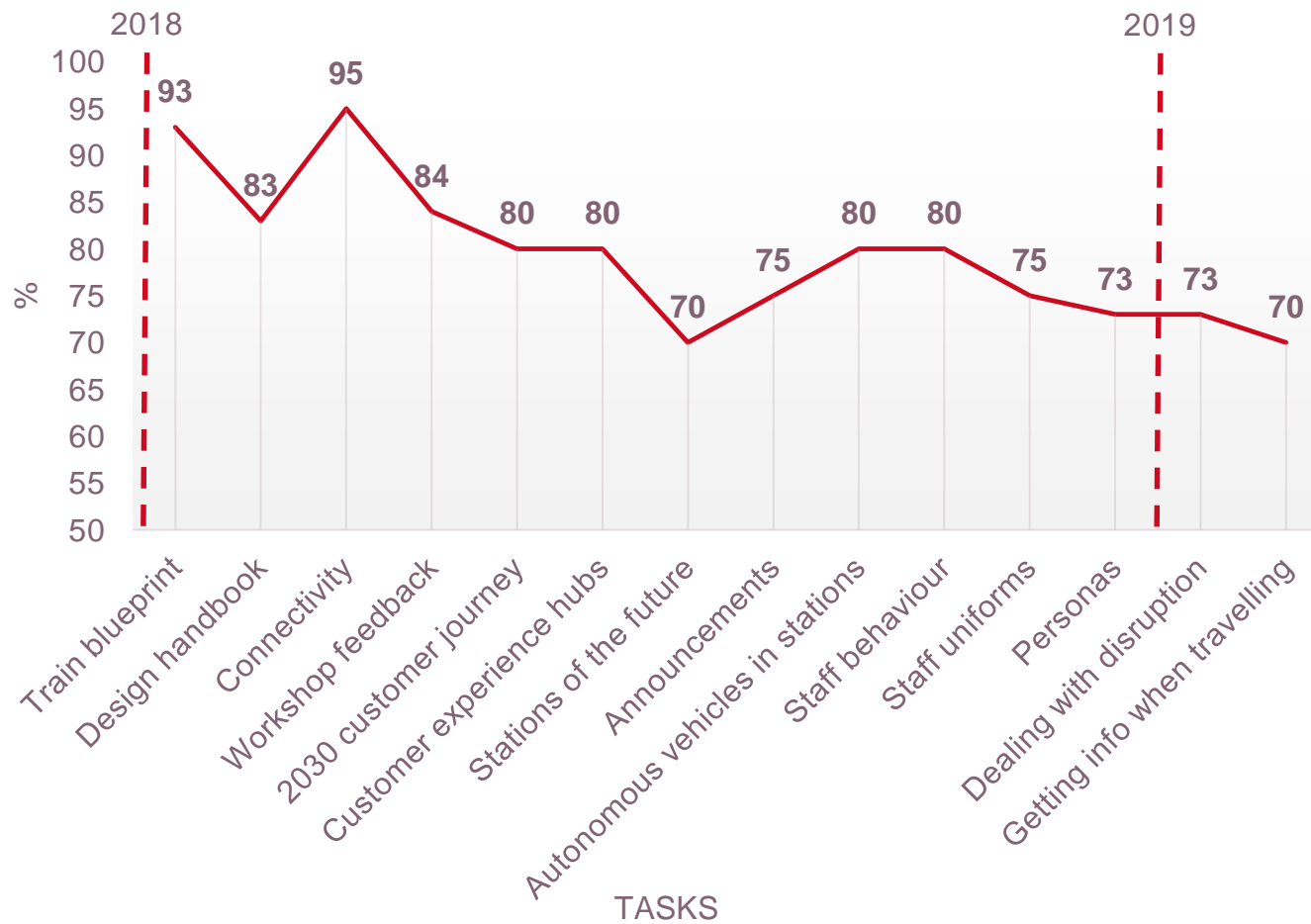




HS2 Customer Community
Getting information when travelling – Feb 2019
Debrief: 15/03/19

Panel participation



The task

Getting information when travelling

HS2 would like to understand more about how you get information and help when travelling by train. This task will be available throughout February.

