



Success story

National Rail Enquiries

Industry

- Transportation

Solution

- OpenText™ Optimost™

Results



Increased desktop sales conversions by more than 13 percent and mobile conversions by 25 percent, growing revenues by 17 percent and 16 percent respectively



Accelerated time to market of new services by cutting development time by 400 percent



Grew customer registrations by two percent on a base of two million registered customers and followers, enabling NRE to meet one of its main KPIs



National Rail Enquiries boosts income with new web developments

OpenText Optimost strengthens online services used by millions

"Our websites are always changing, so we always need to test new developments to see if they are viable. It's an ongoing process because you can never rest with optimization and OpenText Optimost is absolutely central to this."

Keith Stephens
Web Development Manager
National Rail Enquiries



National Rail Enquiries is the UK's definitive source of information for all passenger rail services and handles 500 million contacts per year. The organization uses OpenText™ Optimost™ to constantly improve its websites and test new developments before they go live for millions of users.

Challenge

Increase value of conversions

Recognized as the definitive source of impartial customer information on UK rail services, National Rail Enquiries (NRE) is part of the Association of Train Operating Companies, (ATOC) which represents the UK's 23 train operators. Its primary website and a growing number of mobile apps provide information such as: train times, fares, reservations, service disruptions, live departure boards, details of every UK station and discount and promotional rail cards. Once visitors make their buying decision, they are automatically routed to the appropriate train operator's site to buy the tickets.

Since its inception, it has directed more than £1 billion worth of potential sales to train companies. An average of 2.9 million journey planning enquiries are handled every weekday and its smart phone apps have been downloaded more than nine million times.

NRE always strives to improve its services, as web development manager Keith Stephens explained, ***"We are the single source of truth for most rail information and our two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are conversions and registrations. We work to increase the monetary value of all the conversions that we pass across to the train companies. We also aim to get more users to sign up and create accounts on the website, so they can get more value out of the service."***

"We are ambitiously migrating away from the contact center towards self-service channels and that's happening on a massive scale. We're seeing a big rise in the traffic to our digital channels and the website is the single most popular option."

Solution

Simplified testing

NRE needed a tool that would cut through the complexity of testing new ideas on large numbers of people. It looked at different solutions and was attracted by the hands-on managed service approach and flexible licensing of Optimost.

Optimost uses advanced pattern-matching, testing and optimization capabilities to give businesses rigorous clickstream and segmentation analytics that help maximize online traffic and revenue. It also provides users with access to granular clickstream data, enabling them to aggregate, combine and analyze the information any way they choose.

They can perform queries on complete datasets and get new insights on their customers and on how they react to changes in real time. Using Optimost as a managed service also gives NRE the benefit of OpenText specialist knowledge in this area.

The OpenText solution has now been used for approximately 30 different tests on NRE website modifications.

"We work together with our team from Optimost to develop a hypothesis. We then agree on the scope of the tests. The OpenText Managed Services team then builds the experiment," said Stephens.

"The main benefit of OpenText Optimost functionality is the live testing; our development times have been reduced by an average of four months—a 400 percent saving."

Keith Stephens
Web Development Manager
National Rail Enquiries



***“We release it to a random cohort of live users and every time they visit the website, they see the same variation. The tests run for about three weeks and we run up to three different rounds of tests at that stage. Initially, a test can have five or six different variants of, say, copy changes or moving around elements on the page and as we progress through the weeks, more and more users are exposed to that test. It’s usually more than 100,000 users per variant. As we narrow it down, eventually we will compare what we think is going to be the final winner against no change at all and that final winner is validated against 200,000 to 300,000 users. Even though testing is done on the live website, we can hide it from the majority of customers until we’re ready to release it.*”**

“The system calculates a confidence rating for each variant. As user traffic for each test variant builds up, we get more confident with the results. If it’s about 99 percent, we know for sure that when we roll that change out to all users, it undoubtedly has the effect that it should have.”

Benefits

Increased income and faster time to market

Two examples highlight the tangible benefits of NRE testing carried out with Optimost. Optimost specialists advised shortening the eCommerce funnel down to a three-step process for visitors. Suggested changes also included replacing one single “Buy Now” radio button with individual “Buy Now” buttons against every fare in the journey planner.

