



**Liberalising Rail – Essential
Tools for Success**

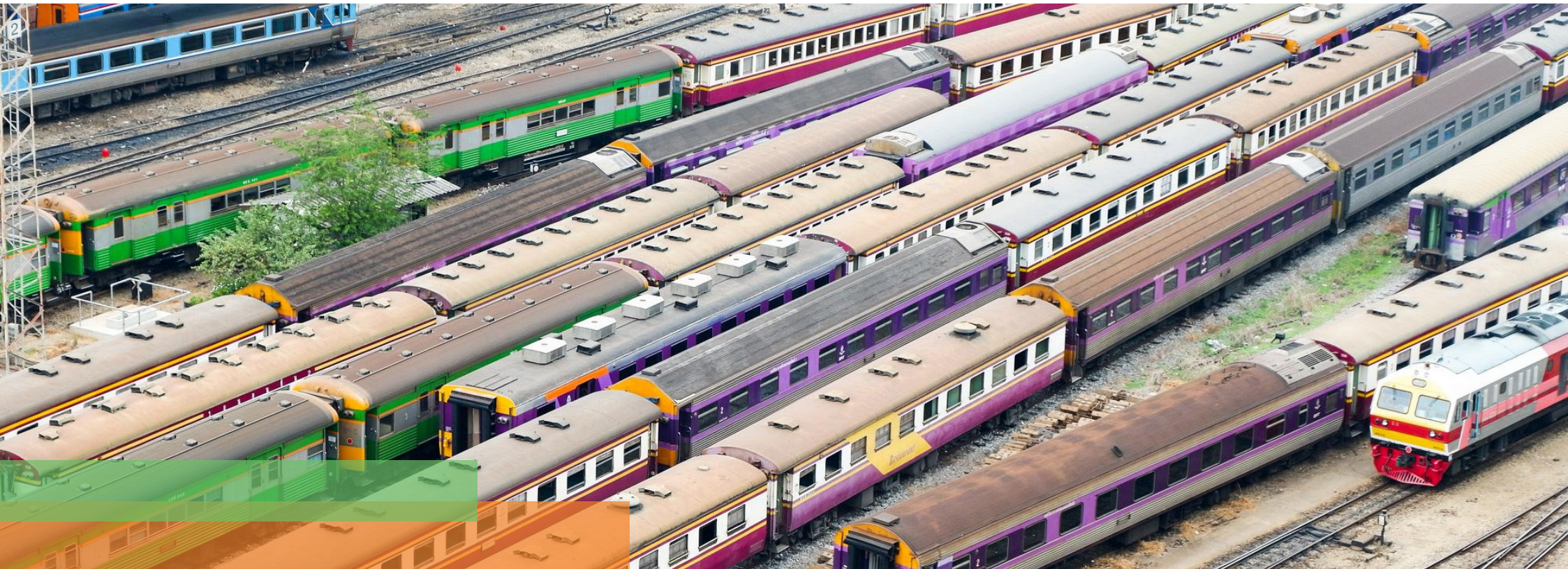
A major change is underway in Europe's rail sector. Recognising rail's superior efficiency and sustainability (providing more than 5% of passenger journeys with less than 2% of transport energy consumption, while contributing just 0.4% of EU transport greenhouse gas emissions), the EU has adopted a series of packages to liberalise the market by eliminating fragmentation and complex stand-alone national systems.

As a result, we are seeing a trend towards fresh faces entering newly opened markets – examples such as OUIGO Spain, Italo and Eurostar (Thalys). And while the EU naturally sees opportunities to increase efficiency and service levels, for local operators there are myriad compelling incentives – including the opportunity to

fundamentally change the transportation landscape in a region.

Alejandro Sanchez, Responsable de Sistemas Operativos at OUIGO Spain captures one such sentiment, commenting: “We grew up understanding that train travel was expensive. OUIGO arrived in Spain to challenge this conception and demonstrate that all citizens have the right to enjoy high-speed travel. We are making history, growing a railway company from the ground up.”