1. Thinking about your door to door journey today:

- Do you seek information/help on your journey? At what points?
- What information are you looking for and where do you look?
- Do you look for different information in different ways?
- Is there any information that you struggle to find?

2. Now thinking specifically about being in the train station, how do you ask for help/information there?

- Where do you seek help?
- What sort of help do you need?
- Are you always able to get the answer/support you need?

3. Take a look at the picture attached. Help Points provide assistance directly to customers by staff from remote locations.

- Have you ever used one? If yes, what was the experience like?
- Would you use the Help Point rather than staff in person?

4. Imagine that you are able to get digital customer assistance - by this we mean you would see the member of staff that is helping you on your device or on screens around the station (on walls, inside autonomous vehicles, on help points) as they try and resolve your problem.

- How likely would you be to seek help in this way?

5. If digital assistance was accessed on a personal device, this would enable customers to call for help from anywhere around the station (in the car park, as they enter the station, as they walk to their platform etc.)

- Have you experienced something like this before? Where? What was it like?
- What do you imagine might be the benefits of this to you?
- How comfortable would you feel doing this?
- When would it not be an appropriate way of seeking help?

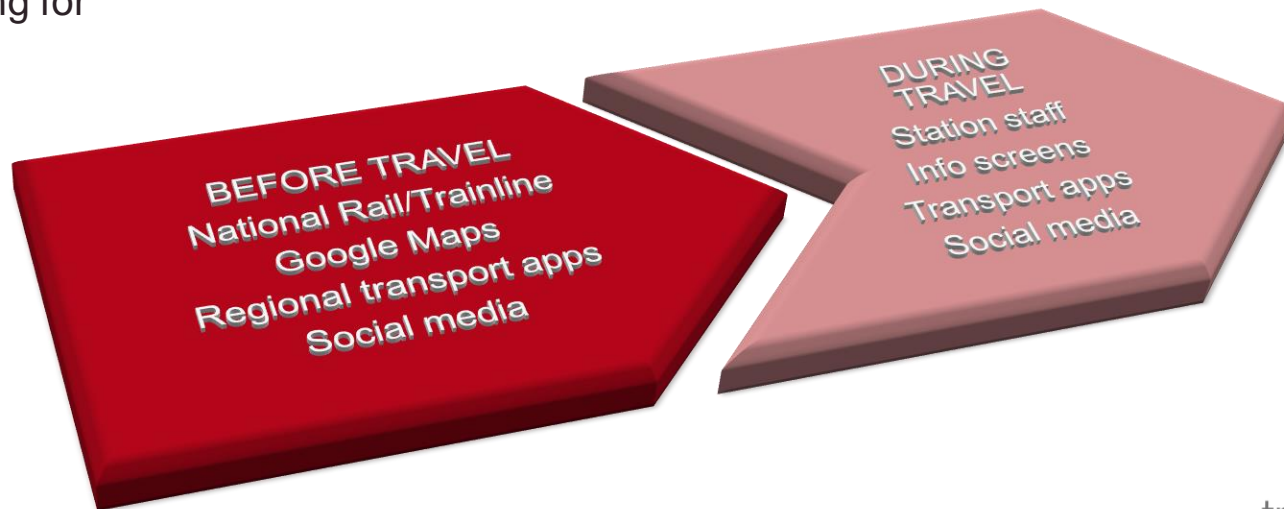
Today's door-to-door journey

Community members:

- Plan their journeys in advance, particularly when taking unfamiliar routes
- Use a host of sources for information at different points of the journey
- Think it is relatively easy to find the information they are looking for

“I have to plan my journey completely beforehand, simply to find out if it's viable at all and for this I rely on information available online.”

