



Menlo79 GmbH

Workforce Orchestration: The Next Performance Frontier for Rail



The rail industry has never managed more complexity than it does today.

Operators and contractors are expected to deliver reliable services while dealing with increasing cost pressure, ageing workforces, changing regulatory requirements and growing expectations around punctuality, safety and operational resilience. At the same time, projects are becoming larger, workforces more specialised and operational environments more dynamic.

Over the last decades, the industry has invested significantly in infrastructure, rolling stock, signalling and digital traffic management. Yet one critical operational asset has often remained supported by fragmented systems and highly manual processes: the workforce.

People are at the centre of every railway operation.

Drivers, dispatchers, maintenance teams, shunters, controllers, inspectors and many others ensure that services run safely every single day. Coordinating these resources efficiently has become one of the industry's greatest operational challenges.

Increasingly, this is no longer simply a planning exercise. It is about orchestrating people, competencies, compliance, operational services and real-time information as one connected system, creating the foundation for intelligent, AI-supported operational decision-making across workforce, assets and operations.

Workforce Management Has Become a Performance Discipline

For many organisations, workforce management is still perceived as an administrative function. In reality, it directly influences operational performance.

Every roster adjustment, every qualification check, every fatigue validation and every payroll correction consumes valuable time. Small manual activities accumulate throughout the organisation, creating unnecessary administration while reducing the time available for operational decision-making.

Many railway organisations continue to work across multiple disconnected applications, spreadsheets and legacy systems. Information is entered several times, operational changes are transferred manually between departments and valuable workforce data remains fragmented across different platforms. The result is familiar throughout the industry: higher administrative effort, slower decision-making, reduced flexibility and increased operational risk.

Organisations that have digitised these processes consistently report significant improvements. Modern workforce management solutions can reduce administrative effort by around 70%, lower workforce administration costs by approximately £250 per employee per month and increase workforce productivity by 10–15%, depending on the operational environment.

As operational data becomes increasingly connected, organisations are moving beyond digitalisation towards intelligent optimisation. AI and mathematical optimisation can automate complex planning activities, evaluate thousands of operational scenarios in seconds and support planners with transparent recommendations, while keeping people firmly in control of every operational decision.

Perhaps even more importantly, digital workforce management enables organisations to react

more confidently to disruption.

Whether managing last-minute changes, unexpected absences or evolving operational requirements, planners gain greater visibility and significantly more time to focus on making informed decisions rather than completing repetitive administrative tasks.

Beyond Rostering: Connecting the Entire Operational Workforce

Today's operational reality requires considerably more than simply assigning shifts. Modern workforce platforms should bring together every aspect of workforce coordination into one integrated environment.

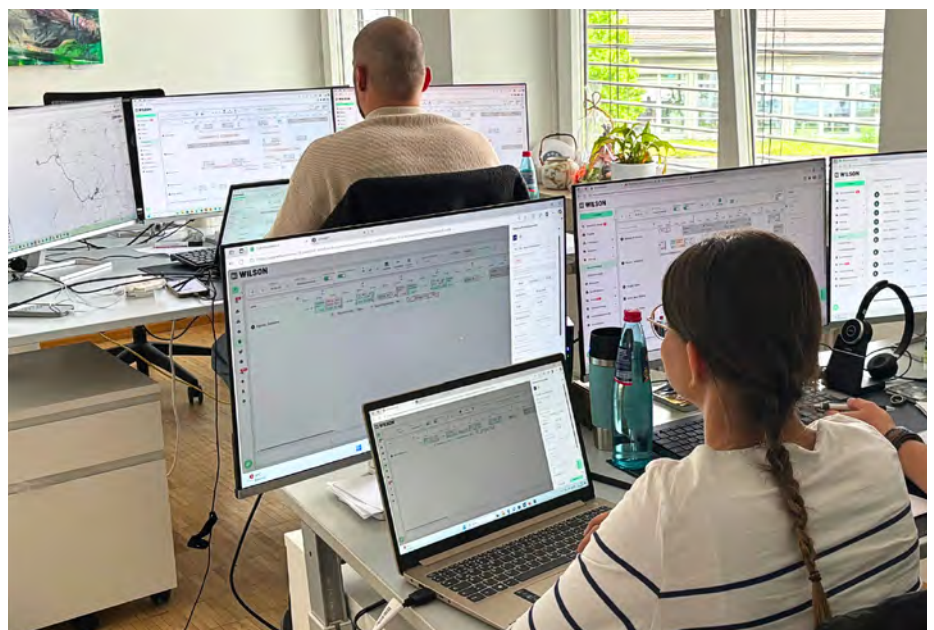
Planning itself is also evolving. Instead of manually building compliant shifts, assigning staff or coordinating rolling stock across multiple systems, optimisation technologies can automatically generate, evaluate and continuously improve operational plans while respecting contractual, regulatory and operational constraints. This allows planners

