

Next Generation Trains

Where are we going?

What customers really want

Neil Bates



1 November 2007

 **creative** design

where are we going?

a long-term vision is essential for railway companies planning their next generation of trains

we have tried to identify the principles, for a new train using customer feedback and recent experience creating a long distance business for an open access operation

it starts with a simple proposition

“Why are new trains not as comfortable as the old ones?”

customer research, male 35-44, long distance commuter, 2003

the old train being referred to is comprised of Mk III carriages



the Mk III was simply a very good train and established a number of enduring values:

- Good, comfortable seats
- Decent legroom and space
- Seats aligned with windows
- Natural lighting
- Basic amenities, which are easy to understand and use

these represent the essential elements for good, basic benchmark standards, they also allow the train crew to deliver a high level of customer service

a high proportion of new trains have ignored these core values and as a result, have created a poorer level of service – it is almost impossible to offer anything better

these are not our views they are comments based on customer feedback

train interiors importance measures

top 15 measures, summary of all rankings - % of total respondents (2164)

1.	comfort of seating	seats are too hard and uncomfortable, too densely arranged
2.	number of seats available	a seat is an absolute, non-negotiable
3.	amount of leg-room	the ease+ability to get in and out of the seat, room to spread out
4.	control of air temperature/environment	one size does not fit all, a choice would be welcomed
5.	amount of shoulder room	ability to adopt a different posture: re activity, length of journey
6.	WC – toilet facilities	clean, hygienic, better maintained
7.	catering facilities	quality, freshness, choice and availability all score highly
8.	luggage stowage space	more luggage space within clear sight of seat
9.	availability of staff on board	information and personal security
10.	size of tables	larger tables equate with the ability to work
11.	size of windows	larger windows are a measure of comfort and space
12.	lighting – levels and controls	a degree of control over personal space is welcomed
13.	choice of seat arrangement	bays vs in-line seats, individual or group travel choices
14.	cleanliness	frequency and level of cleaning
15.	access for pushchairs, wheelchairs + bicycles	safe and accessible spaces for people and hardware

“Why are seats so hard and uncomfortable?”

customer research, female 45-54, long distance commuter, 2003

“Why can’t I get a decent cup of coffee and a healthy sandwich?”

customer research, male 55-64, long distance businessman, 2003

WSMR looks to return to original values for their new product

reasons for customer dissatisfaction		% of total respondents (2164) total expressing dissatisfaction 31%					
seating	25%	more seats / carriages	8%	more shoulder room	5%	improved support	2%
		more leg room	6%	improved comfort	4%		
expressions of dissatisfaction focus on the need for more carriages, room, lumbar support and comfort							
space	14%	cramped	4%	more luggage space	3%	more bicycle space	1%
		too crowded	4%	more pushchair space	2%		
expressions of dissatisfaction focus on the 'one seat for all sizes of people', confined spaces and poor access							
air / temp	5%	more heating	2%	improved ventilation	1%		
		improved air quality	2%				
tables	4%	more needed	2%	laptop charging points	1%		
		larger tables for working	1%				
toilets	4%	cleaner	3%	more of them	1%		
		improved hygiene	1%				
catering	5%	on all trains	2%	cheaper	1%		
		fresher food	1%				
a top 5 satisfaction grouping comprises:							
comfortable seat, numbers of seats, generous cabin space, good light levels, size of windows, seats with large tables cleanliness also ranks very highly. Cleaner, more welcoming WC's and generally cleaner saloons would be welcomed							

levels of customer service and the seat size and space is the main differentiation between the two classes of travel on these old trains

it leads us to the conclusion ...

values were much more customer focused than they are today

with a thirty year life expectancy a train lasts much longer than many other products

- how should we respond?
- what values should we pursue?
- which of these values are the most important?

customer expectation is beginning to move faster than ever before

customers should be able to use their travel time productively, the train should be able to change, to keep pace with their expectation

where are we going – what the customer really wants?



