

**Organisational Culture:**

**Are the Station Managers On The DART The Key Component to Implementing and Managing Culture in This Business Unit Of Irish Rail?**

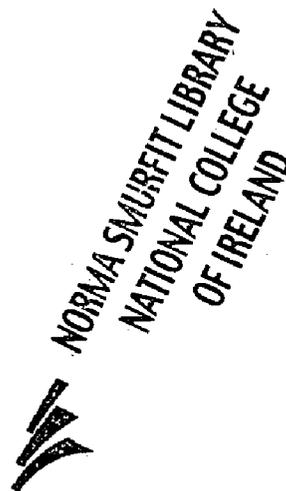
By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for a MA in Human Resource Management.

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**Authorship Declaration:**

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of MA in Human Resource Management is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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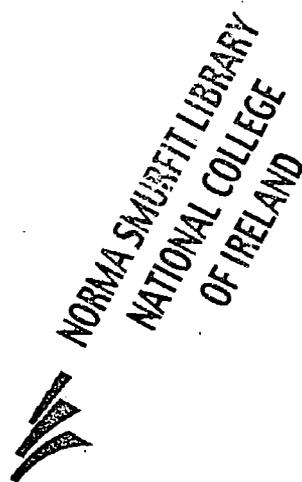
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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the concept of Culture on a key business unit of Iarnrod Eireann. We follow the development of the concept of Culture in the literature review and bring it forward to more modern thinking that sees it as more than just an inner organisational concern. The primary research is drawn from a number of diverse individuals who were willing to share their views of culture and its implementation. They assisted in the analysis of what was right and wrong about the culture in DART. The results of the thesis highlight many issues such as understanding of the concept of culture and desire to implement it properly but many obstacles exist such staff resistance and lack of skills in certain aspects of management. The conclusion from the research is that while the knowledge and desire does exist in the business to improve the culture for both staff and management, the skill sets for all managers will have to be developed to achieve this objective successfully.

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My wife, who spent many lonely times at weekends and evenings as I struggled to produce a document of meaning and value.

## **Preface.**

I have chosen this research topic for a number of reasons. For me Culture has high significance as I believe for Iarnród Eireann (IE) it is the key that will unlock the recipe for success. For others it may demonstrate the need to look into their own culture and decide if action is needed.

Throughout my academic career 'Culture' has had a resounding meaning, a constant influence on how I understood the whole area of Human Resource Management. When it came to writing this thesis it made perfect sense that I should concentrate on culture.

In selecting the DART business unit of Iarnród Eireann (IE) to base this on, that came about from my temporary appointment as Manager Suburban\* in November 2003. Taking on this challenge for one of the busiest and politically sensitive business units in IE, I quickly had to come to terms with the problems it faced. The most striking problem was in relation to people. The poor performers but also dedicated people that have remained committed for their entire working lives to the company. We didn't seem to be getting it right. Therefore I could see a dramatic effect on our employee's performance, attitudes and conduct. In short our culture was working against us.

I realised that a certain group of people in the DART business were key in developing our culture. The Station Managers (SMs), these six people controlled approximately 75% of the staff in the business unit. I wanted to see if they had an understanding of the importance of culture and had they the skills necessary to identify the key issues around culture and manage it properly. So in my mind it gelled to write this paper as I actively began to tackle the culture issues in the business as its acting head.

\*(This position is ultimately responsible for the whole business unit)

## **Introduction**

DART is a business unit of Iarnrod Éireann (IE). While the entire company has 5,500 employees, DART accounts for 400 of these. Established in 1984 with the electrification of the line from Bray to Howth the unit has seen expansion in the last number of years with electrification now running through to Greystones on the southside and a northside extension from Howth Junction to Malahide.

The DART vehicles are stored in Bray and Fairview. The Chief Mechanical Engineering (CME) section is responsible for their maintenance and all this work is done in Fairview. Today's requirement needs 102 DART units daily to operate the current timetable.

There are many different grades and type of work within the DART. Drivers, station staff, booking office staff, clerical staff maintenance staff, supervisors station managers to senior management.

In 2002 DART had 24.1 million passenger journeys for the year an all time record for the business. With the National Development plan and the European union, investment is planned to increase the capacity of DART trains and its stations to accommodate even more customers. In addition to this the Strategic Rail Authority had made proposals for rail services that will act a blue print for not only DART but rail services in general across the country (Annual Report 2002).

The Dart has recently completed a change process for all grades. This has seen improvements in work practices and conditions of employment designed to deal with the structural deficits low basic pay and long working hours. This has also made the business compliant with the EU directive and domestic statute on working time.

