

NORTH WEST REGION

MERSEYSIDE & WARRINGTON GROUP

Transdev Blazefield: the road to amazing



The Group welcomed Alex Hornby, CEO, Transdev Blazefield, to Liverpool. He became CEO in 2015 and has since led the business with its fleet of 400 buses and 1,000-strong team forward through a period of refocusing and refreshing Blazefield, while embracing the maxim 'The road to amazing'.

Across the six depots in Lancashire and Yorkshire, he has made a point of leading the changes personally. When he joined the business, he wrote to every employee to explain where the business is going next. A monthly newsletter, *TransdevTalk*, is produced. Drivers are contacted through an app and they are kept to routes so that a rapport can be built with customers. This has also had the added benefit of reducing absenteeism and seeing patronage growth. New recruits are looked upon for their people skills and customer service.

Following investment in the Transdev team, other key brands have been refreshed to reflect the modern bus market – for example, buses on the 36 Ripon–Leeds route have been given a striking livery and plush seats, double-glazed windows and wi-fi, which improved customer satisfaction. Contactless payment has also been introduced.

Alex Hornby, CEO, Transdev Blazefield

UPCOMING EVENT

Bus Alliance - Working together for the public

10th April 2018

Merseytravel Offices, One Mann Island, Liverpool L69 3HN

The buses on the 36 Ripon-Leeds route have been given a luxury upgrade

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Brands vary from route to route. Coastliner and CityZAP both connecting Leeds and York, but the latter is marketed more towards the regular business user who needs to get between cities as fast as possible. To ensure this happens, the drivers all have satnavs that help determine which of the three registered routes will provide the more reliable journey. Coastliner has been relaunched with a new fleet, but geared more towards the discerning tourist, with tables on the top deck allowing for families to sit together and enjoy the view.

Alex Hornby reminded the Group that today there is less reason for people to travel when they can work from home or shop online. Technology has bought along new competitors such as Uber, which has revolutionised the taxi industry. The bus industry has to work harder to earn customer loyalty mile. Blazefield has looked at its competitors to find a gap in the market could be. Enter Vamooz, a crowdsourced bus solution that solves two problems: underused assets and overcrowding during the morning peak. The bus network in Harrogate wasn't geared to provide a door to door service for school children, leading to many kids using the 36 during peak periods. Transdev decided to approach parents to see if they would contribute towards a bus that would serve schools in the town. Two weeks later, over 70 parents had signed up. As interest rose, the base costs came down. Vamooz now offers day trips to one-off destinations, all of which are bookable through an app. There could be the potential for this method of operation to help connect rural communities and keep the likes of the Dales Bus running. A dedicated fleet also makes use of school buses that would otherwise be dormant until the next school day.

In addition, Harrogate will soon benefit from eight 100% electric buses costing £2.2 million.

Russell Oakes

Committee Member, Merseyside & Warrington Group ☹