new trains should offer:

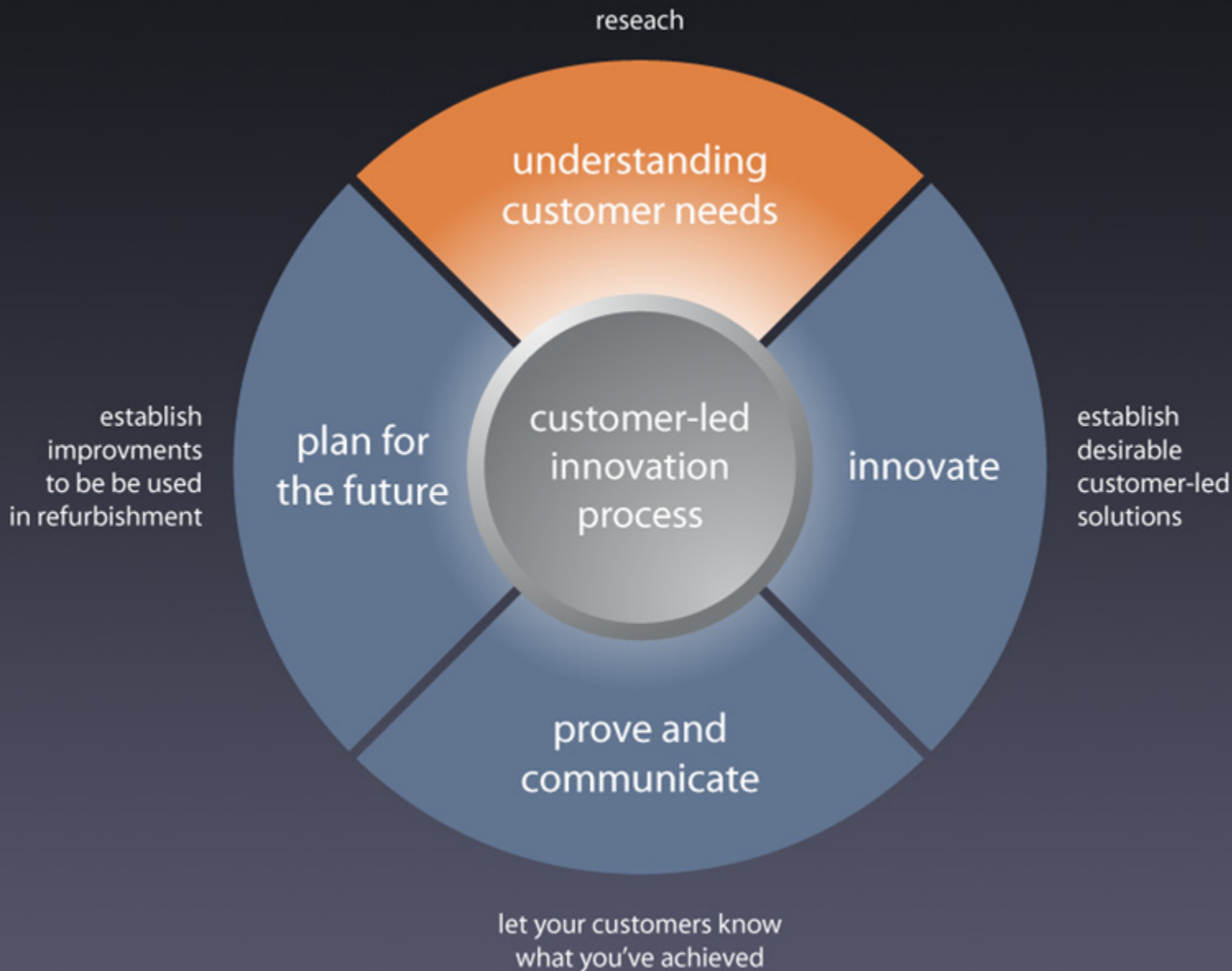
- Good basic benchmark qualities
- Comfortable seats, decent legroom and space
- Seats aligned with windows
- Natural lighting at all times of the day - new lighting technologies
- Amenities refined to suit the needs of the journey
- Spaces to work, socialising and for relaxation, for individuals or groups
- Half-life and major overhaul should be used to 'reposition' the trains
- Future proofing
- Partnerships between the major suppliers and the end-users