The company has been suffering since 2002 with serious financial problems. It recorded a loss in 2002 of €22.5 million (Annual Report 2002), these losses were generally associated with:

- The cost of changed work practices under the Change Management Programme.

- The expansion and quality of rail passenger services.
- The extensive investment programme to renew rolling stock and infrastructure.
- Erosion of the competitiveness of the Rail Freight business.
- Significant investment in Safety, Project Management, Financial and Human Resources systems and controls.
- Continued erosion in real fare levels on passenger rail businesses.
- Increases in real costs of purchasing materials and fuel.

Estimated losses for 2003 were even worse if the organisation failed to control its costs and make savings. The dramatic effect of this financial crisis had an immediate cultural implication for DART as a business unit. We had to see if we had the resilience to overcome the crisis and maintain a service to our customers. We had to

My research objectives then centered on:

- (a) Did our Station Managers understand the cultural implications of the business unit?
- (b) Were they equipped with the knowledge and desire to improve the culture of the business unit?
- (c) Could they be the catalyst to organisational and cultural transformation that the business unit needed?
- (d) Was there agreement between the Station Managers and the senior managers in DART in relation to the problems and solutions?

In the following sections you will discover with me the answers to these questions. We begin by having a detailed look at the literature surrounding the topic. This traces the history through to modern day thinking on Culture.

The next chapter details my methodology, why I chose the qualitative approach. What I used for secondary research. Why I interviewed certain people and I introduce the reader to the Station Manager's job by detailing some statistics on them along with their roles and responsibilities.

Then the results of these interviews are set out. This is quite a detailed section and gives an honest and open account of the way the management of the DART see the situation in relation to the culture of DART.

In the analysis chapter we look at what has come from the results and expand a little on what may lie behind the results.

The last two chapters will draw conclusions make recommendations on the results for senior managers in the DART, the station Managers themselves and indeed top management of IE.

**Chapter 1**  
**Literature Review.**

## Literature Review

### Defining Culture

Krober and Kluckhohn (1952) have studied well over 100 definitions and offer this:

*'Culture consists in patterns ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values'.*

Hofstede (1981) defined it as:

*....the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values.*

These definitions relate to culture on the grand scale a more organisational-based definition is offered by Drennan (1992);

*'Culture is how things are done around here. It is what is typical of the organisation, the habits, the prevailing attitudes, and the grown up pattern of accepted and expected behaviours'.*

Collectively these definitions imply that culture is an objective entity which can be identified and which delineated one human grouping from another. It becomes clear that culture has cognitive, affective and behavioral characteristics. However this tends to give the impression that cultures are easily identifiable and generally they are not. This was captured by Schein (1992) in his definition of culture:

*'The deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously and define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organisation's view of itself and its environment'.*

The fact that these elements of culture operate 'unconsciously' as Schein says reinforces the metaphor of the 'iceberg'. What is also implicit in the use of this metaphor and these definitions is that culture is deep seated and will be difficult to change. We will discuss culture and change later.

## **Characteristics of Organisational Culture**

There are varied ways to describe organisational culture. Writers such as Brown (1995) and Robbins (2001) list what are seen as the characteristics of culture, Brown lists:

- Artifacts.
- Language.
- Behaviour patterns.
- Norms of behaviour.
- Heroes.
- Symbols and symbolic action.
- Beliefs, values and attitudes.
- Ethical codes.
- Basic assumptions.
- History.

Robbin lists:

- Innovation and risk taking.
- Attention to detail.
- Outcome orientation.
- People orientation.
- Team orientation.
- Aggression.
- Stability.

It is left to those attempting to describe a culture to frame their descriptions in terms of these characteristics. However models such as Brown and Robbins do not make an attempt to link one culture characteristic with another.

Writers such as Hofstede (1990) and Schein (1992) argue that cultural characteristics are linked through a hierarchy of 'levels'. Hofstede states that culture manifests itself at the deepest level through people's values and at the shallowest level in terms of the things, which symbolise those values. Schein's model suggests three levels from the shallowest to the deepest:

- The artifacts level.
- Espoused values.
- Basic underlying assumptions.

Another model forwarded by Dyer (1985) adds a fourth level to Schein's model in the form of *tacit assumptions*.

The **objectivist view** of culture espoused by writers such as Alveeson (1993), Bate (1996), and Brown (1995) treat culture as a critical variable which forms a partial explanation for differences in organisational operations, this can also be termed as the 'functional view of culture'. Additionally culture can be described in terms of behavioral or cognitive characteristics. This places culture along side structure, technology, and the environment as one of the variables that influence organisational life and performance (Brown 1995). This links in with the managerial view of culture discussed above and sees culture as something the company *has* and implies that changing culture is not difficult given the correct way of going about it.

