NTS light-years ahead on its digital journey with 3Squared – starting with streamlined fatigue management

Introduction

Fatigue; noun - meaning 'extreme tiredness resulting from mental or physical exertion or illness' – and a word that you certainly wouldn't want associated with your train driver.

Fatigue presents itself in many different ways, but it's proven that people who feel fatigued have difficulty concentrating and are more likely to make mistakes. Extreme tiredness affects communication skills and slows reaction times and reflexes.

If it's your job to operate heavily laden trains, any mistakes have the potential to be huge – and deadly – putting lives and businesses at risk.

RailSmart ORS, an online rostering system, monitors the fatigue and risk levels for all rail staff, based on their actual working hours. The system can set out rosters which take fatigue into account, meaning there's no risk of the team being overworked.

Oliver Schepisi, Director of Rail Operations at Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS), explains why implementing RailSmart ORS has helped NTS transform fatigue management at a pivotal time for the business.

Partners in success

NTS has an impressive track record.

The leading global provider of safe, secure and reliable nuclear transport solutions, NTS are experts at providing solutions to complex transport and logistics challenges, and of the UK's main freight operators, they're the best performing.

However, before using RailSmart ORS, the operations team was still relying heavily on clipboards, notepads and spreadsheets.

"We launched a programme to transform our business and spotted early on that we needed a more efficient way to manage our crew's rosters," explains Oliver.

"Before RailSmart ORS, this work was manual and time-consuming, and we had very little data capture or automation, meaning we couldn't drive any real efficiency or productivity savings."
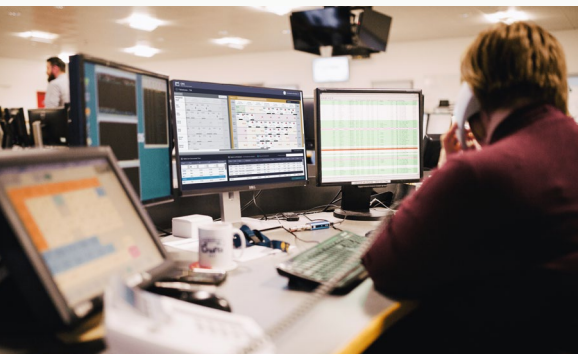
Oliver Schepisi, Director of Rail Operations at Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS)
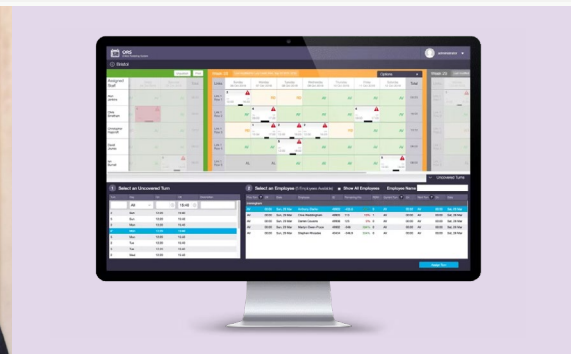
The beauty of embracing technology

When it comes to reducing the risk of fatigue, obvious measures to put in place include giving staff adequate time for rest and sleep. But this is only the first step to avoiding extreme tiredness.

The next step is to design rosters which allocate the most appropriate people to a shift based on who has worked the fewest hours in the previous week or who has had the fewest early starts.

RailSmart ORS effectively monitors these factors to keep rail workers safe and ensure compliance standards are upheld.

As Oliver explains: *"RailSmart ORS automatically flags any resourcing issues, such as a train driver who hasn't had enough breaks between shifts, or has worked four consecutive night shifts.*

"Previously we'd had to rely on our team of resource planners to manually check for issues and make sure we are complying with all the rules on risk and fatigue. Now the system automates this process so there's less repetition and less room for error. The system is relatively new but we're predicting a 20 to 25% time saving.

"RailSmart ORS has helped us improve the output of the team as well as the quality of the roster."

The importance of collaborative implementation

Moving to a new system is a big change for the staff involved, and people need support and training to adapt to the new technology.

3Squared's implementation process involves meeting the people who will be using the systems to understand their current ways of working and what they need to get out of the products. This way customers will get maximum value from systems that deliver against their KPIs.

This approach worked well for NTS: *"Rather than making it part of the day job, we put together a three-strong implementation team to work directly with 3Squared. The RailSmart ORS implementation has been a really positive experience for everyone.*

"The training is ongoing and we've certainly got what we needed within the timescales that we were expecting."

Building a future-proof partnership

After seeing success with RailSmart ORS, the NTS team decided to implement a number of 3Squared's products, including RailSmart EDS, the competency management system, and RailSmart IFM, an incident management solution.

The systems are helping NTS to leave the notepads and spreadsheets behind and upgrade to digital processes. This digital transformation is saving time for staff and improving the quality of their work.

"3Squared were the best fit to help us, in terms of the quality of the products, the relationship we knew we could build with them, and the support they could give us. We're going into the new financial year with three systems which all enable us to work much more efficiently.

"We're light-years ahead of where we were."

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3squared.com/demo-request/

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