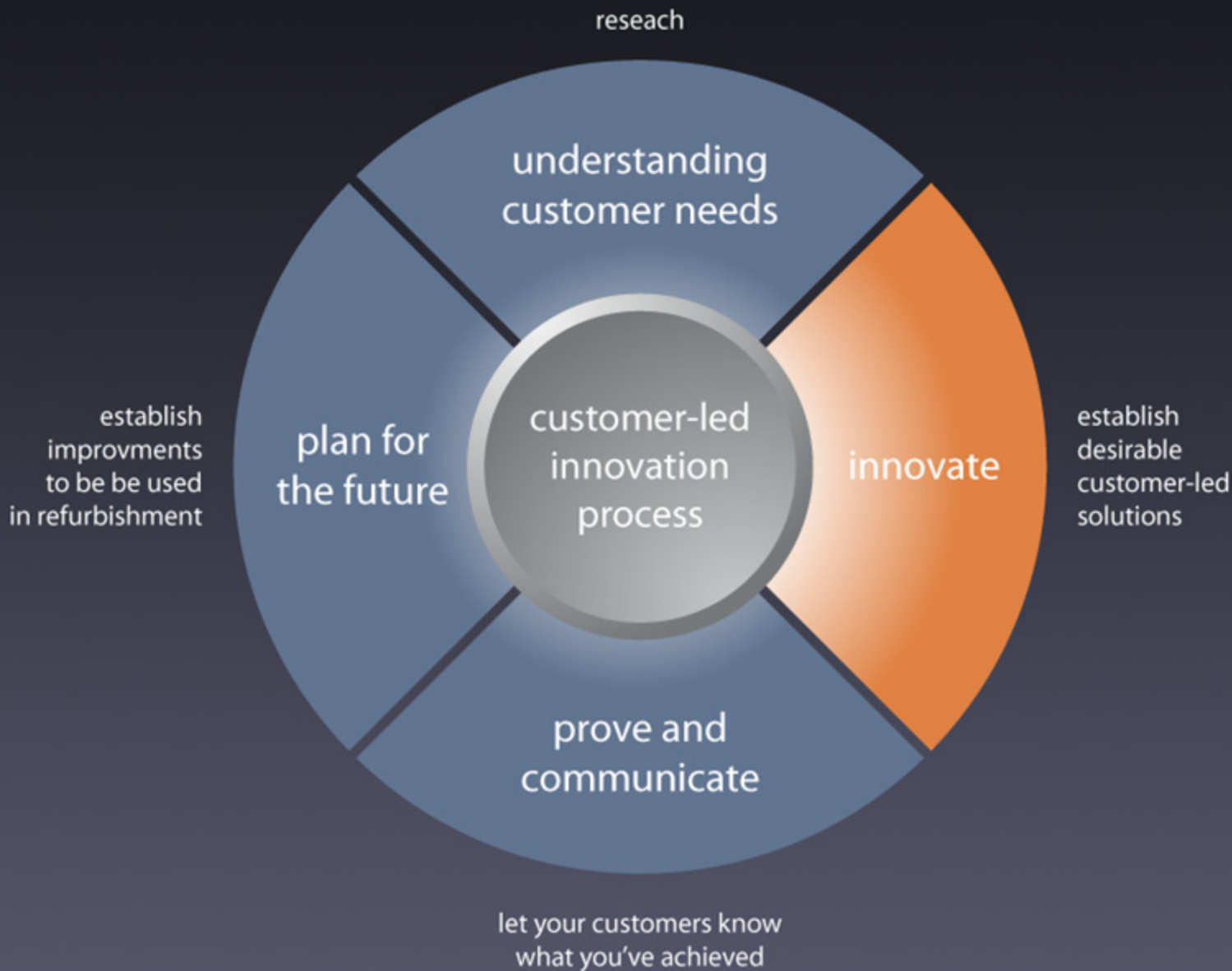
designers, train builders and major suppliers should work together to create the next generation products the marketplace will demand

future proofing should allow easy replacement, new components should meet customer's demands, for things we don't yet know about

