

PurpleSpace

Out of Office

CASE STUDY TWO:
NETWORK RAIL
CanDo NETWORK

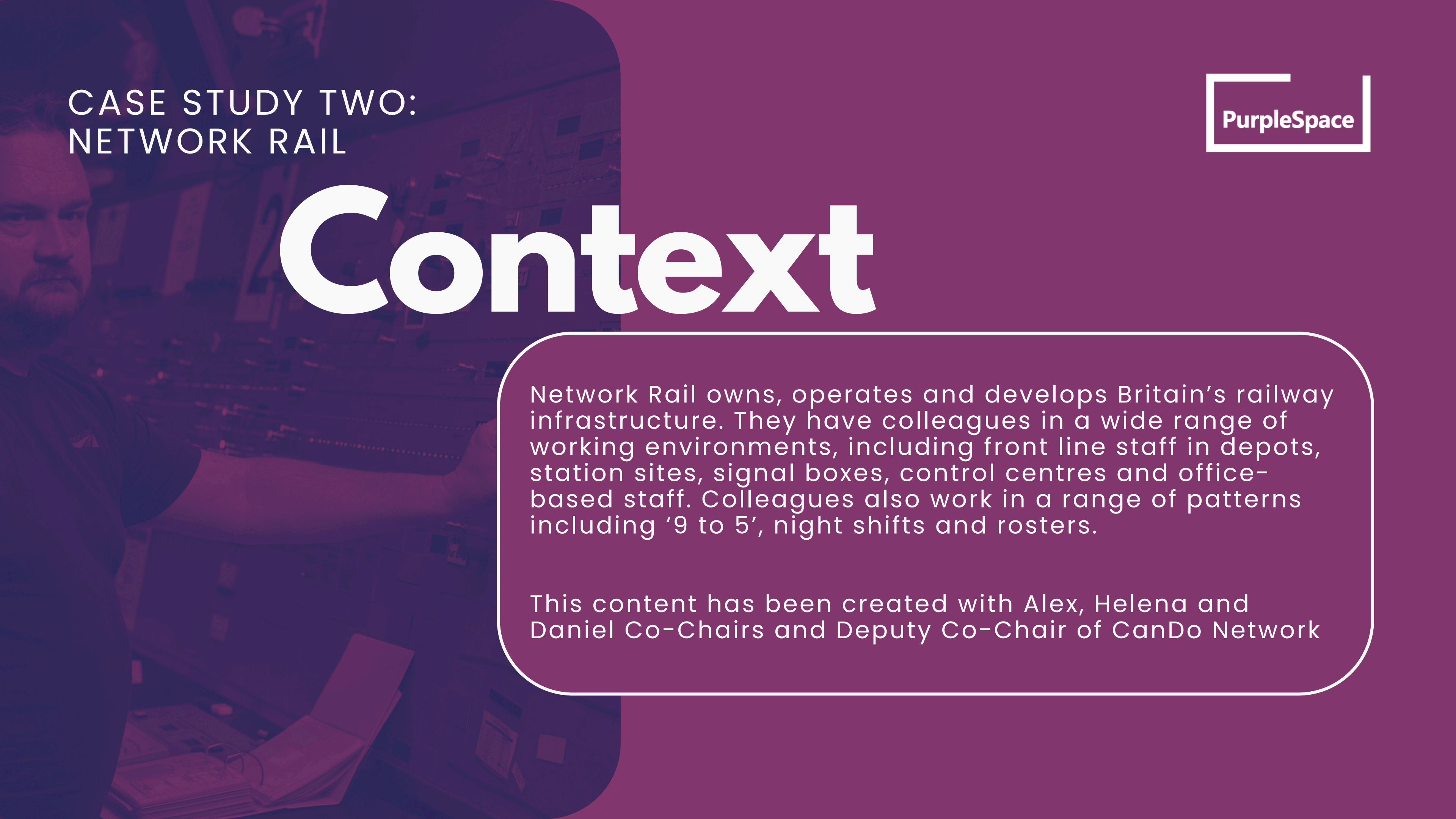


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Context

Network Rail owns, operates and develops Britain's railway infrastructure. They have colleagues in a wide range of working environments, including front line staff in depots, station sites, signal boxes, control centres and office-based staff. Colleagues also work in a range of patterns including '9 to 5', night shifts and rosters.

