

Incident Management Solution – dealing with the unexpected

As public transport services become increasingly customer-focused (the name change from 'passengers' says it all), what helps an operator really stand out and strengthen or weaken their brand is how they respond to the unexpected. In such cases, an efficient [incident and crisis management solution](#) is a means of helping them maximise service continuity and deliver journey experiences that ensure customers come back for more – and tell others to do the same.



Disruptions to normal service are inevitable for all operators, no matter how efficient their overall performance. Signalling or power failures, or the U.K.'s infamous 'leaves on the track' moments(!) for example, may cause 'minor delays'. And then there are emergency situations such as a bomb alert, where passenger safety is at risk.

Yet when these events occur, an efficient incident management solution can really make the difference. It puts operators in a position to communicate information to the relevant parties and trigger the right

processes, thus ensuring the necessary steps are taken to revert to normal operations as soon as possible.

Decision-making, communication and workflows

Most, if not all operators already have processes and technologies in place to tackle the more extreme end of the scale.

Such processes, providing a minimum set of steps to resolve a serious incident, typically involve an initial report – alerting resources – hazardous substances – informing – updating incident data – and documentation. On the technology side, web technology apps are used at data centres, both in the Cloud and on mobile units. These apps may use any communication technologies such as SMS, email, Skype, and Twitter.

“Furthermore, in most countries, regulatory bodies require proof that providers are ready for worst-case scenarios such as heavy earthquakes, tsunamis, and nuclear issues at power plants,” adds **Christian Stimakovits**, Domain Sales Manager at Frequentis Group.

However, when less dramatic situations like signalling, track or rolling stock failures do occur, a lack of coping systems and mechanisms risks disappointing customers; whose expectations, let’s not forget, are always on the rise.

“In general, the main issues in such cases are insufficient resources and inadequate compliance with the operator’s internal guidelines,” says **Mr Stimakovits**. “Also, a lack of clear operational models and agreed principles between all the parties involved, i.e. critical infrastructure providers, public authorities, the police, ambulance and fire-fighting services, internal departments at railway companies, and specialist institutes.”

To meet this challenge, operators need to correlate data from a growing number of operational systems and make sense of it at sufficient speed to respond effectively – either to handle incidents when underway, prevent, predict or flag them up.

Frequentis believes that solutions in the field of incident management should be based around **decision-making, communication, and workflows**.

Integration and capabilities

Prompt restoration of normal services after an incident depends on having a highly integrated platform with the following capabilities:

- **Rapid identification and shared situational awareness**

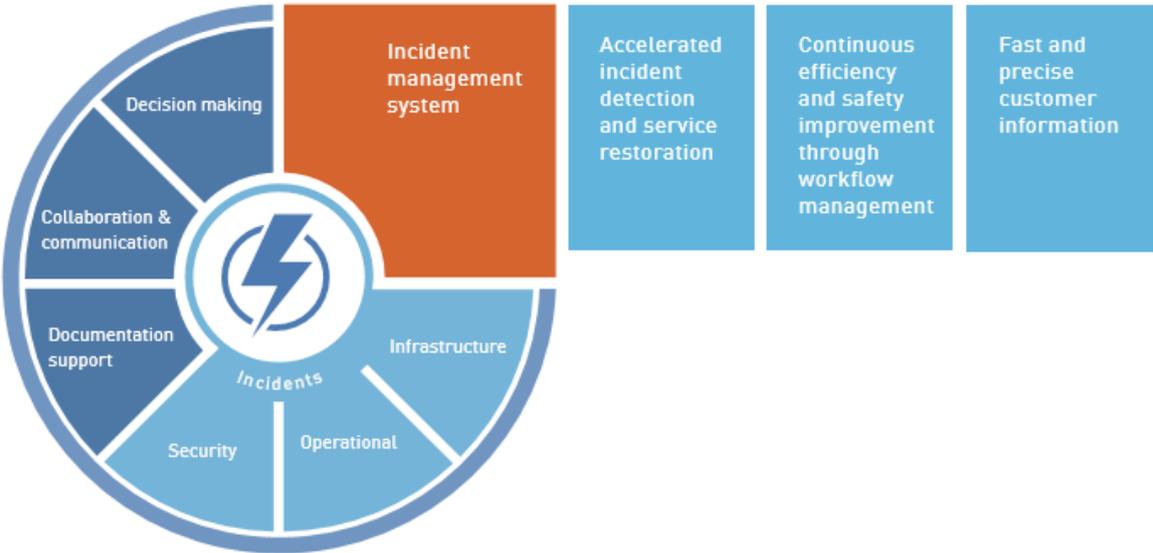
Public transport operators need to understand the ‘what’, ‘where’, and ‘when’ of every potential incident as soon as possible, through an incident management solution that is seamlessly integrated with other upstream and downstream systems. It is vital to create shared situational awareness through technology that gathers and disseminates information between all the internal and external parties concerned, including tailored updates to end-customers.