to focus less on repetitive planning activities and more on delivering reliable railway operations.

That includes competency and qualification management, fatigue management aligned with RSSB and ORR guidance, operational service planning, digital time capture, payroll preparation, mobile workforce communication and seamless integration with existing business systems. Rather than treating these as isolated processes, they become part of one continuous operational workflow.

Operational services – whether train driving, shunting, inspections or other railway activities – can be planned, assigned, monitored and completed within the same digital environment. Changes become immediately visible across the organisation, while automated rule validation supports planners in maintaining compliance without increasing administrative effort.

The result is greater transparency, improved operational resilience and more efficient collaboration between planners, operations teams and service providers.



From Workforce Management to Workforce Orchestration

At Menlo79, this broader perspective has shaped the development of the software solution WILSON. Instead of focusing solely on crew rostering, WILSON has evolved into the digital operational foundation for workforce and asset management, connecting planning, competency management, fatigue management, workforce deployment, digital time tracking, payroll preparation and, increasingly, asset planning within a single ERP environment.

Building on this operational foundation, Menlo79 is expanding its portfolio with AI and optimisation solutions that automate complex planning tasks such as shift creation, workforce allocation and asset planning. Rather than replacing existing operational systems, these solutions integrate with them, connecting operational data across the railway ecosystem and synchronising results automatically in the background. This enables planners to benefit from advanced optimisation without changing the systems they already rely on.

Operational decision support is evolving in parallel. By connecting information from operational systems, maintenance platforms, emails and other business applications, intelligent assistants can identify disruptions as they emerge, provide contextual recommendations and help dispatchers respond faster while maintaining full transparency over every suggested action.

Designed specifically for complex operational environments, WILSON supports organisations in managing their workforce more efficiently while remaining compliant with UK industry requirements, including fatigue management principles aligned with RSSB and ORR guidance.

The objective is not simply to digitise existing processes. It is to create an operational environment where information flows automatically, planners have complete visibility and routine administration is significantly reduced, allowing teams to focus on delivering safe, reliable and efficient railway operations.

As rail continues its digital transformation, workforce orchestration is becoming an increasingly important capability. The organisations that achieve the greatest operational improvements over the coming years are unlikely to be those that simply automate individual



tasks. They will be those that connect people, assets, operational services and business processes into one intelligent operational ecosystem.

Artificial intelligence will undoubtedly play a major role in this evolution. However, AI can only create value when it is built upon high-quality operational data and well-structured workforce processes. Organisations that invest in workforce orchestration today are laying exactly this foundation.

Menlo79 believes this foundation is strengthened by combining a robust operational ERP, AI-powered optimisation for planning and intelligent decision support for live operations. Together, these capabilities help rail organisations reduce complexity, improve operational performance and make better-informed decisions every day.

If these challenges resonate with your organisation, we'd be delighted to continue the conversation. Meet the Menlo79 team at InnoTrans 2026 in Berlin (CityCube, Joint Stand Berlin-Brandenburg Hall B | Stand 320) and discover how our evolving portfolio is helping rail organisations move beyond workforce management towards truly intelligent rail operations.

M79
RETHINKING RAIL.