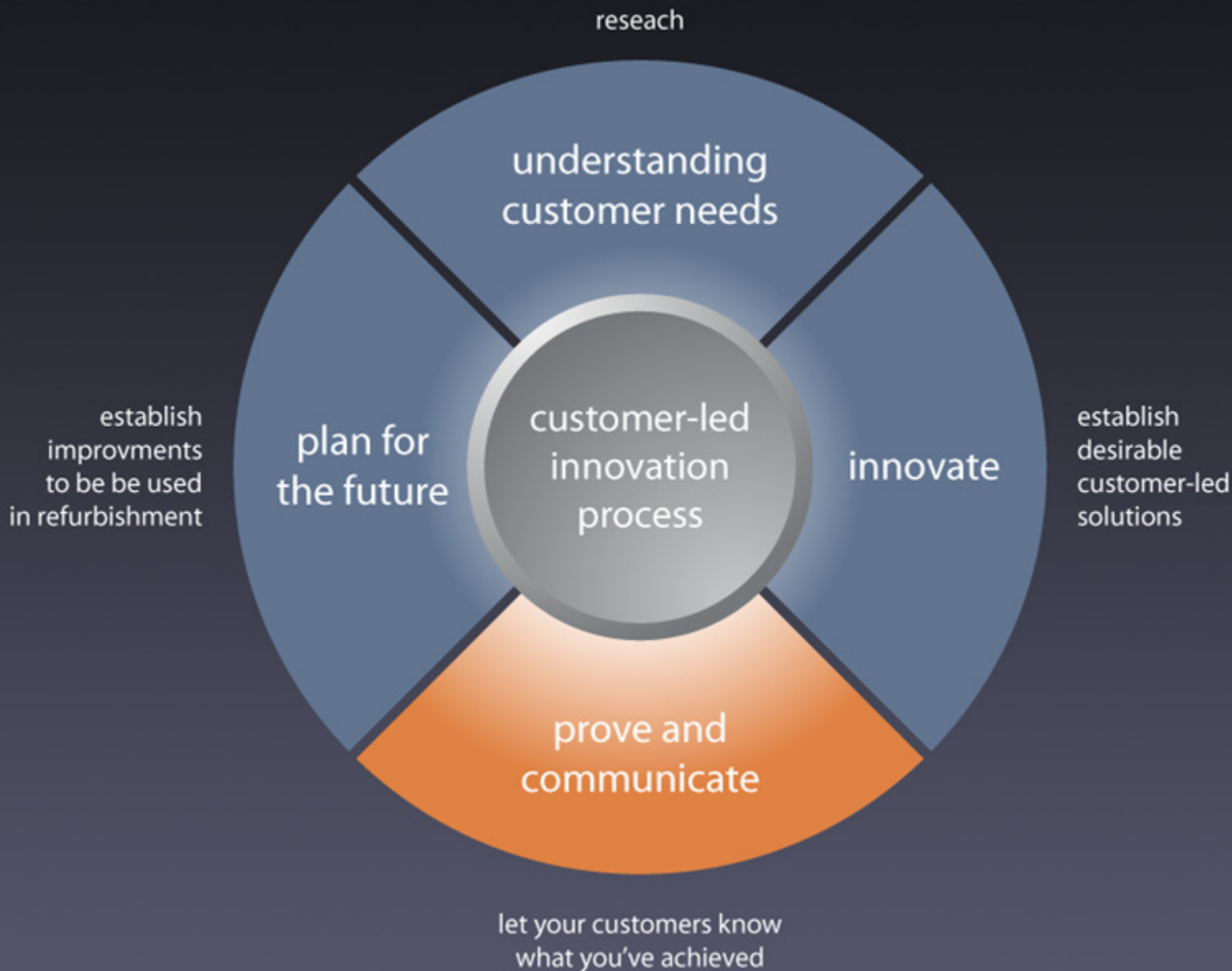
at the moment too many of the players are working in isolation, collaboration based on customer needs and changing expectation will be an essential part of long-term success

