

REINVENTING COVENTRY...

CASE STUDY ^{NO.} 2

working together for better public transport

Key opinion formers in Coventry did not feel that the TWM brand of our West Midlands bus business, adequately reflected their local aspirations. Understanding the need for visible improvement, TWM worked alongside partners, Centro and Coventry City Council, to draw up a Concordat setting out a continuous improvement strategy for the next five years.

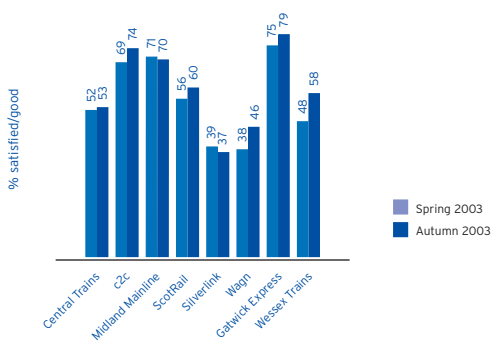
Thanks to a review of customer needs, investment in vehicles, branding and technology, bus services in Coventry City have been transformed, not least by a smart new Travel Coventry livery. Now led by a dedicated managing director,

the Coventry business is built around a local team meeting local needs. A £2 million investment in articulated buses has been supported by smartcard technology for fare payment and a new website that displays real-time schedule information. Two-thirds of the fleet is now easy-access, with an average age of just seven years.

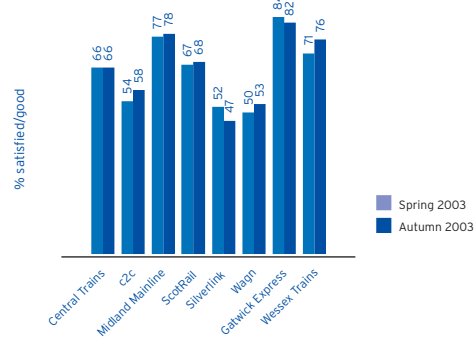
The result is an increase in passenger numbers, a new relationship with the local authority and a greatly improved relationship with the TGWU. In 2004 we will respond to recommendations of the external body we appointed to review the entire Coventry network.



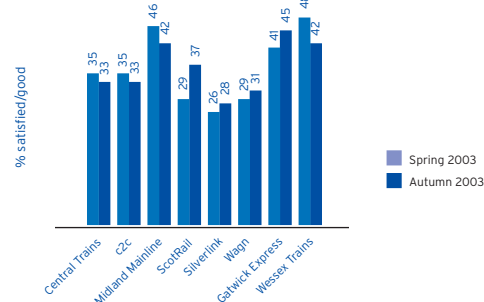
The provision of information during the journey
(Chart 14)



The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train
(Chart 15)



How well train companies dealt with delays
(Chart 16)



MAKING PUBLIC TRANSPORT THE NATURAL CHOICE (continued)

AFFORDABILITY Cost is a key component of an attractive public transport system. 99% of TWM's of operational run at full commercial risk with no subsidy.

We recognise the importance of working with the Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) on proven initiatives such as Travelcards. On TWM bus services, the average fare is the lowest in the country outside London and senior citizens still enjoy free travel after 9.30am on weekdays and all day at weekends.

Coach fares remain very competitive, with 50% of journeys costing less than £10. We are rolling out best value £1 fares which allow customers booking online to travel to and from selected locations, for just £1.

We have continued to introduce schemes to make rail travel more affordable, including £1 fares and 2-for-1 initiatives on key routes into London. Recent changes by the SRA in rail fare regulations will not have an effect on our policy of maintaining a wide range of fares, including attractive promotional and pre-booked tickets aimed at filling empty seats with new travellers. The increases in regulated fares mean we have a larger "window of opportunity" in which to manage the lower priced ranges.

ACCESSIBILITY AND INFORMATION As part of the DfT's planning policy, transport operators are encouraged to make public transport more accessible. Within our bus operations we have addressed this development through the West Bromwich Mini-link bus which provides a feeder service into the main TWM's network.

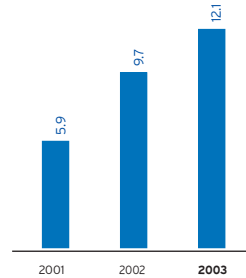
From a manned customer information point at Liverpool Street railway station to a GPS system that displays real-time data on screens at bus stops in the West Midlands, we support and invest where appropriate in a wide range of schemes aimed at giving customers greater access to information.

In the West Midlands, we will be piloting a short message service technology (SMS) scheme during 2004. This will send information to customers on their mobile phones, enabling them to stay at home until the bus is approaching their nearest stop.

The internet continues to grow in importance, not only as an information channel but also as a convenient way to purchase tickets. Train businesses such as Midland Mainline (MML) encourage customers to book on-line and the ScotRail sleeper was the first train service in the UK to offer e-tickets. National Express coaches became the first ground transportation company in the UK to issue e-tickets. 40% of our coach travellers who buy on-line now choose the e-ticket option.

We continue to focus on improving systems and are growing coach direct sales through the internet or our own direct sales channels (Chart 17).

Coach division internet sales as a % of total sales growth (Chart 17)



We are keen to improve access for all customers, able and less able. However, specific improvements designed for disabled travellers can benefit everyone. We have programmes in place to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 in all our UK divisions. We report DDA related issues in greater detail on page 28.

We believe that public transport has a key role to play in social inclusion. Over the past five years, we have participated in the Government New Deal scheme which provides free travel for the unemployed who are attending job interviews and offers half price season tickets.

Within our bus operations we have maintained scheduled mileage and network coverage within the West Midlands at a consistent level. TWM has also signed up to the industry-wide stability package which restricts the number of changes that can be made to bus services in one year. At the end of 2003 we commissioned a study to analyse how bus services in the West Midlands and Coventry can be further improved.

Towards the end of the year we also signed the Coventry Concordat as discussed in the case study on page 11.

INTEGRATION Train, coach, tram and bus services do not operate in a vacuum. Many passenger journeys encompass at least two different modes of transport and although it is difficult to create a meaningful measure of progress, it is our aim to integrate our services whenever possible.

We recognise that there is always scope for improvement, but are proud of the many areas where integration works well, the West Midlands conurbation being an excellent example. However, it is a fact that some rail stations are poorly situated for the main bus flows. It is essential that bus customers are served with routes that take them quickly and directly to where they want to go. Dundee is an example where most bus routes focus on the commercial centre.