After thorough testing with Optimost, the changes brought a 13.5 percent lift in sales conversions rates on the desktop website, increasing revenue by more than seven percent and an impressive 25 percent conversion

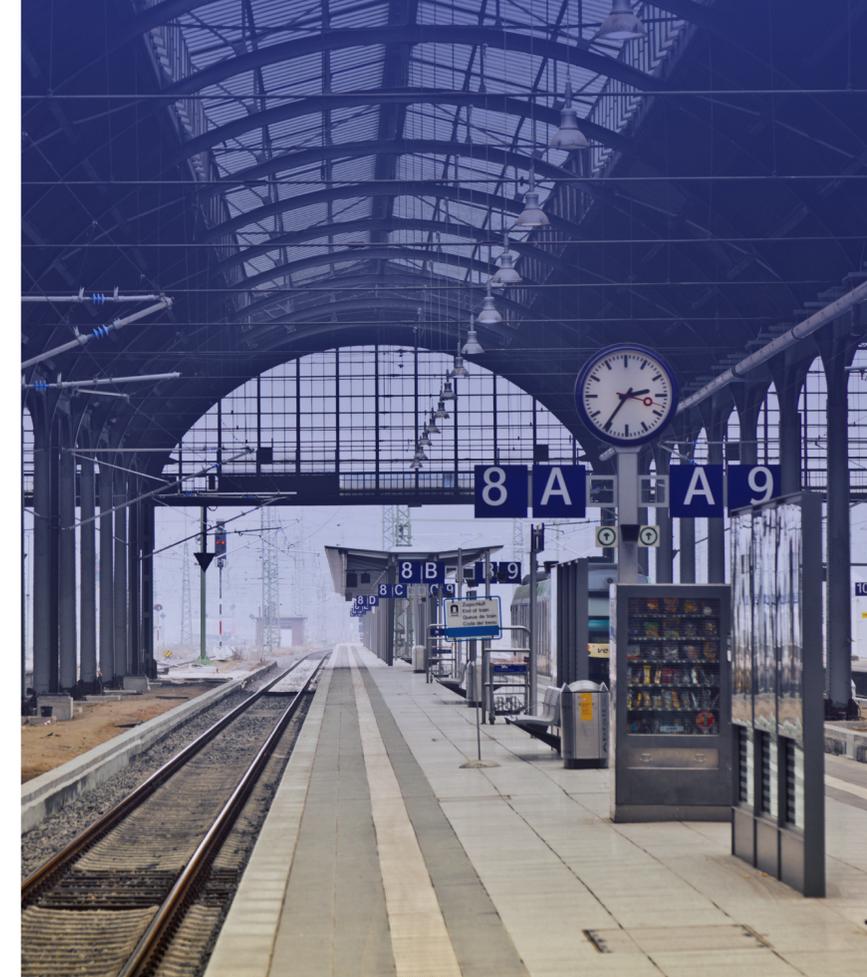
lift on the mobile website, resulting in 16 percent revenue growth. These results have significantly helped with the organization’s KPI targets and the additional income generated has already paid for many years of the Optimost managed service contract.

“The main benefit of OpenText Optimost functionality is the live testing,” said Stephens. ***“Because we outsource our native development of the digital channels, there can be some very long implementation times, but using Optimost reduced our development times by an average of four months—a 400 percent saving.”***

Another project to optimize registration forms brought a two percent increase in registrations. NRE currently has two million registered customers and followers, and according to ongoing surveys, customer satisfaction levels are high. In 2014, 72,000 customer survey forms were completed.

In addition to pure commercial benefits, the managed service delivery of Optimost has brought additional gains: ***“We’re quite a small team here and are very resource light in that area,”*** said Stephens. ***“We are involved in many other tasks, so it’s great to be able to hand an operation like this over to a managed service. We get value out of the experience that the people at OpenText have got and I can focus on many other things that I am involved in without becoming involved in the technicalities of the tests.”***

NRE aims to put its service onto every major technology platform and its future use of Optimost will support this. There are plans to use a new app optimization solution and to test a portfolio of eight websites that feature various railcards and a Days Out site, which co-promotes rail journeys and tourist destinations.



About OpenText

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