

Bidvest Noonan

Moving Forward: The Future of Cleaning in the Rail Sector

In this conversation David Simms, Transport Sector Manager, shares his perspective on the rail sector, the challenges it's currently facing and what the future holds for cleaning in the sector.

He speaks about the operations at one of the UK's major national rail networks and what has contributed to Bidvest Noonan's success in the sector.

Question: Tell us about your journey and role working with your customers in the rail sector.

David Simms: I began my career in the transport sector over 10 years ago. I first managed the cleaning portfolio for several major UK banks that required first class FM / cleaning services. I then moved into the rail sector managing the cleaning of the Mersey rail network.

Then in 2016 I wanted a new challenge. With Bidvest Noonan I began working on Transport for Wales and at the Alstom depots at



David Simms, Bidvest Noonan Transport Sector Manager

Chester, Widnes and Oxley, providing a cleaning solution that improves the passenger experience for hundreds of thousands of people every year.

Q: Can you tell us about the team you work with and what they do for your clients?

DS: My team works across various

locations, and we are responsible for the cleaning of all the trains, depots, offices and other premises across the customers' portfolio in the North West and Midlands. We provide a wide range of services to our customers. From train turnaround cleans, PHCs, washroom services, and much more.

My team is excellent. I couldn't

ask for anyone better. They're hard working and have a great relationship with my customers. I know I can rely on them for anything.

We have regular walkarounds and review our KPIs frequently to ensure we are delivering an outstanding service on all aspects of our solution.

Over the past year we have consistently hit 100% in our KPI scores which is an astonishing achievement, and it shows what a high performing team we have.

Q: What are the biggest challenges the rail sector is facing at the moment and how does Bidvest Noonan support its customers during these challenges?

DS: Our customers always want to provide the very best value to their passengers. We help them achieve that objective by operating as efficiently as we can. Our customers are always motivated to provide their passengers with a highly punctual, clean, safe and attractive environment. We support our customers in achieving this by cleaning the trains to the highest standard ensuring that they are fit for use and are released for service on time.

Part of our vision is to be so valuable to our customers that we are always the partner of choice and that rings true on our work across the western network.

We know our customers and we provide the best service on the market. It would be difficult to find



Bidvest Noonan colleagues working across the Alstom depot

a more passionate and higher-performing team than this one.

Q: How do you support your customers in terms of their health and safety goals?

DS: Safety is one of the most important factors when working in the rail industry. We have a range of processes and procedures to ensure the safety of our colleagues and everyone on the site.

Our colleagues go through rigorous safety training and are also required to complete refresher training every 12 months. We host safety sessions throughout each month and distribute safety briefs for our colleagues to follow.

We use our online apps and dashboards to audit our work and track our safety. We have set ourselves safety KPIs to ensure we

stick to our rules each month.

We have also made a range of online courses available to our colleagues so they can keep learning and developing, earning qualifications throughout their career.

An important aspect of cleaning trains is ensuring they are stationary at all times when we work on them and we achieve this through the lockout system. The trains are locked in place whenever someone is working on them.

If a train needs to be moved our colleagues need to report back and log off the system connected to the train.

Safety is our number one priority. We want to make sure that everyone can go home safely at the end of each shift.

Q: Can you tell us about some of the innovations you've implemented for your rail sector customers?

DS: Since we began this contract, we've been constantly improving our service. We have improved the cleaning chemicals used. We introduced a slimmed-down range of highly effective cleaning chemicals and degreasers that completely transformed the premises and trains.

We have implemented our transport sector portal across our site portfolio. This enables our clients to stay informed about our solution and gives them reassurance that they are receiving an outstanding service.

We also like to think outside the box when bringing our innovations to the table. We know that a major part of the customer experience when talking about cleaning is about the smell. Especially on a train you want it to smell great

when passengers travel with you. We ensured each train was thoroughly deep-cleaned and introduced air purifiers and fresheners into the HVAC system. This improved the customer experience tremendously. We even went as far as having a new scent for every season. When that was introduced, we had a lot of good feedback on social media.

We like to come up with ideas all the time and try new ways of doing things. I think that again stems from our great relationship with the customer.

Q: What does the future look like for cleaning the rail sector?

DS: I think we will continue to see innovation throughout the industry. We will become more efficient and start to introduce more technology. Bidvest Noonan has successfully introduced a wide range of technology such as cobotics and next-generation cleaning equipment.

The future of cleaning in the rail sector will be greener. Bidvest Noonan has introduced new processes and technologies that allow us to reduce our use of chemicals, water, electricity and plastics.

We believe that customer experience is very important. It's at the core of the vision of our business. I feel personally connected to Bidvest Noonan's mission to deliver the best customer experience in the market. I believe in the future, customers in the rail sector can look forward to even better customer experience as we continue to invest in our services.

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Train depot