

Washroom Washroom helps put passenger communication back on track

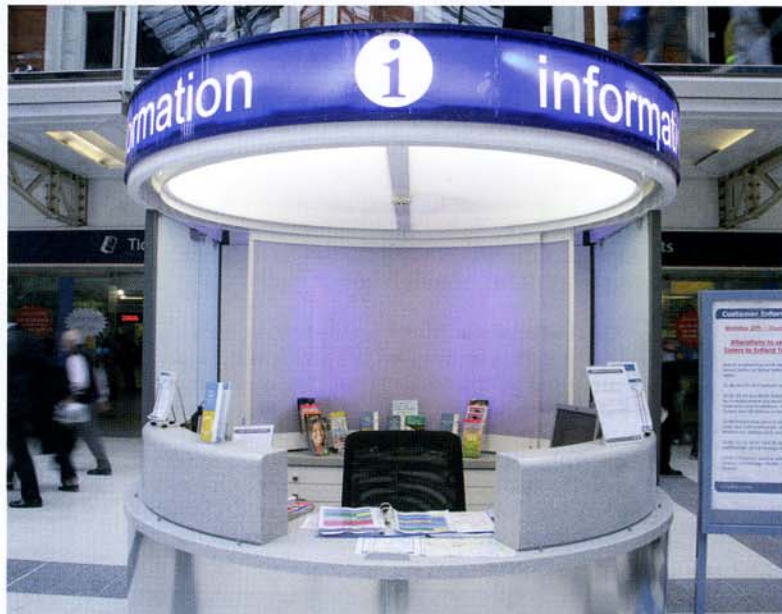
When it comes to rail travel, communicating information to passengers in a clear and efficient way is vitally important in facilitating a stress-free journey. With this in mind, Washroom Washroom's specialist joinery division has worked in conjunction with Network Rail to create the innovative information pod from which station staff can deal with various travel queries quickly and effectively.

Following a rigorous selection process, Washroom Washroom was engaged to develop the first of the new concept designs. The requirements included the need for design development, value engineering to meet emerging aesthetic and performance requirements and, not least, the ability to meet a timescale of just 12 weeks from design to manufacture and commissioning.

The concept designs incorporated materials that in some cases no longer complied with new class O fire regulations, which were strengthened following the Kings Cross disaster. This necessitated the need for new surface and sub-surface material choices, which could have potentially affected the critical timepath of the project.

Washroom's brief included cost engineering to establish the most appropriate materials for the project and the subsequent manufacture and installation of self-contained modular pods, which would be produced to meet the clients budget and performance requirements whilst achieving all the environmental and quality benefits offered by off-site manufacture.

The investment by Washroom in sophisticated CAD 3D modelling software, together with an experienced team of CAD designers and engineers, enabled a rapid turnaround of full size 3D drawing details for each component part, and also enabled the user to experience each moving part in action. The suitability of the components was first established and as these included a fire retardant acrylic only available



from the USA on an 8-week lead-time and a bespoke decorative metal also on an extended lead-time, order placing was undertaken at the outset. This was vital in ensuring that the 12-week critical timepath could be met without any delays caused by delivery difficulties or manufacturing problems.

The curved, demountable modular information pods were designed to be stand alone, back-to-wall or linked by the removal of the screenprinted 12mm toughened glass sidewalls and access doors. A key design feature was the requirement for each component part of the modular information pod to be capable of access through a standard size doorway prior to assembly in-situ.

Materials and finishes were re-engineered to provide a more robust solution than originally specified, including curved sliding security screens in class O rated acrylic and a top lip section that was upgraded from GRP to steel and aluminium. Back panelling originally specified on class O rated plywood and fire retardant laminate was upgraded to class O compact laminate with steel panels behind to achieve a fire barrier for additional protection. Curved front panels were redesigned in steel, clad

with decorative Rimex patterned steel and the framework was manufactured from powder coated mild steel.

The counter, incorporating a lowered centre section to comply with DDA regulations, was manufactured from GRP with a class O plywood base and steel underframe and included a Cat 5 data cabling connection. All other electrics were integrated into a 240V 'commando' style plug with connection to the mains via either a hidden pocket for back-to-wall configurations or a discreet cover for stand-alone pods.

To date, three information pods are in service at London Liverpool Street, Edinburgh and Birmingham New Street, three of the busiest stations in the UK. Initial indications suggest that the information pods perform exactly as intended, with minimal teething problems, providing a highly visible facility to passengers and offering improved service for both disabled and non-disabled customers due to the improved design of the customer interface.

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