

K is for Kato and Kestrel

Kato

It's always good when you take a piece of your holiday home with you



Kato and Myles

As many of you know, Andrea enjoys being around animals (some might say that is a selection criteria for joining the UIC).

In August Andrea was away with her family and friends in a small part of Corfu called Agios Georges or St George South as it is known in English, a regular destination for the family. This time however something unexpected happened.

Over the period they were away a small tabby/ginger cat - moved in with them. She was small, just over a year old, and was very affectionate. Andrea has a 3 year old son called Myles who became inseparable from the cat who became known as Kato (Greek for cat) and so the relationship began. Andrea tells her story:

“Each day Kato would arrive, have a bit of breakfast with us and then settle down until we went out for the day. At night she would stay with us until we went out and, yep, meet us when we got back. She rapidly became part of the family. The holiday came to an end and we had a bit of a dilemma - what do we do with the cat?

Kato came home from Corfu a week later. Myles had been heartbroken to leave her and I had realised that leaving her was not an option

as many stray cats don't make it through the winter due to the weather, lack of food and predators. So we decided to find a way of getting her back to England.

I managed to enlist the help of Animal Rescue Corfu. A very kind lady, Christina, who runs the charity worked with some of our Greek friends to locate Kato and start the arrangements to bring her home.

She was picked up and lodged at Christina's until all the veterinary checks had been carried out and flight arrangements were in place..... and then she flew back to Manchester!

She is now in quarantine kennels near Chesterfield who are looking after her fantastically well and each week she puts on more and more weight.

In another couple of months she comes to her permanent home with us (any advice on

introducing her to Tess the dog - very welcome!).

So it is always good when you bring a piece of your holiday back - but I'm banned from doing it again (well until next time.....).”



Kato's passport

Kestrel

Kestrel is the UIC's performance management system - it collects and analyses data about punctuality for a variety of transport modes including light rail and buses. Kestrel is unique in that it can be customised for different modes, data sources and performance regimes. Kestrel provides data as close to real-time as possible and pushes this data out, in an easy to understand format, to the responsible managers along with the responsibility for improvement. Kestrel users include two iconic systems - the ultra-modern Docklands Light Railway in London and one of the largest tram networks in the world - Yarra Trams in Melbourne, Australia.



The Docklands Light Railway London

Docklands Light Railway

Serco Docklands have been using Kestrel since 2009. Kestrel is our Performance Management System which enables us to understand our delays and do something with the information that will help us improve performance.

The work was scoped very carefully to make sure all our needs were understood and then prioritised. This happened very quickly with scoping finished by 6 July 2009 and a working Version 1 of Kestrel was installed on 2 September 2009. Version 2 was installed in June 2010 which dealt with the redesign of the system for managing attribution - the root causes of delay. Work on Version 3 is currently ongoing and will put performance management in to the hands of those who are in a position to do something about it - our



managers. This is due out by May 2011.

We now have automated production of many reports, cutting down on management time taken to produce performance information. We are looking to further strengthen output in this area to help drive performance improvement as we move towards the London Olympics in 2012.

David West, Performance and Concessionaire Manager Serco Docklands

Yarra Trams

Yarra Trams is the Melbourne tramway; operated by KDR, a joint venture between Keolis and Downer EDI. The Melbourne tram network is a street based operation with 80% of its network shared with road traffic. The network consists of over 245 km of double track with 178 million passenger trips per year.

Yarra Trams is working with the UIC on installation of the Kestrel Performance Monitoring System. In essence, we are seeking to drive performance improvement through our PRIDE (Punctuality, Reliability, Incident and Delay Evaluation) philosophy of performance management. Kestrel is the platform through which we aim to measure, monitor and assess performance. With over 31 000 services per week and 20 monitoring points on each trip, there are an enormous number of opportunities to get it right!

Yarra Trams is looking to further improve our performance through 2011. The installation of Kestrel and its broader suite of reporting tools is designed to facilitate this improvement.

Duncan Smith, Operations Performance Manager Yarra Trams



The unique advantage the UIC has over traditional systems providers is that we are an organisational improvement specialist, not an IT company.

Therefore we focus on what the customer needs to help them run and improve their business rather than dreary technical specifications that give the end user gee-whizz IT applications with lots of unnecessary features rather than something that's useful.

