



IRU Eurochallenge Award 2007

'PLUSBUS Britain's nation-wide integrated train & bus ticket.'
submission by Journey Solutions

Description of scheme

PLUSBUS is a nationally available integrated ticketing scheme for train and bus travel that's available to 227 towns and cities across Great Britain. It has been introduced over the last five years by Journey Solutions, a non-profit making partnership established and funded by the six main passenger transport Groups in Britain and their respective trade associations.

Britain is probably unique in Europe in having a nationally available integrated train and bus ticket that has been developed, implemented and is managed by private commercial transport operators (rather than by local, regional or national Government organisations). The whole initiative has been introduced and is now run without any form of local or central Government subsidy.

PLUSBUS is a discount price ticket for unlimited bus travel that is bought at the same time as a train ticket. The customer pays for their entire train and bus journey in one easy transaction. Bus travel can be at the start, the finish, or both ends of the train journey. For each town there is one zone that covers the whole urban area. With **PLUSBUS** the traveller can make as many bus journeys as they wish within the urban zone. **PLUSBUS** can be added to most train ticket types: single, day return, period return, and season tickets (for set periods, matching the most popular rail seasons sold: 7-days, 1-month, 3-months, a year).

PLUSBUS can be purchased at all train station ticket offices across Britain, by telephone through train company telesales agencies, from selected self-service ticket machines at stations and through all National Rail appointed travel agents.

PLUSBUS tickets are great value and can save customers money (compared with the cost of buying multiple bus tickets). A **PLUSBUS** ticket costs a specific headline price for each days bus travel, in addition to the train fare. Prices start from £1 (€1.47) a day, with 70% of **PLUSBUS** day tickets costing £2 (€2.94), or less. The **PLUSBUS** price is less than the equivalent cost of buying a similar unlimited bus travel ticket from the bus operator(s). This added discount is considered an important customer benefit of **PLUSBUS**, in order to entice rail users to use buses for their journey to/from the train station (and hopefully switch from using another less sustainable mode of transport). Standard Railcard discounts are also available, giving Disabled Persons, Young Persons, Families and Seniors one-third off the adult price.



Benefits of **PLUSBUS**

For train travellers, **PLUSBUS** provides the ability to purchase tickets for the entire train and bus journey in one easy transaction, at a station (or by telephone) anywhere in Britain, using cash, credit or debit card. The customer also benefits from an exclusive, discount price multi-journey bus travel ticket that is valid on all bus operators in each town. It reduces the hassle of travelling by train and bus, making total journeys “door-to-door” by public transport more attractive and easier. **PLUSBUS** attracts more journeys by public transport which is more sustainable (than car travel), thereby also helping to reduce the twin evils of road congestion and car accident casualty rates.

For train operators **PLUSBUS** offers a way of encouraging their customers to travel to/from the station by bus (rather than by car) and hence reduce the worsening amount of traffic around stations and increasing pressure on car parking capacity at train stations.

For bus operators, **PLUSBUS** offers a low-cost yet effective way of enticing a proportion of the growing number of people travelling by train in Britain to try the bus for their journey to/from the train station.

How it is promoted

The core target market for the product is existing train travellers, particularly the young on a budget (students and those in the early years of work), commuters and leisure travellers (particularly single travellers and couples without children). **PLUSBUS** is promoted to these customers through two main channels:

- a). by the train operating companies themselves, and
- b). by **PLUSBUS** national campaign activity organised by Journey Solutions.

www.plusbus.info promotes the product, giving travellers everything they need to know (how it works, what it costs, where it's valid and the participating bus operators in each town that accept the ticket). Detailed colour zone maps for all **PLUSBUS** served destinations are available on the site as downloadable PDF's. These show the boundary of each zone, list the main places/suburbs within each town served by participating bus services and also show locations of Hospitals, University/college campuses and main leisure/tourist attractions.

All train operators (and National Rail Enquiries) include information about **PLUSBUS** on their own websites. Many train companies also promote **PLUSBUS** in customer communications literature (e.g. timetables, ticketing leaflets, leisure guides and onboard customer magazines).

In January this year Tom Harris MP (Junior Transport Minister) officially launched the first-ever national promotional campaign for **PLUSBUS**. 750,000 promotional leaflets were distributed to nearly 1,000 train stations across Britain. These were supported by over 500 promotional posters displayed at train stations, 5,000 posters displayed inside buses across Britain and much stronger website presence.



