

Case Study

CLAREMONT

THE ONLY IMPOSSIBLE JOURNEY, IS THE ONE YOU NEVER BEGIN

THE RAIL INDUSTRY

In the 1990s much of the UK railway services were privatised, excluding the rail infrastructure. The rail network was split up into different franchises, with those franchises being put out to tender, typically every 7 years. Various private companies bid on, and are awarded the contracts to run the services in these franchises. Each time this happens a new company must be set up within a short period of time and the business-critical payroll and ticketing systems are moved from one operator to the next. The transport sector is heavily unionised so any changes to payroll systems that may affect employees requires union sign-off.

The Client

West Midlands Railway (WMR) operates over 1,300 train services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 70 million passenger journeys each year. West Midlands Railway was awarded a contract to operate services in the Birmingham and the West Midlands region covering key commuter, intercity and tourist routes from December 2017- 2026 by the Department of Transport.

The Background & Business Challenges

On being awarded the franchise, WMR discovered the previous operator did not have a separate payroll system that could be handed over to them. Due to the short turnaround time from the previous operator to WMR, there wasn't enough time to set up a new payroll system. The consequence being that any delay in payments especially for the drivers, could bring the rail network to a halt.

As a solution, WMR and the franchise's previous operator agreed the previous operator would run the payroll for WMR for up to twelve months. This was delivered as a bureau service, allowing time for WMR to develop and implement a new payroll system.

Highlights

- Claremont designed and implemented a payroll solution in under 3 months, saving significant costs for the customer.
- A payroll solution able to address the complexities of the railway employment contracts and terms at the fraction of a cost of a new system.
- A client who no longer worries or loses sleep about their payroll system.

Client Testimonial

"The payroll system migration was something that used to keep me awake at night with the huge uncertainty and risk to the business. With Claremont on board looking after the system and the work they did before during and after the new system launch, I don't lose sleep over it anymore."

David Lindsay, Finance Director of WMR

What makes us different?

- Our agility and deep Oracle payroll knowledge allowed us to deliver a payroll solution in under 3 months.
- First class Managed Services with guaranteed incident response and resolution times.
- We build proactive long term partnerships with clients.



If a train doesn't stop at your station, then it's not your train!

WMR chose to implement iTrent – a system designed for large company payrolls. With the historical and eclectic nature of differing employment contracts for staff going back several decades, customisation and practical flexibility of the iTrent system was key for the payroll system, particularly in terms of dealing with the complexities of different terms and conditions and individual contracts. However, it became clear that with 4 months until the live date, the iTrent payroll system would not be ready on time. This could result in WMR incurring significant extra costs to extend the bureau service.

The light at the end of the tunnel

WMR approached Claremont to develop a solution that could be implemented quickly using Oracle E-Business HR and Payroll. A typical solution like this could take up to twelve months to design and install, as it involves understanding the business requirements and then configuring Oracle E-Business Suite to meet those needs.

Claremont's solution was to host on Claremont Cloud a copy of the previous operator's E-Business Suite Payroll and purge or anonymize all personal data not relating to WMR. This would deliver a GDPR-compliant system holding only WMR's staff details and contracts. The benefit of doing this was that all the payroll processes would be in place and would not have to be redeveloped, saving time and cost. This was not a standard Oracle approach and Claremont would have to build technical routines to complete the project.

This solution was accepted by WMR and the previous operator. Once the details of the project had been agreed by all sides, it was underway by late September 2018 with the deadline of 9th December 2018 fast approaching. Against all odds and involving some long hours, Claremont managed to successfully deliver the project a few days before the deadline. WMR's payroll team left on a Friday and on the Monday came in and ran the December payroll without even noticing that the system had changed.

It's the journey that teaches you about your destination

The benefits of the solution and services that Claremont provided were a system that was designed and implemented in under 3 months, at the fraction of a cost of a new system. Furthermore, the system included the processes and customisations familiar to WMR's payroll team, so no training was required. The system meets all the client's needs with the intricacies of its business's payroll.

Following the successful implementation of the solution, WMR signed a 3-year contract with Claremont for a full Managed Services solution. The contract allows WMR the flexibility to amend the contract should they wish to move away from Oracle or change their requirements. The contract includes Database Administration, functional and technical support.

Their E-Business Suite Payroll system is also hosted on the Claremont Cloud – a cloud that provides clients with a secure UK-



based Cloud hosting solution built for Oracle. It's a truly virtualised platform, optimised for Oracle systems and hard partitioned to be compliant with Oracle licensing, on which all Oracle and non-Oracle business applications can be run.

Claremont provides 2nd and 3rd line DBA support along with third line Functional and Technical support. Unlike other Managed Services Providers, Claremont offers industry leading Service Level Agreements on the resolution of all incidents within specific time frames. Our aim is not to work to these SLAs, but rather fix incidents as quickly as possible. Furthermore, Claremont takes a proactive approach to preventing incidents and problems, maintaining security, availability and performance rather than just fixing incidents when they do occur.

With Claremont's highly experienced Oracle Database Administrators and Payroll specialists looking after this system, West Midlands Railway has saved money by not having to employ and manage in-house Oracle specialists.

Having implemented the system and gone live, we worked with WMR to identify and classify (cost vs benefit vs complexity) potential improvements which would most benefit WMR. These have been implemented and have helped WMR to deliver efficiencies and improve systems functionality. Claremont continues to deliver changes and projects for WMR, for example developing interfaces to support the new rail industry pensions scheme. As part of our continuing commitment, we maintain the Oracle E-Business Payroll system, provide advice and guidance to WMR, and implement updates and patches to support legislative tax regulatory changes.

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Finance Director, WMR - David Lindsay

David is so happy with our service that he rates Claremont 9/10 every month on our customer satisfaction score.



Partner

