

CASE STUDY

The Key Card



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Retail Smartcards for travel have been in use in the UK since the launch of the Oyster card in 2003. By 2014 Go-Ahead's smartcard, The Key, was already well-established, but I knew it had potential to further transform the customer experience.”

THE BUSINESS CASE

By 2014 there was widespread use of The Key smartcard across Go-Ahead companies, but there was huge potential to transform the customer experience, providing significant gaps could be breached:

- It had not been delivered for Rail.
- It was not integrated with Transport for London, a barrier to passenger engagement.
- It could not be used in conjunction with other operators.
- It could not be used on a 'pay-as-you-go' basis

That we needed an end-to-end service was clear, executing it a little less clear.

In 2014 I developed a strategy for retail ticketing, which, approved by the Board became our retail objectives for the following years.

From early 2015, I led the team that would deliver these award-winning solutions.

METHODOLOGY

Integrating systems from different suppliers is never an easy task. The level of complexity increases when proprietary systems from public transport authorities are added to the equation. First, we deployed smart cards industrially in Rail in 2016. Our Southeastern franchise became the largest deployment in the government-sponsored SEFT project; and it was delivered on spec, on time, and on budget.

In 2016 we achieved full integration with **Transport for London** and The Key smartcards were being used on London Underground and buses. That year we also offered our back office to two small operators in the Brighton Area, an embryonic **Mobility as a Service (MaaS)** scheme.

Between 2016 - 2020 we built and deployed several **interoperable schemes**, making the smartcard work across bus operators and, in 2019, we integrated it into all our rail franchises.

The unique keyGo smartcard, described in detail in a separate case study, provides pay-as-you-go benefits for passengers using Thameslink, Great Northern Railway and Southern Railway.

RESULTS

- Largest private smartcard scheme for transport in the UK (pre-covid data).
- 18 different brands.
- >90% passenger satisfaction.
- Managed Services in Brighton.
- 9 smart zones in different UK regions.

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A superb example of complex systems integration