

IAN HILL

General Manager Train Crewing

My introduction to the railways as a Civil Engineer was walking on the flyovers at half past seven in the morning with the guys that were doing their inspections, and that scared the living daylight out of me. There were trains everywhere!

I've been very fortunate to have had a variety of jobs. When I took over as General Manager – Train Crewing, I thought, "This should be easy. All you do is take a timetable and organise rosters and get the crew". But I was really surprised at the complexity of taking a timetable, creating the rosters and then actually doing it. In fact, for the first three months, I was terrified and after four years, I'm still learning the intricacies of the job and at the same time, trying to make changes to make it more effective and efficient and customer friendly.

There are some aspects of this job that I've been able to make impressions on because of my previous knowledge of speed signs and how they work. For example, if an engineering group misses out on replacing a speed sign, train drivers have to default to a lower speed. So, I'd go over a bit of track and say, "Well, something's not right here."

We've now got some ten or twenty speed signs that have gone up over the last month or two in places where drivers can now go faster than they used to be able to. These things actually help you support the train crew in providing them with the confidence that, "Hey, someone knows a little bit about what he's talking about in this area, therefore he might be able to help." It's all about thinking, "How can we help them? How can we minimise the opportunity for things to go wrong? Can we simplify the signalling or can we keep them away from those routes by re-timetabling them perhaps?" Those sorts of issues.



...THE OPERATING SIDE OF THE BUSINESS IS NOT AS THREATENING AS ONE MIGHT THINK, BUT IT'S VERY INTERESTING AND YOU CAN ACTUALLY USE SOME OF YOUR ENGINEERING SKILLS TO MAKE IT BETTER. IT CAN BE VERY REWARDING.