The **interpretive view** links with the social science view and sees culture as something the company *is*. Writers like Morgan (1986), Pacanowsky (1982) echo this. They describe organisations as socially constructed realities that are constructed as much in the hearts and minds of the people working in the organisation as the structures surrounding them. To describe culture through this lense takes an examination of the routine as well as the more public signs and ceremonies associated with organisational leaders. It means understanding culture as a recurrence not an occurrence.

Another model that ties culture with everything that happens in an organisation is Johnson and Scholes's 'cultural web'.

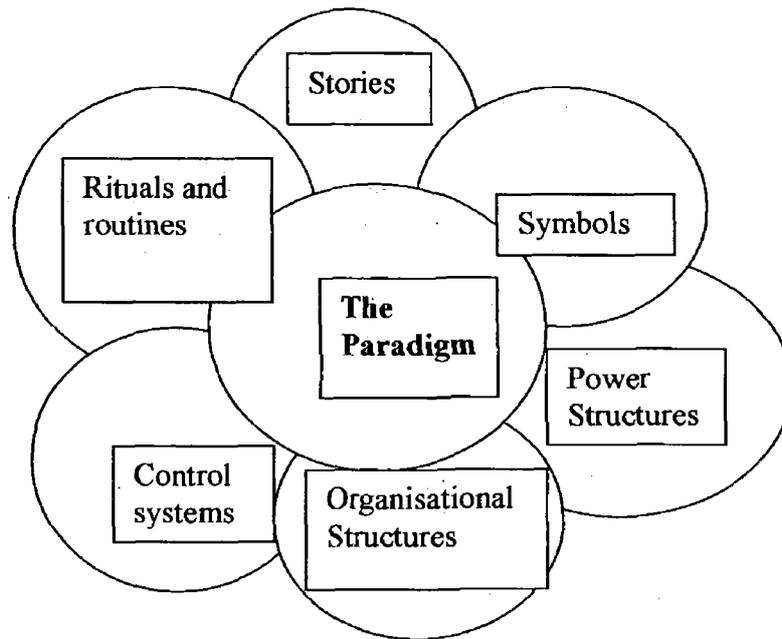


Fig 1

The cultural web is all encompassing in the organisational elements, which it includes. The link between the beliefs and assumptions making up the paradigm and other aspects of organisational functions was exemplified in the statement by Johnson and Scholes (1993):

*'It would be a mistake to conceive of a paradigm as merely a set of beliefs and assumptions removed from organisational action. They lie in a cultural web which bonds them to the day-to-day action of organisational life'.*

Johnson and Scholes do not go as far as Morgan in equating culture to the organisation but they do not completely objectify culture as separate from other aspects of organisational life.

A **structural view** of culture was forwarded by Handy (1993). Handy refers to culture as atmosphere, ways of doing things, levels of energy and levels of individual freedom- or collectively the 'sets of values and norms and beliefs-reflected in different

structures and systems. On the basis of studies conducted by Harrison (1972) Handy determined that there were four organisational culture types:

1. **The power culture-**, a single person or group dominates. Decision-making is centralised, this culture is seen as political s decisions are taken on the basis of influence rather than logical rational process. Power is held by virtue of personal charisma of control of resources.
2. **The role culture-**, these work by logic and rationality. Activity is controlled by rules and regulations. Emphasis is on defined roles and occupants are expected to fulfill these but not overstep them. Role culture flourishes in a stable environment.
3. **The task Culture-**, the dominant concept in a task culture is project work associated with matrix-type structures. Task culture is not concerned with personal power or hierarchy, but with marshalling the required resources to complete work efficiently and effectively. Decision-making is devolved to the group to enhance flexibility. This culture flourishes where creativity and innovation are desirable.
4. **The person culture-**, this culture exists to serve the needs of its members. These have minimal structures and it does not have an overarching objective found in more conventional structured organisations.

Pheysey (1993) built on Handy's work and developed categorisations similar to Handy i.e. role, power, support and achievement cultures, but she went further and linked her four types to control systems, employee motivation, leadership style and organisational development as well as organisational structure.

**Strong and Weak** cultures offer yet another way of describing culture and its impact on organisational life. 'Organisational cultures differ markedly in terms of their strengths' (Brown 1995). A Strong culture implies a commonly understood perspective on how organisational life should happen, with most organisational members subscribing to it. Weak cultures imply no dominant pervasive culture but an organisation made up of many different cultures, some of which will be in conflict with each other.

