



A step-by-step
guide to making all
your digital rail
freight projects
into a success
story

Emerging technologies like IoT and AI are reshaping supply chain and logistics operations, necessitating a shift from traditional practices to digital platforms. This transition, however, is not merely about integrating new technologies but ensuring that these changes are embraced and effectively implemented. Enter change management, a critical strategy to ensure successful transformation in your rail freight projects.

Learn from Jean-Marie Le Bizec, a supply chain expert with more than 30 years of experience in the industry. He shared the following knowledge with us during a [RailTech Master Class](#) in April.



Effective change management leads to improved performance, reduced costs, and increased customer satisfaction.

One strategy to rule them all: change management

Change management involves preparing, supporting, and helping individuals, teams, and organisations in making organisational change. For rail freight projects, this means ensuring that all stakeholders—from top management to operational teams on your plants/arrival sites—are aligned and committed to the change process. Effective change management leads to improved performance, reduced costs, and increased customer satisfaction.

Change management in rail freight: 3 key insights

- **Technological evolution:** The integration of IoT, AI and machine learning into rail operations signifies a monumental shift from paper-based and manual processes to digital platforms. This shift can create uncertainty and resistance among users accustomed to traditional methods.

- **Complex supply chain dynamics:** Rail freight operations involve a vast network of interconnected partners, each contributing to the end-user experience. Optimising these processes through digital transformation requires seamless coordination and collaboration, which change management facilitates.
- **Strategic importance:** Effective change management is crucial for realising the strategic and tactical promises made by general management. It supports the implementation of new processes and ensures that the organisation adapts to new market conditions swiftly and efficiently.

Steps to implement change management in digital rail freight projects

1 Identify the need for change

- Recognise the driving forces behind the transformation, such as technological advancements or market pressures.
- Communicate the rationale for change to all stakeholders, emphasising the benefits and the necessity for adaptation.

2 Develop a comprehensive plan

- Outline clear objectives and milestones.
- Create a roadmap that includes timelines, resource allocation, and KPIs.

3 Engage stakeholders at all levels

- **Top management:** Secure commitment from senior leadership to champion the change. Their support is crucial for resource allocation and decision-making.
- **Middle management:** Equip middle managers with the tools and knowledge to lead their teams through the transition. Their role is pivotal in bridging the gap between strategic directives and operational execution.
- **Operational teams:** Involve end-users early in the design and implementation phases. This fosters ownership and reduces resistance.
- **External stakeholders:** Don't forget about your partners who may be impacted by this change, such as railway undertakers, wagon lessors or even your end-customers themselves. Make sure they integrate your new tool into their processes.

4 Communication is key

- Develop a robust communication strategy to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged.
- Address concerns and provide regular updates on progress and achievements.
- Use multiple channels, such as newsletters, webinars, and face-to-face meetings, to reach diverse audiences.

5 Training and Support

- Provide comprehensive training tailored to different user groups. For instance, operational teams may need hands-on training with new digital tools, while management might focus on strategic oversight.
- Offer continuous support through help desks, user manuals, and online communities to ensure smooth adoption.

6 Manage Resistance

- Identify potential areas of resistance and develop strategies to address them.
- Engage key influencers and opinion leaders to advocate for the change.
- Use incentives and recognition programmes to motivate and reward early adopters.

7 Monitor and Adapt

- Regularly review progress against KPIs and adjust strategies as needed.
- Collect feedback from all stakeholders to identify areas for improvement.
- Celebrate successes to build momentum and maintain engagement.

When it comes to rail freight operations, where operational efficiency and customer satisfaction are paramount, effective change management is not just beneficial—it's essential. As technology continues to evolve, embracing change management practices for your rail freight projects will ensure your capability to adapt, thrive, and lead in this dynamic landscape. By preparing, supporting, and involving all stakeholders, you'll be able to navigate the complexities of digital transformation and achieve sustainable success with the digitalisation of your rail freight operations.



Talk to one of our experts to start digitising your rail freight operations.



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