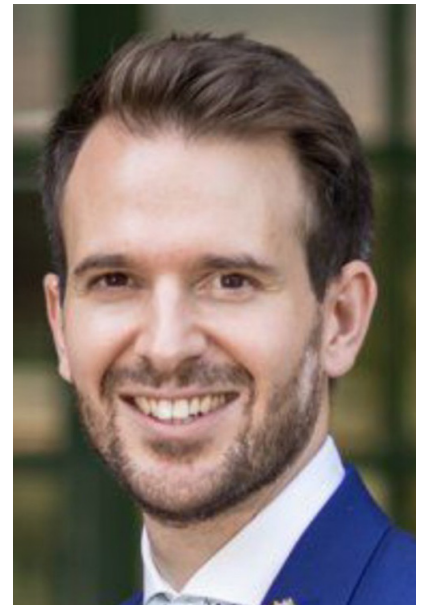
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Our experiences



Members of our team were integral to the creation of Lumo - a start-up offering open access rail services on the East Coast Main Line. We helped to define ways of working for Lumo by creating new:

- Employee terms and conditions
- Role profiles
- Strategic vision
- Crew accommodation plan
- Recruitment and training plans

The objective of this assignment was to design an organisation that was fit to deal with the most pressing issues facing rail at the time.

First Rail Consultancy supported South Western Railway in the implementation of its Service Quality Regime.

We worked with SWR to provide:

- Mobilisation for technical suppliers
- Internal process development
- Communications plan
- Team creation and onboarding

We ensured deadlines were met by clearly defining priorities and guidance for suppliers.



We were commissioned by the UK operator, Great Western Railway, to develop an engineering proposal to replace its ageing diesel fleets over the next 5-10 years. We devised plans with the ability to:

- Reduce the number of vehicles needed by 4% while still providing the same service
- Reduce GWR's carbon footprint with low/zero emission trains
- Improve efficiency in train crew and engineers by using a standard platform
- Ensure efficient procurement through a single large order delivering lower unit costs

As part of the post-Covid-19 Green Recovery, FirstGroup became the first bus and rail operator to formally commit to reaching Net Zero by 2050. As part of this commitment, First Rail Consultancy's team of analysts designed and created a bespoke model to assess the carbon emissions of different timetable and electrification options.

In addition, our team also reviewed and developed key performance indicators for train operating company business plans and identified business as usual process improvements to support wider sustainability objectives.



Analysis & Modelling

We provide insights and draw meaning from complex data, also providing the link between finance teams and subject matter experts.

Performance

With extensive experience in transport data analytics and performance management, we support transport operators to improve their performance levels.

Commercial & Customer Experience

We deliver a strategic view of the existing markets, assisting clients in operational decisions and business case development.

Planning

We support customers grow their existing operations and develop new contracts and business opportunities through interpreting market analysis, and assessing network capacity and resource constraints.

Engineering

We work with engineering/maintenance functions to ensure the continuity of service through the maintenance and sustainability of a client's fleet.

Programme and Project Management

We help shape and deliver projects, programmes and portfolios using dedicated interim resource, or augmenting existing teams.

Operations

We provide professional experience spanning every aspect of operations. We drive organisational change, enhance efficiency, leverage technological advancements and use our broad range of knowledge to apply best practice solutions to operating risks.

Writing, Editorial & Graphics

We are skilled in producing a range of different documents including business plans, franchise bids, business cases and feasibility studies.

People and Organisation

We support our clients by providing organisational design, workforce strategy and employee engagement activity.



What we do | Analysis and Modelling

Our modelling and analysis team has wide-ranging skills from competition and fares analysis to report writing. We provide data-led research and drive decision-making. We design, build and run robust models across a variety of business areas from commercial, financial, operational to customer experience. Our core disciplines are:



Researching, analysing and visualising data to present persuasive and insightful conclusions



Problem solving



Creating models using a logical approach, industry guidance and best practice modelling principles



Model assurance



Financial (performance, cost and revenue) and non-financial KPIs forecasting



Operating different analytical tools e.g., Excel, SQL, MOIRA, Python, PowerBI, Tableau and ArcGIS



Business case development and evaluation



Sensitivity analysis



Sustainability Analysis and Modelling for FirstGroup operators/TPE Transpennine Route Upgrade service study

We designed, built, and ran a bespoke model that assessed the carbon emissions impact, and associated costs, of different timetable and electrification options for the Transpennine Route Upgrade service study. We also reviewed and developed environmental KPIs for FirstGroup business plans. This included identifying process improvements for data collection, appraising different reporting tools and subsequently creating best practice reporting. Throughout the projects, communication with stakeholders was paramount to understanding current processes, their aspirations and sharing outputs.



