

Streamlining Rail Operations in an Industry First

How Avanti West Coast Revolutionised Station and Train Management with ServiceNow Custom Applications making use of ServiceNow across the business, including using ServiceNow to automate HR processes.



- Industry: **Transport**
- Company size: **3,000+**
- Location: **UK**
- UP3 services: **ServiceNow Managed Support Service, ServiceNow Managed Development Service, Professional Services Product**
- ServiceNow products: **UP3 Support Services, ITSM Professional, Field Service Management, Integration Hub, Agile Team, ITOM Operator Enterprise, Software Asset Management Professional and Strategic Portfolio Management Standard**

Outcomes:

- ✓ A first for the rail industry with all of Avanti's stations and train operations on one platform.
- ✓ Decisions can now be made with a holistic view of all activities and events across its network.
- ✓ Massive reduction in the number of manual and paper-based processes, with error levels cut, costs saved, and employee and public safety enhanced.
- ✓ Stream-lined processes have facilitated a culture change across the entire business.

The challenge:

Running a train station is complex. Running a whole network of them is even more so – especially when they rely heavily on manual processes and disparate systems. That was the situation facing Avanti West Coast, which manages 16 stations across the West Coast Main Line. Added to that, the company operates a fleet of 76 trains too. Through their long-standing relationship, Avanti and UP3 had worked on a range of digitalisation projects already. Now, with their shared understanding of the operator's processes and challenges, they spotted a bigger opportunity: to modernise and standardise the way it ran its station and train network through a single digital platform. This would be a first in station and train management. Nothing like this had been done in the rail industry before. But Avanti and the UP3 team could see potential waiting to be unlocked.

The current, highly fragmented ways of working across the network were full of inefficiencies and inconsistencies that caused numerous problems for staff and customers alike. Train stations often relied on multiple disparate systems for core tasks such as ticketing, scheduling, and maintenance, leading to delays and wasted time. Data entry was done manually, and forms were still paper based. Many decisions were communicated verbally or by email, which slowed down the entire system and created the potential for miscommunication or information overload. There were inconsistencies between locations too. Each train station, working independently, had its own processes, procedures, and service standards, which affected the customer experience and operational efficiency. All of these manual tasks and redundant efforts generated unnecessarily high overheads. Station managers lacked real-time insights into station operations because there was no comprehensive management information system, making it challenging to make informed decisions and optimise performance.