Partners

PLUSBUS has been designed, managed and funded by Journey Solutions, a partnership formed in 1999 to enable the public transport industry to deliver on its commitment of improving transport integration - in particular making combined train and bus travel easier, more convenient and better value for customers. Journey Solutions partners are: Arriva, Blazefield/Transdev; First; Go-Ahead; National Express Group, Stagecoach, the Association of Train Operating Companies and the Confederation of Passenger Transport. Each organisation contributes a set amount each year towards the cost of running Journey Solutions, which includes the promotion and administration of **PLUSBUS**.

Journey Solutions is responsible for bringing together partners to share best-practice and to develop the product strategy and national product standards. It works very closely with the Association of Train Operating Companies, who provide additional funding, some marketing and retail expertise and the Rail Settlement Plan revenue apportionment system.

Information & connections

Pre-journey information is important as it reassures the passenger that they can make their entire journey by train and bus with confidence. A number of sources provide this function, including the **PLUSBUS** website, 'traveline (0871 200 22 33)' and National Rail Enquiries (08457 48 49 50) telephone enquiry services. Journey Solutions produces onward travel '**Continuing your journey around town with PLUSBUS**' information posters displayed at 60 mainline train stations across Britain to help travellers successfully complete the last leg of their journey. These show the **PLUSBUS** zone map specific for the town, lists participating bus operators and has a gazetteer of destinations within the zone, local bus route numbers and shows stop locations nearest to the train station.

Customer research & feedback

Journey Solutions also hosts regular Advisory Panel meetings where bus and rail customer groups (e.g. Bus Users UK, Passenger Focus, London Travelwatch), along with a wide range of other stakeholders, such as representatives from the Department for Transport, Association of Transport Coordinating Officers, Commission for Integrated Transport, Passenger Transport Executive Group and Transport 2000 attend. Feedback from these meetings is valuable in guiding future policy and product development.

Staff training

Each year Journey Solutions issues driver information posters (showing a map of the travel zone and sample rail ticket types valid with '**+BUS**') to all participating bus operators for each scheme. Three times a year ATOC issues to all TOC retail staff a National Rail fares manual specifically dedicated to integrated ticketing, including PLUSBUS. ATOC also regularly issue articles and ticketing advice to retail staff through their 'Newsrail Express' magazine. ATOC have also produced a retail staff training DVD, called 'Just the Ticket 2' which encourages and guides staff through practice sessions for retailing tickets, including **PLUSBUS**.



Targets & achievements*

One of Journey Solutions core targets is that **PLUSBUS** should be available for all rail-served towns and cities in Britain with a population of 80,000 and more. The ticket is now available to 227 towns and cities across England, Scotland and Wales. There remain only two towns of this size yet to gain **PLUSBUS** – it is expected that these will join the scheme by January 2008.

In the rail financial year 2006-2007 a total of 77,180 **PLUSBUS** tickets were sold. This was a 55% increase on the previous years' figure of 48,800 tickets. Some well-established schemes have annual growth rates for ticket issues of well over 150%. In recent reporting periods, following the marketing campaign, year-on-year increases in ticket issues are running at 100% above.

Future plans

Journey Solutions has a ten-point action plan to continue the development of **PLUSBUS**, including roll-out the product to more, smaller rail-served towns and the further expansion of season ticket availability. It is also working with ATOC and the National Rail website to establish online sale of the product.

PLUSBUS is an innovative and sustainable public transport ticketing product that aims to encourage more train travellers to make their entire “door-to-door” journey by public transport. It simplifies ticketing and offerings a one-stop shop for the customer, with the added benefit of discount price bus travel.

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Submission attachments:

1. promotional leaflet;
2. promotional poster - at stations;
3. promotional poster - on buses;
4. website page for a destination;
5. town zone map;
6. station-specific information poster ‘Continuing your journey around town’;
7. bus driver information poster;
8. list of all rail-served towns & cities covered by **PLUSBUS**;
9. graph showing **PLUSBUS** ticket issues by period over last three years.

NOTE:

* = for reasons of commercial confidentiality, it is not possible to provide revenue or profit figures for **PLUSBUS** sales, so all information is presented by volume of tickets issued.