Wheelchair user



Today's door-to-door journey

Further information they would like to access:

- Reliable ticket price comparisons
- Assurance that they have purchased the correct ticket for the journey they wish to make
 - without having to queue up and speak to staff at the station
- Station navigation advice e.g. directions to platform
- Onward travel advice
 - located within the same channel they are sourcing other information from
- More reliable information regarding the anticipated length of delays.

“The info you don't get is best route to get to the required platform and information to get you out of the station. Birmingham is the worst station for this. Everything is in zones that mean nothing to me as a non-local.”

Female, 41-50, Commuter

Today's door-to-door journey

"The information I am looking for is the quickest and cheapest route. Sometimes it is a pain to see things when there are multiple options at slightly different times or routes. It is also really hard to alter whilst en route as sometimes apps don't let you have the information of a journey started in the past .i.e. the train you are on."

Male, 24-30, Leisure

"I sometimes struggle to get accurate information on delays if it's a fluid situation."

Male, 51-60, Business

"I plan from as far in advance as possible and check the night before, and then about an hour before I leave, and then just as I am about to leave."

Female, 41-50, Commuter

"Generally the information I would look for is traffic reports if I'm driving to the train station so I know whether to take a different route to ensure I get there on time. I would find this info through traffic news on the internet. If I was catching the bus I would look on the bus website to see the timetables."

Female, 41-50, Leisure

"Citymapper constantly streams information like get off alerts, which platform you need when changing, your ETA which you can share with the person you are meeting, updates of disruptions and advice on alternative routes. You also get cost options when you set off. I will on occasion double check to ensure there are no connectivity issues which can influence the updates. I might glance up to look at the station name to make sure the app has an accurate location for me. In other words I will look at signs and boards as a redundancy."

Male, 51-60, Business

Information in the station

When inside a train station, community members stated that they continued to use a range of sources to access the information they require for their journey

What?

- Delays or disruption
- Location of facilities e.g. toilets, lifts
- Connecting services
- Ticketing
- Routes
- Platform changes

Challenges

- Lack of staff to seek help from
- Incorrect information displayed
- Relying on information provided by other passengers

Where?

- Main information board
- Signage
- Staff
- Help desk
- Announcements
- Online sources

“The quality of information from staff varies considerably.”

Male, 51-60, Commuter

Information in the station

“At the station I will rarely ask for help... I do not like approaching 'customer service' agents who look like they would rather slap you than help you. This part of the journey I will struggle with as I don't cope with big display boards very well (Piccadilly at Manchester for example, I get stressed looking at all the data at once and can't then focus on what to look for).”

Male, 31-40, Commuter

“A handful of times I have been very frustrated when there are delays and station staff are not able to provide accurate information.”

Male, 61-70, Commuter

“As a passenger the first thing I do at the station is check platform, times etc to ensure the journey is as I planned it. I have found staff sometimes rely on them too which means it is pointless asking a 'human'.”

Female, 51-60, Business

“In the station you just crane your neck at the giant board and hope for the best as trying to find someone that doesn't glare at you when you ask a direction is a miracle.”

Female, 41-50, Business

“I sometimes ask for information in the station, generally to check platform arrivals as they occasionally change. The information is generally quick and correct.”

Female, 61-70, Leisure

“Better signage at every station or an app with a map would be a great help in identifying services or facilities I need to use in the station. So much signage is at totally the wrong height to see easily and information points are also usually too high to use.”

Wheelchair user

Help points

NOW

Many had noticed help points in stations before but never tried to use them

Those that had used them stated that they received no response

Those with mobility requirements said that they were not designed well enough to be accessed by wheelchair users



“I remember it looking fabulous and being of no help”

Male, 61-70, Commuter

“I found it awful – I couldn't hear what the operator was saying”

Female, 31-40, Commuter

“I usually think those machines are broken as they look so run down”

Female, 24-30, Business

FUTURE

However community members were very interested in and receptive to the idea of being able to access digital customer assistance in the future stating that they would use it

Generally, proportions of those preferring to speak to staff matched those more interested in a help point – and this was not influenced by age or gender.