Systems such as Kestrel work best when they are combined with improvement training. One of our products is the Performance Improvement Programme aimed specifically at transport industry managers. What better way to illustrate this, than a quote from a satisfied customer speaking at the 2010 Facilitators Conference:

“Performance in the rail industry has a very, very specific meaning. It's about train performance, it's about trains on time and there's a whole science to it. And it's dead boring. So we get this thing through the post saying you're going on a 14 day Performance Improvement Programme. I said to Barbara “I'm not doing that. No way. Get me out of it”.

www.theuic.com/Kestrel



Kestrel screenshots

L is for Liverpool Housing Trust, London South Bank University, and Love

Liverpool Housing Trust



Business Planning Day, January (Dave is in the back row, second from the right)

At 16 years and counting, LHT is one of the UIC's oldest clients. Present on the very first day of work with the UIC on 1 August 1994 was Dave Lambert, then Deputy Chief Executive of a small Housing Association employing just over 100 people. Dave was instrumental in the growth of LHT into The Vicinity Group and retired in 2010 as Managing Director of two of Vicinity's subsidiaries - Liverpool Housing Trust and Cobalt Housing. All the best and thank you Dave.



London South Bank University

London South Bank University have taken on a new approach to project management and change since the arrival of Leonie Saywell in the role of Deputy Director of Organisational and Staff Development in November 2009. Leonie brought with her the UIC skills and approach she learned way back in 1994 on one of the very first courses and the organisation has not looked back since! Initially one of her team - Carol Tavernier - was trained as a Facilitator completing her training in early 2010. Carol in turn recommended that Improve Your Projects be included as part of the Leadership Succession Programme and this offering has now been expanded to other staff and managers.

Recognising that there was more support required in the organisation than two Facilitators could possibly manage, the decision was made supported by the Executive Team who were seeing the benefits of the approach to train a cohort of 12 internal Facilitators. They will complete the Facilitator Development Programme and be operating fully in the organisation by March 2011.

Everything has come together in the most timely way says Carol. "The organisation really needed to work in a more systematic way, especially in the new climate and with both Leonie's and my passion for project management, introducing a 'light touch' project management methodology for LSBU supported by the UIC approach has been spot on. We have a long way to go but a great start has been made. We are already seeing powerful results".



Why I love my manual

In terms of Must-Should-Could, using my manual has become a must. I use it all the time - it makes running projects and meetings so much easier and, because the methodologies follow a clear step-by-step structure, it helps to avoid the 'what shall we do next' approach. The language is clear and straightforward, it has lots of tips on how to get the best from Project Events and meetings and supplements the training really well.



Belinda Naylor, Enterprise Officer, South Yorkshire Housing Association

M is for Magpie

Magpie - monitoring capacity at Northern Rail

Northern Rail is a huge, complex operation. We operate 2,500 trains a day covering 1,675 route miles across the north of England. We have 4,500 employees and we manage more than 450 stations or, put another way, around 20% of the national rail network. We have been using Magpie since 2006.

Magpie is an Advanced Capacity Monitoring System that enables users to monitor capacity against plan or, put simply, whether the trains we run on the day have the planned number of seats available. Magpie's analytical features allow us to view information in a format that is understandable, highlights short formations and provides information that helps us improve capacity management. Magpie has allowed us to collate, measure and report capacity information without spending days cutting-and-pasting data between spreadsheets.



With over 2,500 daily train services, which present a myriad of seating capacity conundrums, we faced the mammoth task of developing a system to not only capture but also analyse this information. From initial scoping to Version 1, we were able to develop a working system in just 8 weeks. This required colleagues from Northern Rail to work closely with the UIC. As Magpie has continued to develop, colleagues from other departments have been requesting access to the system and reports so they can get the data they need more quickly and easily. As more people use the system, new ideas keep being generated and these are quickly built in to the next version.

Support has been exceptional. When issues have arisen or changes have been required, Azhar has made them quickly and efficiently. Some alterations have been made to meet the changing needs of the business, others have been made to improve system functionality and meet auditing requirements.

Chris Spencer, Assistant Production Support Manager Northern Rail

www.theuic.com/Magpie



Graham Higgins, First ScotRail

"Magpie support is prompt and professional. Other systems suppliers should look at the UIC to see how support should be done"

Andy Miller, Head of Performance First ScotRail



"Magpie provides us with all the information we need to manage and improve seating capacity at First ScotRail and produce statutory reports for Transport Scotland at the touch of a button. It's a great tool for our allocation analysis, it does exactly what it says on the tin".

Graham Higgins, Performance Improvement Team First ScotRail



N is for Noriaki and Notebooks

Noriaki

Many organisations are obsessed with KPIs, their internal measures, and can often forget that measures of customer satisfaction are more important. Your KPIs can show that you are great but, if your customers think you're crap, you are crap! Noriaki is the UIC's customer satisfaction data gathering and analysis system. Noriaki can easily cope with your once-a-year customer survey and provide the results instantly, yes we do mean instantly, in an easy to understand and analyse format. But more importantly Noriaki moves customer satisfaction data collection into real-time. You can ask your customers what you want, where you want, when you want, using the media you want and have the answers straight away.



