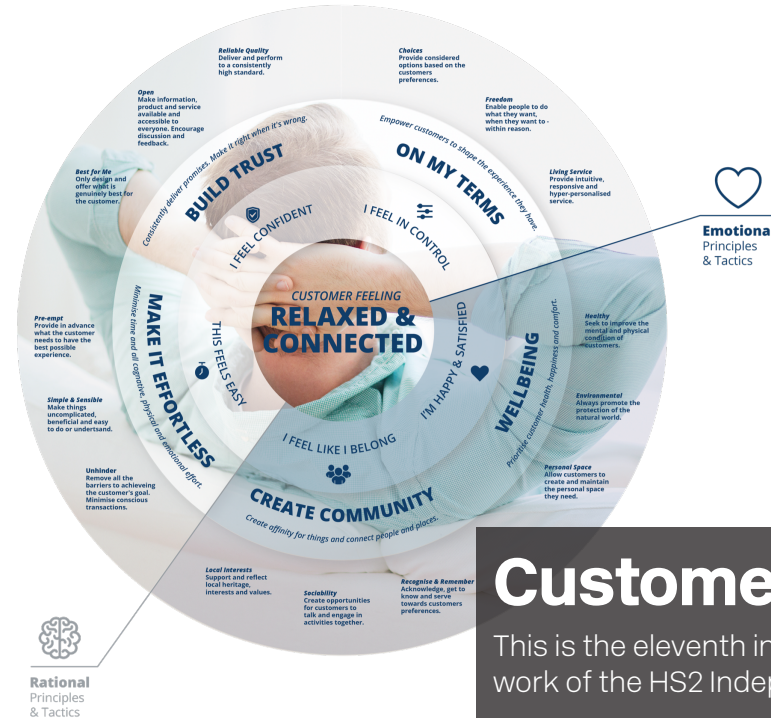


Case Study #11

HS2 INDEPENDENT DESIGN PANEL

Apart from the railway itself, the HS2 project also requires the design of new trains, stations and railway systems. These offer an important opportunity to make fundamental changes and improvements to the customer experience of travelling by train. The HS2 Independent Design Panel has supported HS2 Ltd in developing its Customer Experience Vision, a document that sets out the ambitions and the proposed customer experience approach that HS2 Ltd believes the new railway can deliver. The vision will be handed over to the West Coast Partner that will operate the route, to help them define, develop and deliver their vision as they bring the new railway into operation.

Process: HS2 will be operated by the West Coast Partner, a train operating company to run both the HS2 and West Coast Mainline routes. HS2 Ltd's Customer Experience Vision sets out a detailed plan to ensure that the high design quality required of the physical structures being constructed for HS2 are applied equally to the way the railway functions. Good design can ensure that the experience of using HS2 is as effective for customers as possible, whatever their needs. Additional Design Panel members with expertise in customer experience were recruited to provide specialist input, helping HS2 Ltd shape a vision that will ensure HS2 offers an industry leading customer experience.



2030 STRATEGIC RESPONSE

DESIGNING THE HS2 OFFER

To successfully respond to the strategic context in 2030, HS2 needs to:

Resolve a wide range of anxieties that currently define the rail travel experience for customers today.

Define a compelling customer experience that makes it the natural choice for high speed travel.

From an anxious way to travel

To a relaxing one that helps you make the most of your time

Customer Experience

This is the eleventh in a series of case studies about the work of the HS2 Independent Design Panel.

Project headlines

- HS2 Ltd has produced a HS2 Customer Experience Vision, setting out its ambitions for the experience of travelling on the HS2.
- The vision covers all aspects of using the service, from booking tickets and using the station to traveling on the trains, examining the designs and tools needed to enable this.
- The Design Panel is a strong advocate of the vision and urges others, including the Department for Transport, to help ensure its ambitions are brought to life.
- The HS2 Customer Experience Vision received an HS2 Independent Design Panel award in November 2018.

Panel comments

The panel congratulated HS2 Ltd in producing a document that represent positive and innovative work. It stressed the importance of customer experience forming a 'golden thread' running through all aspects of HS2 Ltd's work. It encouraged HS2 Ltd to develop the comprehensive design approach required to deliver its ambitions for a high quality customer experience. The panel supports HS2 Ltd in putting these ambitions into practice, and will continue to provide support to help ensure they are set out clearly at the start, and their importance is communicated to contractors, other HS2 Ltd teams, and beyond.

Some of the comments made by the panel, which have informed the Customer Experience Vision, are outlined below.

1. Customer Experience Vision

The vision document distils three years of research and analysis into a single briefing manual for the future train operator. It covers a broad range of subject areas, from industrial design and service design to commercial analysis, ethnographic research and future technologies. The Customer Experience Vision aims to drive change in the sector to create a high quality HS2 experience when it begins

operating in 2026. The Design Panel was impressed by the work of the HS2 Customer Experience team in producing the vision document, which it felt had a sharp and robust narrative, and warmly supports the Customer Experience Vision. Its principle advice was intended to ensure the work is not lost in transition to the West Coast Partner, and is fully implemented. To this end it recommended that HS2 Ltd continue to be involved in signing off the West Coast Partner's Customer Experience approach. It feels it is critical that HS2 Ltd maintains a role in championing the vision, and urged HS2 Ltd and the Department for Transport to integrate the valuable customer experience work with the West Coast Partner, through robust governance and structures.

2. Strengthening the vision

The panel provided advice during the development of the Customer Experience Vision intended to help strengthen it, and to ensure it gains traction in decision making. It recommended that HS2 Ltd explore opportunities to influence and gain leverage across the HS2 project and beyond, to ensure that the Customer Experience Vision goes beyond trains and stations. For example, the design of noise barriers along the route will have a significant influence on the experience of travelling on the railway, so contractors will need to be fully engaged in delivering HS2

Ltd's customer experience ambitions. The panel made the point that HS2 will need to deliver not only an exceptional level of basic service, but must also be both innovative and sector-changing in its customer experience offer, both on and off the train. The quality of staff delivering HS2's service will therefore prove crucial. It welcomed the simple tag line of 'relaxed and connected' to sum up the vision for the HS2 customer experience.

3. Understanding the customer

The panel supports the ambition and intent of the vision, but it highlighted the need to ensure that it remains realistic, including responding to the needs of an aging population and of increased numbers of people with obesity. The panel suggests that HS2 Ltd explores opportunities to segment customers beyond the standard categories of business, leisure and commuting. How and where people work is fundamentally changing, which could have a significant impact on train design and on tickets sales. HS2 will not be operational until 2026, making flexibility and future proofing essential to meeting the changing needs of customers. Embedding creative thinking now will help break down the 'binary' thinking which currently dominates the sector. The panel recommends HS2 Ltd further consider how its customer experience can be future proofed.