Charlene Lawton
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What we do | Commercial and Customer Experience

Our commercial and customer experience practice use customer insight and data to develop strategies that deliver growth, commercial value and a customer-centric experience:

- ✓ Revenue generative initiatives
- ✓ Strategic competitor pricing analysis
- ✓ Developing price strategies
- ✓ Market analysis
- ✓ Customer proposition development
- ✓ Marketing strategies
- ✓ Branding strategies
- ✓ Organisation skills
- ✓ Benchmarking
- ✓ Brand strategy, development and implementation
- ✓ Cost analysis
- ✓ Creativity and problem solving
- ✓ Critical reasoning
- ✓ Customer satisfaction and loyalty
- ✓ Customer segmentation
- ✓ Yield management systems
- ✓ Data insights analysis and forecasting
- ✓ Designing large-scale marketing campaigns
- ✓ Economical skills and analysis
- ✓ Effective communication
- ✓ Measuring customer satisfaction
- ✓ Modal share evaluation
- ✓ Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook (PDFH) modelling
- ✓ Qualitative and quantitative research



West Coast Partnership Development

Our team of specialists has played a crucial role in supporting the West Coast Partnership Development to assess potential customers and markets for high speed services on the HS2 infrastructure, focusing on understanding existing and potential customers, how they behave and how future trends could impact their travel behaviour. We have explored growth strategies and developed demand and revenue forecasts. Market analysis provided valuable insights into the potential demand for the services, as well as the competitive landscape in which the services will operate.

By conducting thorough market analysis, we have identified key trends and patterns in the market, as well as any potential opportunities or threats. We have identified the target market and their specific needs, assessing the competitive landscape and the strengths and weaknesses of existing rail services, analysing the regulatory and legal environment, and researching the current and projected demand for services along the West Coast Main Line. Consequently, WCPD can make more informed decisions about the type of services to offer, the timetables to operate, the fares and pricing strategy and marketing, minimising risks while maximising the chances of success.

Tom MacLachlan
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What we do | Engineering

Our engineering practice specialises in rolling stock, depots and associated technologies. Our team provides a strong blend of experience from frontline and leadership roles in operating companies, rolling stock leasing companies and manufacturers. This enables them to develop effective fleet strategies and specifications as well as undertaking successful procurement of new trains and leases. Our engineering team also delivers improvements within the operating phase of the asset lifecycle. We can also provide guidance and deliver projects for authorities and operating companies across a wide range of requirements, including:

- ✓ Fleet and maintenance strategies
- ✓ Procurement strategies, requirements and tender evaluation
- ✓ Technical specification
- ✓ Maintenance optimisation
- ✓ Decarbonisation
- ✓ Accident/incident investigation
- ✓ Advisory and commercial
- ✓ Auditing and independent review
- ✓ Commercial negotiations and contract finalisation
- ✓ Depot operations
- ✓ Design review
- ✓ Innovation and best practice
- ✓ Planning and collaboration
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Quality inspection
- ✓ Resilience



West Coast Partnership Development - Depot Design Review

We developed WCPD's high-level functional requirements (FRs) for Washwood Heath Depot. We determined WCPD's requirements for the site and engaged with key depot stakeholders to consider what they required HS2 to deliver. The product deliverables were delivered on time and to a high quality.

Following the completion of the functional requirements, using our expertise we supported HS2 in the ongoing development of the design, highlighting the impact on the FRs and supporting identification of opportunities and risks arising from the design's development. This first FR product paved the way for future FR based products, building strong relationships with HS2 and WCPD.