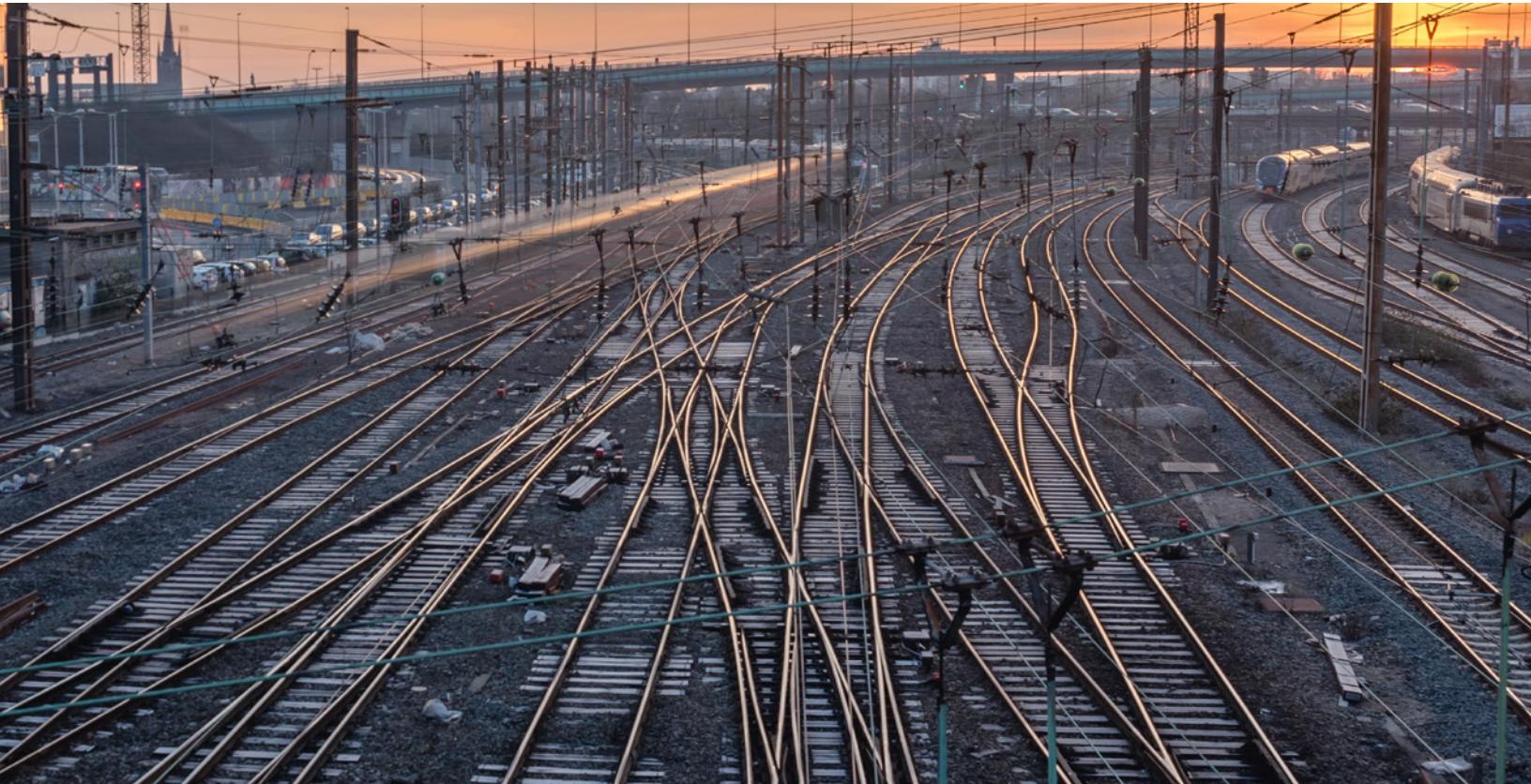
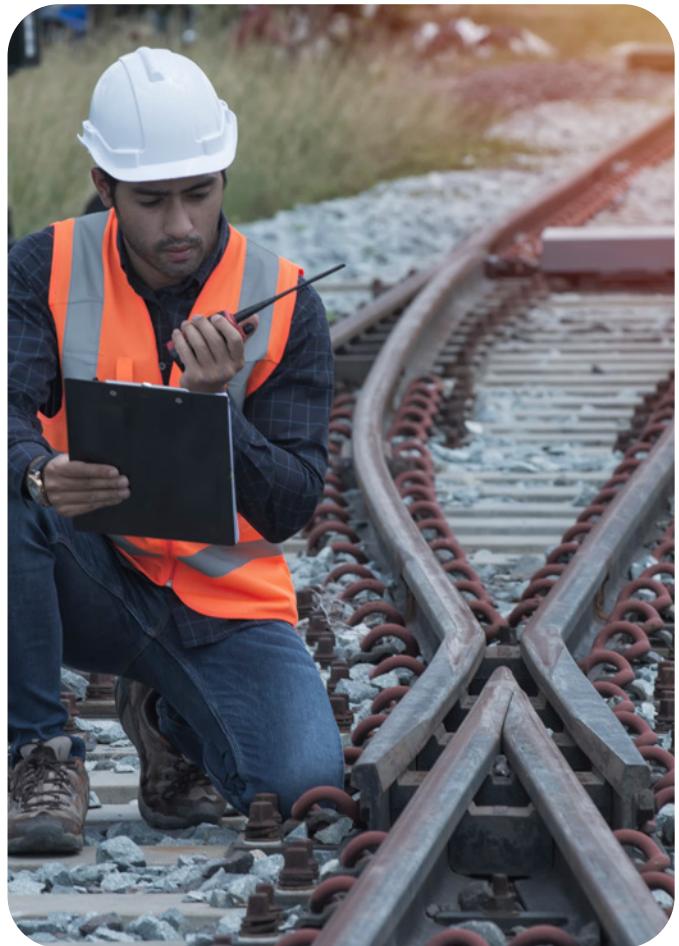
Finally, relying on manual processes meant that site risks, including safety hazards and security concerns, were inevitably error prone, resulting in potential compliance violations. The team at Avanti were therefore looking for a solution to standardise processes, deliver robust risk management practices, and put in place efficient communication channels to improve operational efficiency, safety and overall customer satisfaction. The UP3 team recommended developing a suite of ServiceNow custom applications to address these challenges. As a ServiceNow first customer, Avanti understood the platform's custom application capabilities, and due to the long-term UP3 and Avanti partnership they were confident in UP3's ability to deliver the right solution.