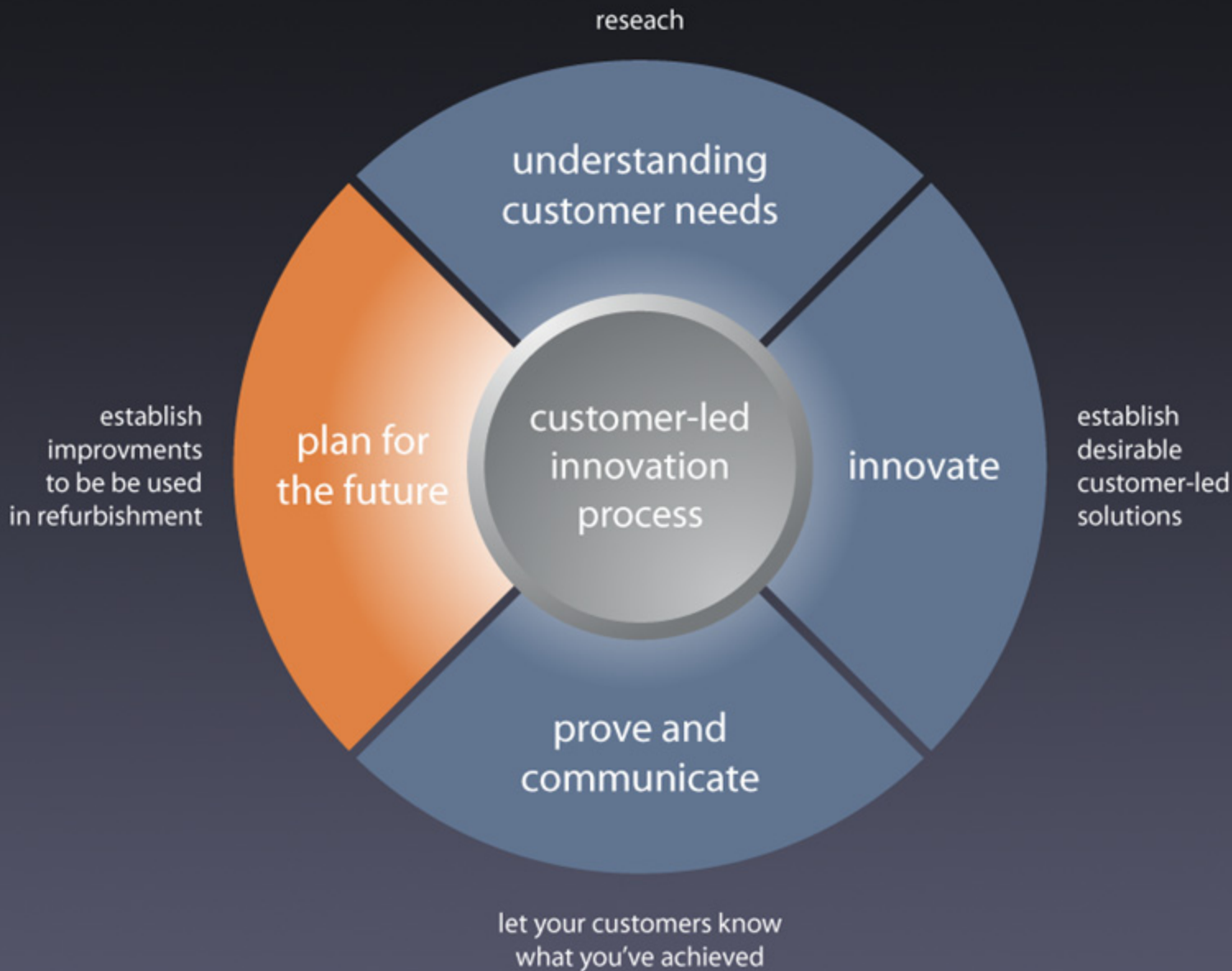
whilst cogniscent of cost, design must not be wholly driven by it





