THE INTRODUCTION
The UK railway is a complex transport network operated by independent rail companies, servicing millions of people and businesses on a daily basis. The rail operators share a common purpose, to deliver a safe, reliable and environmentally friendly railway while offering value for money.

Rail Safety Standards Board (RSSB) is a not-for-profit company, providing support and facilitation to a wide range of cross-industry activities. With 250 staff, including experts in a wide range of technical disciplines, RSSB plays a key role in the management of network safety. RSSB’s core functions include measuring safety performance and analysing risk.

PROJECT BACKGROUND
The Safety Management Information System (SMIS) is the industry’s national database for the recording of safety related events that occur on the UK rail network. Its use is mandatory for all Infrastructure Managers and Railway Undertakings operating on Network Rail managed infrastructure.

The collection of safety related data and turning it into intelligence and risk information assists the industry in analysing risk, predicting trends and focusing on major areas of safety concern. This is considered by RSSB as key to successful management, planning and decision making within the industry.

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Jeff Brewer, Project Manager, RSSB
"We had heard about DSCallards and decided to investigate their credentials to see whether they were a suitable Business Intelligence partner moving forward. We checked DSCallards website and liaised with our SAP Business Objects Partner Manager who told us that DSCallards were a highly regarded SAP Business Objects Partner.

Jeff Brewer, Project Manager, RSSB

"We hugely enjoyed working with Jeff and the team at RSSB, and were proud to have been involved with the SMIS project, knowing of its importance to the rail industry. For us, a successful project is the combination of delivering on our promises and building long-term mutually beneficial relationships with our clients, and this project embodies that completely."

Ray Kemp, Technical Director, DSCallards

THE CHALLENGE

RSSB wanted to provide its customers with the right software tools to meet its intelligence and risk information requirements.

Jeff Brewer, Project Manager, commented, "RSSB traditionally used SAP Crystal Reports to extract the data from its database but we wanted to not only extract data but to build upon and exploit the emerging dashboard technologies. We wanted our customers to easily see at a glance – or the click of button – how they were performing."

In a nutshell, RSSB wanted to provide the industry with the right information in the right format that met their requirements. Major changes were also afoot as RSSB were looking to modernise their old SAP Business Objects platform, to support these new ways of sharing information with their members.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

RSSB looked at what the Business Intelligence marketplace had to offer, evaluating a number of options from a variety of vendors. They eventually decided to continue with their existing technology as not only was it embedded within their SMIS application, but to move away from SAP Business Objects would have presented an unnecessary risk to the organisation with little or no benefit.

RSSB had historically used SAP Business Objects software in combination with technical services provided by either an SAP consultant or another third-party company to help with their Business Intelligence activities. Although this had not always been the most cost competitive or effective way to proceed, it was necessary to work with third parties as they did not have the necessary skills in-house.

Due to the business critical nature of the SMIS system, it was imperative that they find the right partner with the right type of experience to deliver on their promises. According to Jeff, "We had heard about DSCallards and decided to investigate their credentials to see whether they were a suitable Business Intelligence partner moving forward. We checked DSCallards website and liaised with our SAP Business Objects Partner Manager who told us that DSCallards were a highly regarded SAP Business Objects Partner."

RSSB were given the confidence they needed to reassure them that they would be working with a high-quality organisation with an impressive Business Intelligence pedigree. Through meeting with the team at DSCallards, RSSB were able to talk through their unique requirements with an experienced Project Manager and Senior Principal Consultant, with over forty years combined experience in ensuring projects of this type were successful, delivered on time, and on budget.

THE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE PROJECT

Once the project scope and plan had been defined, for four months DSCallards engaged with RSSB’s infrastructure partner IBM and managed and implemented a tri-party programme of BI modernisation that involved working with multiple teams, contacts, datacentres and offices throughout the UK. However, as with any project of this size, there were challenges along the way.

When asked how DSCallards differed from other Business Intelligence partners, Jeff commented, "We get the extra mile from DSCallards and more for our buck. When we had the problems with implementation after go live, DSCallards went out of their way to resolve the issues. The support we got after the project was implemented was far more than we had been used to before. DSCallards are very good value for money."

RSSB felt that considering the project involved three organisations – RSSB, IBM and DSCallards – effective Project Management throughout the duration was critical. Jeff commented, "The regular project review meetings held with DSCallards were very effective. The teams worked well together and even after a difficult period after go live, the lines of communication remained open and we sat worked together to make it happen."

Jeff went on to say, "DSCallards is a fresh, young and dynamic organisation that is a pleasure to work with."

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Once the production system was live, DSCallards then began the process of enabling users through skills transfer both for internal users at the RSSB office in London, and also for their customers located around the country.

To achieve this without incurring additional expenses, DSCallards delivered a series of tailored training courses over the web through online meetings.

When asked how he felt the knowledge transfer and training was delivered by DSCallards, Jeff commented, “Very successfully. A lot of knowledge was passed to the RSSB team and our customers on subjects such as dashboarding, Web Intelligence reporting and ‘Universe development’ – all unique SAP technologies. The method by which DSCallards delivered the training was very well received by customers and internal users alike”.

RSSB’s relationship with DSCallards goes from strength to strength and both companies intend to continue working in partnership to tackle new Business Intelligence challenges and adopt appropriate technologies as they emerge on the market.

When asked whether RSSB would recommend DSCallards to another organisation, Jeff replied, “Yes, absolutely, we would highly recommend DSCallards, and have no issues at all in discussing this case study or indeed how we work with DSCallards in general, in fact we would be very happy to”.

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