The solution:

Having worked with Avanti West Coast as a ServiceNow Managed Service customer for several years, the UP3 team had strong knowledge of the rail industry, and quickly combined that with their deep ServiceNow expertise to translate Avanti's requirements into a workable solution. UP3's team built a series of six custom applications on the Now platform:

- **StaySafe** – a new and easy way for staff on trains and at stations to report safety issues, from building faults to inappropriate behaviour.
- **Sign-In** – allowing visitors to register and immediately validate their permit to work, preventing delays while also blocking unauthorised access.
- **Safety Tours** – giving staff the ability to request and approve a safety tour of stations and other Avanti locations, ensuring all relevant safety information is known.
- **Permit to Work** – a speedy way for contractors to confirm their level of approval and carry out planned works at an Avanti location.
- **Fault Reporting** – a digitised system to actively monitor ticket machines and report any faults.
- **Revenue Protection** – a crucial application to record and manage details of any passengers attempting to travel with no ticket, or an invalid one, and help clamp down on fare evasion.

Through its ServiceNow Managed Service, UP3 developed each of these applications quickly and iteratively, with constant communication and collaboration with the Avanti West Coast team. And each application was integrated smoothly to ensure a connected answer to Avanti's complex challenge.



The outcome:

For the first time ever, all of Avanti West Coast's stations and train operations are connected on a single platform. It marked a first for the rail industry and will no doubt become a milestone in the digitalisation of the entire sector. This means that, uniquely, Avanti has a holistic view of all activities and events across its network – bringing its processes together and unlocking the potential of the business like never before.

From UP3's perspective, the team over-delivered on the customer's expectations and requirements, using the rich functionality of ServiceNow's App Engine and custom applications to do more than originally anticipated. In the short term, the key outcome of the project is that the number of manual and paper-based processes across Avanti's sites has reduced significantly, with error levels cut, costs saved, and employee and public safety enhanced.

More than that, however, the new streamlined approach has kick-started a culture change for the entire organisation. Decisions can be made with comprehensive and readily available data; patterns can be spotted in fare evasion or building maintenance, for example, and targeted strategies put in place as appropriate. Proactive monitoring and reporting, not reactive problem-solving, can become the norm. Benefiting from UP3's combination of industry experience and ServiceNow capability, Avanti West Coast has set the standard for modernising and streamlining UK rail operations.



“Working with UP3 is always a great experience because they've developed such a deep understanding of our business and the wider rail industry. They know our needs and guidelines, and matching that with their technical expertise means we get the very most out of our ServiceNow platform. This project has been game-changing for us and we're really excited about the positive impact its having for our people and our customers.”

Barj Duhra, Head of Technology Services, Avanti West Coast