where are we going – what the customer really wants?





research

understanding customer needs

innovate

customer-led innovation process

prove and communicate

plan for the future

establish improvements to be used in refurbishment

establish desirable customer-led solutions

let your customers know what you've achieved

the only thing we can be sure about is customer expectation

it will change, and customers will always demand more

the only way to respond is to future-proof the train as much as possible

customer feedback on train travel does not make good reading:

- Expensive
- Dirty
- Over-crowded
- Confusing (with reference to tickets and pricing, in the UK particularly)

in summary, the industry is under-achieving and failing to offer

- Good comfortable travel environments
- Excellent customer service

how is this possible? how has it been allowed to reach this position?

train builders, train operators and customers have slightly different values

to respond positively, new trains should look to re-address core values, offering good, simple responses to their observations:

- Good seat space and appropriate luggage provision
- Spaces, which are easy to clean
- Materials which can offer significant improvement (i.e. nano-coatings)
- Robust and enduring materials, which retain their quality over time
- Easily upgraded components particularly amenities such as catering

future proofing will be an essential part of meeting changing demand

to be successful, next-generation trains will need common values

research, customer comments, observation and informed intelligence
leads us to a simple conclusion

'values must be customer driven'

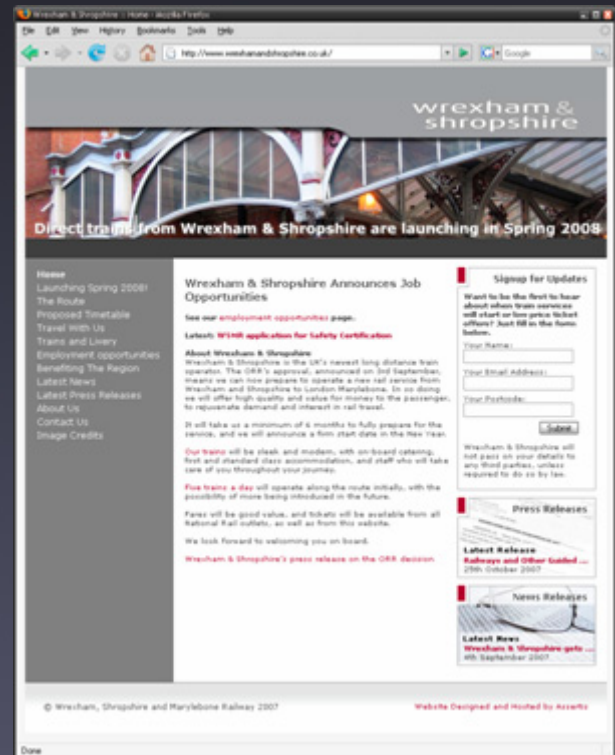
branding

UK customers dislike clever abstract concepts

these brands have no connection with fundamental values

Wrexham, Shropshire and Marylebone Railway sends a clear early message

values are built on this simple proposition

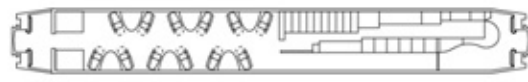


the following three slides illustrate a concept which introduces approx 60 additional seat to the train

the objective is to reduce loading density throughout the train, offering a higher quality travelling experience for intercity travellers