Help points

“I have seen one of these at Birmingham New Street, I think, but it was too high for me to reach the controls.”

Wheelchair user

“Never actually got through to a human, just infinite ringing. Only tried to use them when stations are unstaffed and at those times clearly help points are as well.”

Male, 24-30, Leisure

“I have never used one of the help points, I do find them a little impersonal and often wonder if someone will actually answer. That aside I would try one if no one else was around.”

Female, 61-70, Leisure

“I'm all in favour of efficient methods, and if this frees up the station staff to help people more needy of personal assistance that's a good thing.”

Male, 51-60, Business

“I haven't noticed these help points but I would use one if I couldn't find a member of staff.”

Female, 51-60, Commuter

“I have used it once. I didn't receive a reply. It was quite poor.”

Male, 18-23, Leisure

“I think I've only ever used this once at a bus station but it was difficult to hear the person. I've often seen children messing with them.”

Female, 41-50, Leisure

“I have never used such a device; I thought it was only for fire or emergency. I would tend to ring or tweet the company as you get better quicker responses.”

Male, 51-60, Business

“If I saw a help point I wouldn't use it to ask for travel information. It looks like it is there for emergencies rather than everyday queries.”

Female, 41-50, Business

Digital customer assistance

- Most had not interacted with digital customer assistance before but thought it was a great idea to improve the passenger experience
- Many believed that they would be comfortable to interact and particularly liked the 'live chat' format which included a real person that they could see
- Some felt that face-to-face rather than digital assistance would be more suitable in certain circumstances e.g. personal issues, customers not comfortable using technology

They recognised that providing digital customer assistance offered passengers better access to information and greater choice

Perceived benefits

- Saving time by not needing to join a physical queue
- Ease of access to information without being tied to a specific location.

“I would rather see someone in person- it is more personal and they can be more attentive to your emotions and mental state in person.”

Female, 24-30, Business

Digital customer assistance

"I'd be very comfortable using this. I think all services have to consider a wide range of users and remember not everyone is online (even smart phone users get flat batteries sometimes). There isn't one size fits all, but these technology solutions help spread resources around to where it's needed."

Male, 51-60, Business

"I would definitely love to use digital assistance accessed from a mobile phone. It saves time walking to the help point and queuing for assistance and it's less intimidating."

Female, 18-23, Commuter

"I would feel comfortable but I am very technologically literate and I imagine others may feel less comfortable. It's good to have this as one option alongside many others."

Female, 24-30, Business

"Digital services from all locations would be great as you can access it when you need it"

Male, 51-60, Commuter

"It would be much easier to get an answer I required in advance so I didn't have to rush around & push past queues of people."

Male, 18-23, Leisure

"I would be much more comfortable using a device where I could actually see and talk to a member of staff. I would find this very helpful."

Female, 51-60, Commuter

"A digital assistant can only give more reassurance to passengers. I would use this form of assistance as it would be able to help more passengers in various places in the station at the same time."

Female, 41-50, Leisure

Summary

- Community members access information about their door-to-door travel continuously throughout the journey and a majority take the time to research it beforehand
 - Generally they are satisfied with the ease of access to information – they have learnt where to look for the information they need
 - They would like to access information about their journey in a more seamless way
- When in train stations, they use multiple sources to keep them informed
 - Sometimes they feel that the information provided is not as up-to-date as what they are able to access online
 - Having negative experiences of asking for help from staff has resulted in some seeking help from other sources (e.g. apps, other passengers)
- They were excited by the idea of digital customer assistance within the station, particularly where the interaction was visual
 - Benefits included more efficient access to tailored information from different locations and providing customers with another method of seeking help
 - They recognised that this solution would not suit all passengers but felt that it could ease the demand on other sources of information.