This content has been created with Alex, Helena and Daniel Co-Chairs and Deputy Co-Chair of CanDo Network

Challenges

Both the highly varied working environments and working hours of colleagues, leads to a range of challenges with network engagement, including:

- **Operational impact:** colleagues who are in front line roles need permission to be released from their operational duties, in order to attend a network meeting, activity or event
- **Access to tech:** not all colleagues will have work emails or devices, so cannot access information that is only distributed in that format (such as information on upcoming events or activities)
- **Access to platforms:** some resources and platforms used to share information, (e.g. SharePoint), are not accessible from personal devices, to maintain corporate security.
- **Lack of confidence:** there may be fear, amongst staff and managers, of talking about or sharing that they have a disability, in case assumptions are made about the impact on their work.



Solutions

“Work to reach people you don’t normally connect with. It’s important to listen to members and look at options to reach those voices that are not heard, to find out what they need.”

Daniel, Deputy Chair of CanDo, Network Rail.

Use a wide range of communication channels. CanDo uses the following:

- **NewZapp** (a communication platform) to create and distribute newsletters. The platform tracks engagement by measuring time spent on pages, so this gives usage data for the network. It is signposted via email but doesn't require a work email; colleagues can use any email address to sign up
- **Internal social media channel**, which they use for posting network updates and engaging with network members, who can also post
- **Information leaflets and merchandise** to share CanDo sign-up information and resources that have practical use, such as magnetic bookmark for limited dexterity with QR code and signposting links.
- **Be led by the needs or interests of network members.** CanDo host sessions every two weeks, alternating between any topic members need support with, known as 'CanDo CanTalk' and fixed topics, based on members votes, known as 'CanDo Let's Talk...' This is a confidential safe space for members to discuss disability or mental health topics, which are held online but are not recorded, to protect confidentiality. Colleagues can connect on Teams or dial in on a phone
- **SharePoint site**, which holds event recordings, information documents and resources (known access limitations working with IT and security to resolve)

Find opportunities for face-to-face interaction

- CanDo is developing a 'frontline strategy'. This includes in person briefings to share what CanDo is, to signpost to upcoming events and share content. CanDo are testing this out in a small area to trial before rolling out across the regions, this includes producing video content that can be linked into safety days to engage with frontline employees.
- They also had a conference to celebrate 10 years of the network, which had both online and in-person participation, to widen accessibility. The event included keynote speakers and was themed around 'confident conversations', with a six-month strategy developed based on the lessons learned from colleagues.

Successes

Sharing disabled employee feedback with Senior Leaders as Allies

CanDo presented at Network Rail Board, to discuss the challenges disabled people face at work and shared personal experiences. We received 'You Said, I Listened' pledges from senior leadership for actions based on direct feedback from members.

Disability Confidence Week and #PositivelyPurple

Disability Confidence Week is CanDo's focus week for Disability Pride Month to avoid school holidays conflict. These key campaigns are celebrated with numerous events to engage and raise awareness. Additionally, awareness days like 'Wellbeing Wednesday' and Neurodiversity Celebration Week are also highlighted with events across the country. Online events are recorded and available on SharePoint for members to access at their convenience.

Best practices



Executive Sponsorship and network leadership: CanDo has a leadership team of 20–30 volunteer leaders, with an executive sponsor. This framework creates broad involvement and facilitates members stepping forward as leaders who are eager and capable of making a difference now.

Listening to members: CanDo stays grounded by the engagement of their members, by listening to what members need to ensure that activities are meaningful and not just a "nice to have."

Your Top Tips

“Go back to basics and reassess why you are doing this; what do you want to get out of this? Use both qualitative and quantitative data to understand the needs of your members and effectiveness of the network.”

Alex, Co-Chair of CanDo, Network Rail

“Surround yourself with people who make positive impact for the network; when you’ve got the right people doing the right things and you’re listening to members, you keep sight of what’s important and maintain your authenticity as a network.”

Helena, Co-Chair of CanDo, Network Rail

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