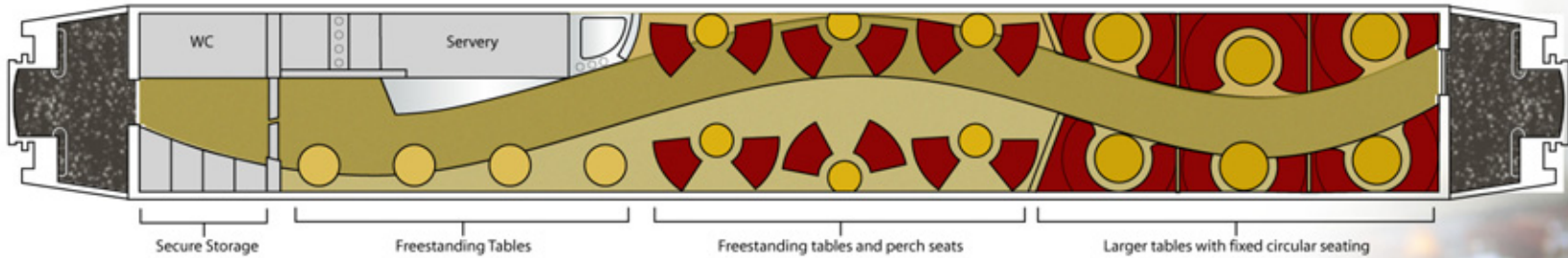
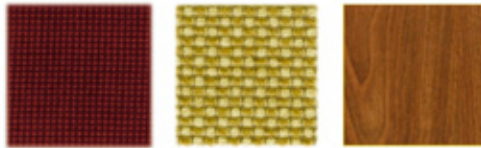
A. Converted Bistro (30 seats)



B. Refurbished Catering Car (24 seats max)



C. Converted Coffee - Shop (30 seats)



rich colours

MORNING : CONTINENTAL CAFE / BISTRO



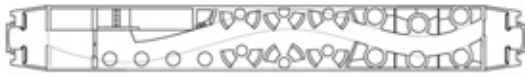
classic materials

EVENING : WINE BAR / ATRIUM

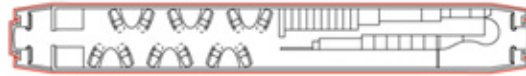


fine wine

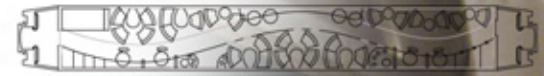




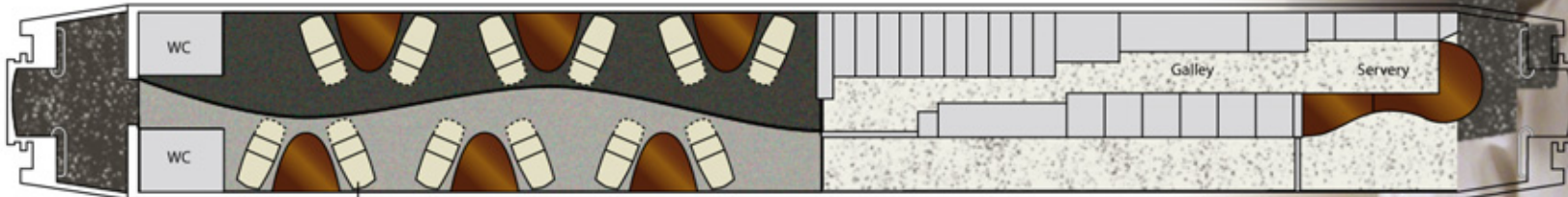
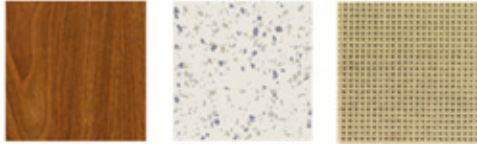
A. Converted Bistro (30 seats)