Richard Denham
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What we do | Operations

We advise and shape the rail industry, champion innovation and help organisations build foundations today to meet the customer, shareholder and stakeholder needs of the future. Central to customer-focused outputs, we provide professional experience spanning every aspect of operations. We drive organisational change, enhancing efficiency, leveraging technological advancements and using our broad range of knowledge to apply best practice solutions to operating risks. We specialise in:

- ✓ Supporting operations with dedicated interim cover for critical leadership roles
- ✓ Leadership, performance-based service delivery, resource and competency management (rolling stock and crew, including training), and communications
- ✓ Digital railway integration and transition
- ✓ Disruption and emergency response design, management and review
- ✓ Signalling and infrastructure
- ✓ Operational control centres
- ✓ Interoperability and efficiency
- ✓ System design, specification, implementations and transitions
- ✓ Connected driver advisory systems implementation
- ✓ Railway operational and functional structure design, review and recommendations
- ✓ Platform Train Interface (PTI) specification, standards and risk assessments



© Image credit: Network Rail, ECDP

East Coast Digital Programme (ECDP)

We provided operations specialisms to lead on organisational requirements to mobilise the East Coast Digital Programme workstreams. This included: operational interface with infrastructure design, training package design and specification, leading integration change safety assurance validations for operators, representing operators at cross industry forums and provision of subject matter experts to assess project and design plans.

Lumo

We designed, mobilised and embedded planning, control and performance function to meet a lean operator model, focused on a digital and data concept of operations. We also provided senior leadership resource for around eight months to establish operations following launch.



Craig Clark
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What we do | People & Organisation

Our organisational development and human resources team supports our operators and clients by providing organisational design, workforce strategy and employee engagement activity. Our main disciplines are:

- ✓ Workforce planning
- ✓ Organisational design
- ✓ People strategy design and delivery
- ✓ Business planning
- ✓ Management and leadership development
- ✓ Psychological assessment at work
- ✓ Learning, training and development
- ✓ Leadership, engagement and motivation
- ✓ Trade unions
- ✓ Wellbeing and work
- ✓ Apprenticeships
- ✓ Employee attendance and performance management
- ✓ Employee engagement
- ✓ Internal communications
- ✓ Operations training
- ✓ Organisational governance
- ✓ Resourcing and recruitment



Train Driver Academy

Our Train Driver Academy proposals were created in response to the Department for Transport's request for an industry plan to improve recruitment, training and management and increase the diversity of train drivers, to be more representative of the communities they serve.

Our consultants produced 15 reports that covered the entire driver supply chain. We also established a Driver Training and Recruitment Forum to ensure best practice was shared and to offer a space for colleagues to keep abreast of industry developments. We also helped to support wider industry excellence; we developed an important body of research and analysis to support recommendations, to reduce the time and cost of training drivers, and to increase the diversity of future recruits.



Tim Cowley
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What we do | Performance

The performance team encourages collaboration between operators and stakeholders to identify and deploy good practice to provide a cohesive and collaborative approach to performance management. Through the development of a centralised data lake of performance data, we provide detailed insights that align with reporting schedules and performance regimes, in addition to identifying performance improvement opportunities. The granular level of data available assists in the annual benchmarking and forecasting activities required under the National Rail Contracts in addition to wider market, revenue and demand analysis. With extensive experience in transport data analytics and performance management, we provide support to operators across a range of areas:

- ✓ Performance reporting, analysis and forecasting
- ✓ Business continuity and resilience
- ✓ Cost analysis
- ✓ Performance improvement lifecycle management
- ✓ Benchmarking
- ✓ Data visualisation
- ✓ Framework development and implementation
 - Whole system thinking
 - Risk Management
 - Leading indicators
- ✓ Business case development and evaluation
- ✓ Database management
- ✓ Self-service dashboards and system rationalisation
- ✓ Business case management
- ✓ Market analysis
- ✓ Revenue and demand analysis

RM3P

Risk Management Maturity Model for Performance promotes a consistent approach to manage train performance delivery across GB rail. This provides an assurance process to identify good practice, assess current capability, help identify where improvement is needed, and measure progress in risk management. We developed a prototype app for our train operators to simplify the process and increase engagement as a performance initiative, Network Rail, and industry boards then endorsed this approach. Network Rail has adopted our proof of concept and is now developing it further as part of the Performance Improvement Management System toolkit.