Touch technology allows tenant Alison Forbes to give immediate feedback on her home improvements to Phil Lukes, Customer Involvement Manager for City South Manchester Housing Trust



Noriaki questionnaire running on an iPad

www.noriaki.com
www.theuic.com/PhilLukes

Press Release October 2010

City South pioneer new tech to boost customer feedback

City South Manchester Housing Trust is using the latest tech to boost customer involvement and provide instant results.

The Hulme-based housing association is one of the first providers of social housing to use the pioneering Noriaki software, a new customer satisfaction analysis and reporting system which enable City South to track what its customers are saying in real time at the touch of a button.

Loaded to PDAs, laptops, tablet PCs or the Trust's website, the software enables housing officers to take their questions to their customers' front door or living room. As soon as they are entered the results are analysed and updated.

Over the next few weeks, surveys will be carried out looking at satisfaction with repairs, customer services, home improvement works and the way the Trust deals with anti-social behaviour.

Phil Lukes, Customer Involvement Manager at City South, said: "Using this brand new computer software will allow us to increase the speed and accuracy of our surveys.

"People can still fill in a paper form, but we are encouraging more people to give us feedback over the phone, via email web-links or directly through our website. This

new software means we can get feedback in real time, with results being analysed as the survey is completed.

"Hand held mobile devices will also be used, especially when we start doing home visits to assess satisfaction around a month after homes have received major improvements.

"At these visits, survey results will be updated as soon as each answer is input on the hand held device. This will allow us to spot issues and respond far more quickly than with our current systems which have involved more traditional form filling, inputting of data then analysis."

Noriaki's easy-to-use analytical functions mean trends are quickly identified and the impact of improvements can be easily tracked.

Andrea Higginbottom, from The Universal Improvement Company who supply the specialist Noriaki survey software, said: "We're delighted to be working with City South to help them understand their customers' needs and aspirations for their homes and housing service. The beauty of our software is the real-time analysis and rapid reporting, allowing organisations such as City South to respond quickly to any emerging issues."

This is the latest phase in City South's Big Listen, a campaign to get feedback from tenants and other customers on how they would like to transform the services it provides.

Notebook culture

If anyone had asked me a few years ago to write an article about using notebooks, I would have considered them slightly unhinged and I know I would have declined their request. I felt a little the same when Richard and Lisa on our first day of training 18 months ago announced that they would now teach us how to use a notebook. I looked round at my 11 colleagues and read their faces. Some were definitely wondering what on earth I had got them into; others were showing disdain and a certain amount of defiance; a few were just looking confused; and one or two - it must be admitted - were defiantly bored. What could we be taught about using a notebook that we did not know? None of us are in the first flush of youth and we had probably used a notebook for some purpose before. Indeed I knew I had, as some of my doodles could be considered minor works of art!

So what happened next? Well we persisted with the training rather than inviting our UIC colleagues to reach for their coats and showing them the door. We allowed Richard to explain how useful notebooks could be if they were used well - rather than just as a place to write shopping lists during the boring parts of most meetings. We learnt about taking our own minutes of meetings, so we did not need to wait for the minutes to be issued in two weeks time to discover what we agreed to do next week. We were drilled about making notes in advance for one to one meetings with our line managers and our line reports, so that we could have structured and informed discussions rather than just a chat.

It would be dishonest to suggest that I am now an expert on using notebooks, although I have become rather a prolific user - frequently filling up a notebook in less than four weeks. I have grasped the idea of writing myself relatively formal notes of nearly every meeting I attend, but I am far from being an expert in my preparatory notes for one to ones. I promise to try harder!

Changing the way we do things is a challenge, even if it is only about how we make notes in meetings. Change is a challenge whatever the change. There is a process to change and to deliver change it is necessary to recognise and understand that the team members will always go on an emotional journey - some short and some longer. However one necessary evil is for people to understand what flexibility there is in the destination.

We decided that making notes in meetings using a proper notebook was not negotiable. Taking your notebook to all the many meetings that we have is what we expect - it has become how we do things round here. We have even produced our own hardback Broadland notebook. Learning how to use notebooks was not rocket science - it felt like Richard and Lisa were teaching Granny to suck eggs - but it has contributed to the tangible difference that adopting UIC methodologies has made to the group.

*Michael Newey
Group Chief Executive
Broadland Housing Group*