But of course, entering a new market is a major undertaking for any rail operator, requiring local understanding and expertise, people to win and then deliver contracts, and also entire new technology infrastructures in place – the latter is the focus of this article, as we explore the tools required to support this kind of endeavour.



TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEW MARKETS

For any rail operation, safety, efficiency and reliable delivery are essential components. This is no different with a new market – but having supported a range of organisations, we believe that there are specific elements that are particularly important when entering a new market, which should be prerequisites of any technology partner.

SOFTWARE AS A SERVICE (SAAS)

A SaaS model is especially valuable in new markets because its lightweight infrastructure ensures and enables the team to effectively focus their time. OUIGO Spain's Alejandro Sanchez: "Almost all our systems are Software as a Service (SaaS). We are very deliberate about this: we are a small team, and this enables us to externalise effort and competences, reducing infrastructure and maintenance costs."

MOBILE FIRST

Mobilisation of operations is fundamental to both safety and efficiency. Therefore, work with a partner that can offer solutions designed to take advantage of mobile technology through all aspects of the operation. Embracing mobile communications ensures total efficiency when organising personnel – thereby maximising the opportunities to win new contracts and then deliver them profitably.

PROVEN DELIVERY

It is an established truism that you only have one chance to make a first impression. In the same way, an operator will only ever have one chance to undertake a first implementation in a new market. It is therefore essential that the project runs to plan – which requires the support of a technology partner with a proven track record undertaking this kind of project.

BREADTH OF EXPERIENCE

Delivering into a new market means having the ability to understand and respond to local requirements. Great software is of course vital, but it is just as important to work with a partner that has vast, diverse experience and expertise. That means established rail experts covering different countries and an understanding of both passenger and freight rail.

CAPABILITY SHARING DATA

Many rail operators struggle to obtain and make use of the data within their system – this can be a major problem when entering a new market, given the risks and intense scrutiny on KPIs to ensure the expansion succeeds. This is especially true for operators that are part of larger groups, with a requirement to report KPIs back to a central organisation. Openness and sharing of data have been fundamental parts of the Binary solution since day 1 – and are a major reason why embraced modern Cloud, SaaS and Mobile technologies in our specialist rail solution.

FREIGHT SPECIALISATION

For operators managing freight services, it is essential to work with a supplier that truly understands the requirements of this specialised sector. It is important to make sure your supplier can offer a resource optimiser specifically designed for freight rail, and has the ability to manage shunting activities within the system.

ENSURING SAFETY

Safety, and compliance with safety regulations, are of course primary considerations for any rail operation. Entering a new market presents additional challenges here: the requirement for new people, technicians, technology – and often different regulations. It is therefore essential to work with a technology partner that has already helped operators to ensure safety and meet compliance in a range of markets and geographies.

Over the past 13 years, Binary System has delivered solutions with more than 60 clients in eight different countries – including major operators such as SNCF, SNCB and Trenord. These organisations have benefitted from a proven, rail-specific solution which includes a range of configurations created for different regions – and additional regional regulations can be accommodated as an adaptation of the existing solution.

As a result, Binary is able to offer a robust and proven solution which can be delivered quickly – ensuring compliance and an effective safety valve without having to pay, or wait, for a solution to be developed.

CONCLUSION

As the team at OUIGO Spain has found, when entering a new market it is essential to work with a genuine technology partner rather than a supplier.

As OUIGO's Alejandro Sanchez says: "We want to work with a trusted partner. Binary is a good fit for OUIGO Spain: the scope of the solution is very broad, and Binary's SaaS business model ties our success together. We will rely on Binary System to grow in parallel with us, continuing to provide a solution at the level of excellence we require."

"OUIGO has arrived in Spain with a vision for long-term success. We will go to new destinations and increase services – keeping always complete focus on safety, quality, and a good level of customer satisfaction respecting the timetables."

As this article shows, the liberalising of rail in Europe presents huge opportunities, both for operators and the travelling public. Having supported those pioneering liberalisation in both Italy and Spain, we invite you to get in touch to discuss how Binary System's SoftRail can help meet your aspirations.





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