- **Defining workflows**

For operators to work effectively, they must be equipped with dynamic resolution workflows. To support collaborative workflows and smooth cooperation, the management system should automatically identify responsible parties based on the type of incident and stage reached in the resolution workflow.

- **Distribution of streamlined information**

An effective solution automatically streamlines information and alerts, tailoring them to the needs of each party and communicating them across the most appropriate channels. By so doing, operators can help responders and other parties focus on the most important issues at each stage – from detection through to resolution – and keep customers in the real-time information loop throughout.



Streamlining incident management in a highly dynamic environment

- **Rigorous documentation and post-incident summaries**

An effective solution also saves a clear record of all relevant activities in a comprehensive incident case file, automatically capturing and archiving information without requiring operator input. The incident management solution must automatically generate a single post-incident summary suitable for audit purposes and compliant with the relevant regulatory and legislative frameworks.

Why does [Incident Management by Frequentis](#) stand out?

- highly flexible product base tailored by and for the customer
- customisation at any time
- setting standards in mission critical applications
- over 70 years of experience in developing mission critical applications
- finger always on the pulse thanks to significant research investment (in house), plus engagement in international research projects

➤ **ÖBB, Austria**

The solution by Frequentis – delivered as part of [ÖBB](#)'s (Austrian Railways) strategic programme to centralise 57 operational locations into five regional and one central control centre – streamlines roles, responsibilities and communication within a larger control area, processes changes to the operational incident management procedure, while also taking into account local characteristics and know-how.

Staffed by over 1,500 users, the solution addresses the needs of crisis situations and operational, infrastructure and security incidents. At the same time, it satisfies European Railway Authority (ERA) reporting requirements and is fully integrated with control centre communication and legacy systems.

➤ **Major rail network, APAC**

Our customer - a major suburban passenger rail network in the Asia-Pacific region – was looking to establish a state-of-art rail operations centre and centralise operations by aligning functional roles, systems and processes,” explains **Thomas Karl**, Vice President Public Transport at [Frequentis](#). ”Our Incident and Crisis Management solution supports faster communication of accurate, consistent and timely information to all relevant parties, including updates on service disruptions and restoration.

“Beyond implementing optimised business processes for incident management, the solution supports access to notification sources, as well as an incident reporting application for mobile devices.”

➤ **CFL, Luxembourg**

Frequentis implemented its solution at [CFL](#) (Luxembourg National Railways) to enhance the company's safety management processes. In addition to handling incidents with operational impact, smart interfaces

to operating, dispatching and controlling systems enable efficient management of incidents involving infrastructure assets.

Adds **Mr Karl**: “The solution has proven to reliably help incident managers re-establish operational functionality during infrastructure failures by allowing them to efficiently coordinate maintenance crews and related tasks, according to defined responsibilities.”

Ticking all the boxes

Getting the incident management process right delivers benefits across the board – from management and control centre operators to front-line staff and end customers.

