

## Northern Spirit Rail

### Getting the train out on time

The Railways Act in the UK called for British Rail to be broken up into smaller privatised units. One unit, Northern Spirit Rail, a “train operating company” (TOC), found itself struggling to maintain good service levels over its challenging, hilly terrain in the North between York and Leeds. TOC’s were required to maintain good customer service levels. Failures could lead to fines or even loss of an operating license.

At the time of the engagement, Northern Spirit employed 2400 staff and operated 1500 trains per day over 1275 route miles. They carried approximately 83,000 customers per day.

#### Key Results

38.5% reduction in cancellations

43.1% reduction in minutes delay in traffic

98% reduction in overdue B-Exams

£1.68m annualised savings

Greatly improved staff morale & behaviour

#### THE RENOIR GROUP

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#### ANALYSIS

An initial 3 week Analysis by Renoir Consulting (UK) Limited revealed that significant opportunities existed in Northern Spirit’s operating performance. There were issues with their management systems, their operating and maintenance processes and especially with staff behaviour.

Effectively addressing these issues would improve their fleet utilisation dramatically, but getting buy-in and ownership from the old-style British Rail staff mentality would be the biggest challenge.

#### PROJECT

The Renoir team, complemented by a Northern Spirit Task Force began the process to improve the reliability, reduce delay times and reduce the time taken to do “B” service exams.

Specifically their challenge was to develop and implement systems to forecast, plan and manage the workload to:

- Reduce the B service backlog
- Improve part availability
- Improve work planning
- Improve interdepartmental communication

In addition, work methods were studied and improved and staff accountability and expectations were set and agreed.

Employing Renoir’s Focus Process™, the Team successfully engaged the workforce with dramatic results:

Shortly after the project, MTL successfully sold Northern Spirit to Arriva, a major aition company.

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