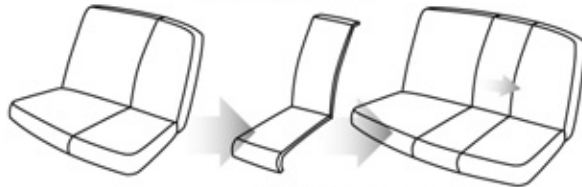
B. Refurbished Catering Car (24 seats max)



C. Converted Coffee Shop (30 seats)



Seat extends to hold x2 people with the addition of secondary cushion



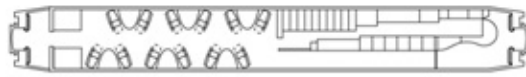
Creates more space off-peak for crew and passenger circulation

RESTAURANT: HIGH QUALITY FOOD AND AMBIENCE





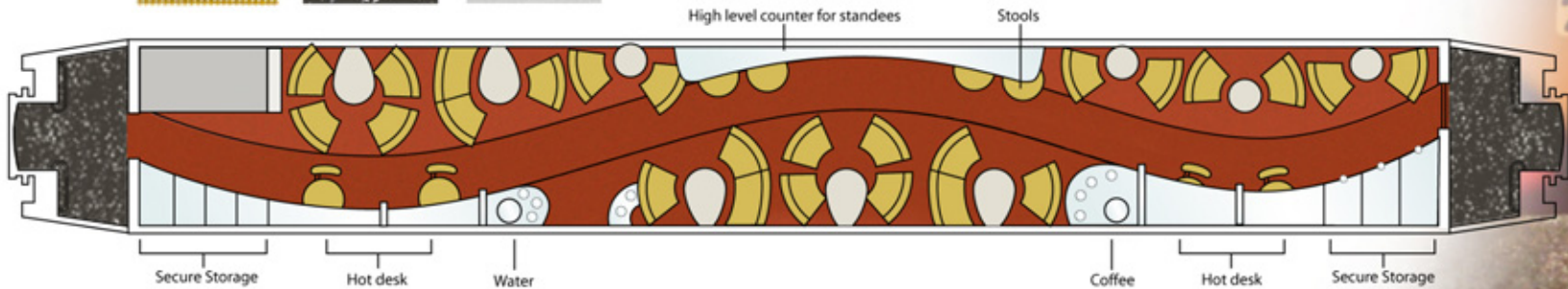
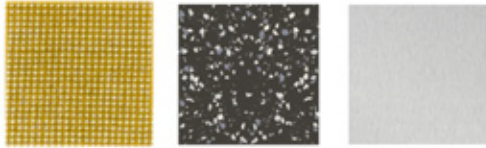
A. Converted Bistro (30 seats)



B. Refurbished Catering Car (24 seats max)



C. Converted Coffee Shop (30 seats)



MORNING : COFFEE REPUBLIC OR STARBUCKS



EVENING : PUB

good coffee



great beer



customers are customers, not passengers

their motivations have not changed in thirty years

we do not expect them to change in the next three decades either

- **Comfort**
- **Space**
- **Amenity**

All of the above are essential components to deliver

- **Excellent customer service**

a customer's journey experience is measured by very simple criteria

**their demands and expectation are not unrealistic, however,
their motivations are more emotional than quantifiable**

- Seat comfort
- Space in which to move and adapt to the needs of the journey
- An environment which is safe, secure, well informed and relaxed

**the seat and the seat space are the ultimate arbiters of travel
experience and are inherently linked**

new trains must deliver this 'connection'

the pursuit of extra seats in a carriage may make commercial sense
but is likely to sacrifice a great deal more in terms of service

customers are not alike, they come in all shapes and sizes and every one
of them is special. They are not a problem to be solved, or a commodity
to be packaged, customers are the lifeblood of your railway business

think of them as individuals and not as rows and rows of ticket sales

treat them well, listen to their demands,
put every effort into satisfying their expectation

new trains, realistic values

Next Generation Trains

Where are we going?

What customers really want