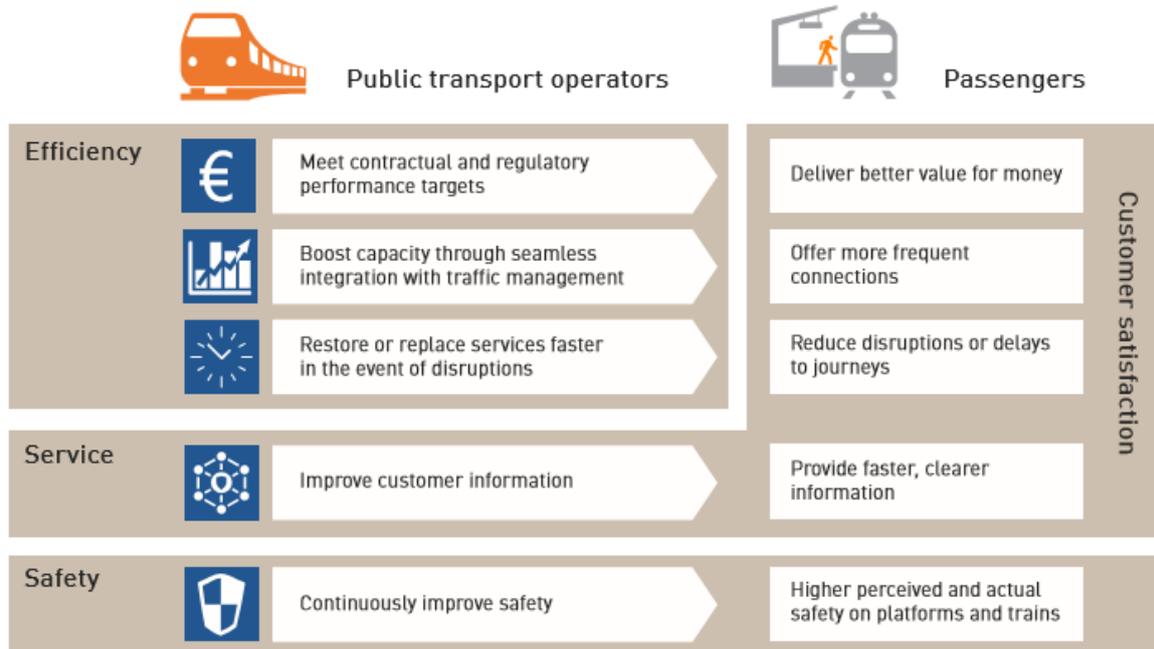
Reducing the costs of handling incidents and protecting the company brand is vital from a management perspective. Here speed is of the essence. Faster detection and resolution of incidents deliver the following gains:

- avoiding minor issues escalating into more serious problems by making alternative routes available to partners, or reducing compensation payments for delayed or cancelled services;
- protecting and potentially enhancing an operator’s reputation. In our hyper-connected C21st where the smartphone is king, news, both good and bad, travels fast and wide. Customers are quick to communicate via social media... often before the transport organisation! And the response provided, when it ticks all the boxes, can serve as free positive marketing for the transport company in question.

In today’s increasingly competitive and demanding public transport world, can any operator today afford not to take this opportunity on board?

Dynamic, context-sensitive workflows and user interfaces help control centre staff focus on key tasks, enabling more work to be handled in parallel without additional effort or stress. Meanwhile, front-line responders benefit from timely and relevant information updates that simplify collaboration and provide real-time situational awareness.

For end-customers, satisfaction levels during service disruptions depend largely on immediate, regular and clear updates. Keeping passengers in the information loop at all times will keep stress at bay, as well as providing reassurance they won’t be left stranded part-way through a journey.



Incident management: supporting efficiency and safety while improving customer satisfaction

Every story is a good news story!

Air, road, maritime... every mode of transport at some time is subject to incidents that disrupt planned operations. And public transport, including rail, is no exception.

Faster incident resolution leads to improved service punctuality. Embracing this transformation will help providers ensure they need not fear their seeing their name in a headline – because every story will be a good news story!

[Frequentis AG](#) is an international supplier of communication and information systems for control centres with safety-critical tasks.

In the field of public transport, our solutions leverage over 70 years of experience in safety-critical communications and applications. Cross-industry expertise gained from supporting control centre communication lays the foundations for industry-leading rail and urban transport solutions.

Article written by Lesley Brown for BtoB RAIL