Avanti West Coast

The time-to-3 performance – the percentage of trains arriving within two minutes 59 seconds of scheduled time – of Avanti West Coast, began declining in 2022/23. Avanti identified that Temporary Speed Restrictions were a key driver and appointed a “Lead On Time” Manager to ensure Network Rail’s timely removal of the disruptive TSRs. To evidence the impact of restrictions, we created an automated dashboard from our centralised ‘Performance Datahub’ to geospatially highlight delays and services impacted. Improved communication and transparency from direct oversight and sharing of the dashboard, saw the progressive removal of TSRs and reduced delays, with T-3 performance increasing two percentage points from 61% in 2022/23 to 63% in 2023/24.

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What we do | Planning

The strategic planning team is a multi-disciplinary team made up of highly specialised professionals with both UK and international experience. We have a track record of supporting and growing existing operations and developing new contracts and open access opportunities through interpreting market analysis, capacity and resource constraints. We deliver compelling and high-quality train plans to grow the rail market. We specialise in:



Developing timetables



Infrastructure enhancements



Rostering



Maximising revenue and minimising cost



Resource optimisation



Organisation review



Diagramming and rostering support



Planning support



Network capacity evaluation



Problem solving



Catering for growth



Traincrew resilience



Traincrew diagram support

One of our train companies required traincrew diagramming support due to staff turnover and a vacancy gap. We provided support for six months to offer training for their new starters and help meet timescales for traincrew diagramming. While recruitment was ongoing, we also covered for a vacant senior management role to monitor delivery of timetable change bids and support the team.

WCPD planning team

We helped support the creation of WCPD's Planning team in 2020. We managed and carried out the train planning activity, and developed and produced options as well as providing peer reviews.



Jon Hills

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Mark Quinn

Head of Resource Strategy
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What we do | Programme and Project Management

We scope, plan, deliver, recover and review changes, projects, programmes and portfolios. Our team are conversant with different methodologies to augment existing delivery teams or are able to provide a full delivery service from concept development and business case through to business acceptance. We are experts in:

- ✓ Programme management
- ✓ Project management
- ✓ Project management Office (PMO)
- ✓ Risk management
- ✓ Agile project management
- ✓ Assurance benefits and change management
- ✓ Building commitment
- ✓ Critical thinking and problem solving
- ✓ Effective communication
- ✓ Governance and control
- ✓ Planning and collaboration
- ✓ Reforming projects
- ✓ Scheduling and time management
- ✓ Stakeholder management
- ✓ Team management
- ✓ Transformation and operating mode



Managing rolling stock procurement for London Trams

Working closely with Transport for London, we project managed the specification and procurement of the new tram fleet to improve its service resilience as the current fleet is unreliable and regularly unavailable for service. Working in collaboration with Tram Operations Ltd (as the operator's representative), we undertook a gap analysis, including reviewing the requirements for the new trams that TfL had specified and comparing this with the list of requirements that TOL had compiled.

Furthermore, we developed a testing strategy paper on behalf of TOL to aid them to plan how many extra staff would be required in the testing and commissioning of the new rolling stock. We used a gap analysis to make a case to TfL that its full technical specification had omitted certain areas deemed as essential by the operator/end user. Once the technical specification is confirmed, TfL intends to go to market and invite interested parties to submit offers. Additionally, our work was useful for TOL to demonstrate to TfL the funding and headcount TOL would need to ensure the project is delivered as specified.

Steve Wilson
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What we do | Writing, Editorial & Graphics

Our writing, editorial and graphics team is skilled in producing a range of different documents including business plans, bids and tenders, business cases, feasibility studies and a range of reports, each tailored to the appropriate target audience. We specialise in:



Bid and report writing



Industry awards submissions



Copywriting



Liaising with graphic designers



Copy editing



Research



Template design and creation



Sense checking



Proofreading



Structuring a response/answer



Graphics



Style guide compilation



Fact checking



Website and social media



Gloucester station

Gloucester station required investment as a result of its dated condition, the wider regeneration programme within Gloucester and GWR's investment in improving rolling stock and services to the city. Our consultants developed and wrote a comprehensive business case for Gloucester City Council to win £4.3m of Local Growth Fund money from its Local Enterprise Partnership.

We engaged with numerous stakeholders, developed a suite of options for the station upgrade, analysed these and recommended a specific option. The business case was structured and written in an appropriately compelling manner and secured the required £4.3m funding. The station upgrade has since been delivered.



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