Payne (1990) suggested that the strength of cultures could be measured by analysing the degree to which the culture is *shared* by members and by the *intensity* with which members believe in it. The greater the intensity the more it pervades the levels in the organisation and it then influences not only people's attitudes but also their basic values, assumptions and beliefs.

The importance of the strength or weakness of culture is significant when viewed through looking at the functions it performs for the organisation. Brown (1995) suggests that culture performs the following functions at organisational level:

- **Conflict resolution-** the organisation can be characterised by disagreement and conflict. Knowing 'how things are done around here' can help avoid conflict. Culture can be a force of integration and consensus.
- **Co-ordination and control-** Strongly held values and beliefs will ensure that all will work together.
- **Reduction of uncertainty-** for new members the faster they learn the norms the more confident they will become. This has the advantage of reducing the complexity of the organisational world so that actions can be taken that are in tune with organisational rationalities as seen by the majority of organisational members.
- **Motivation-** a culture can offer members an identification with their work which can foster loyalty and assist their belief that they are valued, which will add to their motivation.
- **Competitive advantage-** this is open to debate, some advocate that culture is linked to performance. The better the culture the higher the performance of the company (Peters and Waterman 1982), (Kanter 1983). However Kotter and Heskett's (1992) point to research they conducted that identified ten large companies with strong cultures yet had weak performance. An interesting notion in this discussion is that weak cultures may sometimes offer advantage in that they adapt to change easier and allow innovation.

The final issue in describing culture is the aspect of '**subculture**'. Gregory (1983) argues that large organisations in particular have a dominant culture and numerous

sets of subcultures. Subcultures tend to develop to reflect common problems, situations, or experiences that members face (Robbins 1990). They can be formed vertically (one product division possessing a different culture to another) or horizontally (a shared understanding between functional specialists such as accountants). It will include the core values of the dominant culture plus additional values unique to members. The important aspect of this for managers is to remain aware of subcultures and ensure that they stay in line with the overall organisational goals and not begin to undermine the dominant culture and core values.

## History Of The Concept Of Culture

The antecedents of organisational culture go back to the study of anthropology, sociology, psychology and early management thought. In general it was recognised that organisations had 'something' which goes beyond economic rationality, which gave them a unique identity. Some refer to it as: 'the way we do things around here' (Deal and Kennedy 1982) while others saw it as a 'collective programming of the mind' that distinguished one group from another (Hofstede 1984).

The Human Relations School of Management was the first body of theorists to explore informal social relations in organisations and to take the idea of organisational culture seriously. They saw culture, as something unique to each organisation and which can be used by management to serve their needs. They also noted in their study of Japanese organisations that the one thing they all had in common was a strong organisational culture.

Martin Parker (2000) supported this contention and argued that reference to culture could be found in the work of Elton Mayo (1933:1945). He was interested in the social engineering of 'sentiments', i.e. the non-logical rationalisations for actions. He argued that executives could manage better if they understood the irrationalities of ordinary employees. This cultural perspective therefore represented a break with the early rational-mechanistic view of the organisation, which saw employees as tools achieving an organisation's goals.

Later social interaction theorists saw culture as being imported into an organisation from the broader society. Seeing culture as something that is socially produced and reproduced overtime implies that it cannot be discovered or mechanically manipulated. It can only be described and interpreted. However their approach did not take account of the shifts in broader society, which may result in corresponding shifts in organisational culture. Similarly they did not account for employees experiencing different cultures within an organisation and within society as a whole. Thus while organisational culture may be imported from society it does not mean that both cultures are identical.

More recent reference to culture in organisations go back over half a century to the work of Elliot Jacques and his book, *The Changing Culture of a Factory* (Jacques 1952). However the current debates about culture are traceable to 1982. Two books catapulted the concept to the forefront of management attention. Tom Peters and Robert Waterman (1982) in their book *'In search of excellence'* determined that the distinguishing fact between successful and unsuccessful companies was the strength of their cultures. Also Terrence Deal and Allen Kennedy (1982) in their book *'Corporate Cultures'* suggested that culture was a powerful lever for guiding behaviour and that the culture of every company could be managed towards achieving greater effectiveness. They conceived of a company's culture as consisting of values beliefs, myths, heroes, and symbols that possessed meaning for all employees.

### **The Importance Of Culture in Organisations.**

Why study culture? Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) argue that when you walk into a bank, hotel or shop you notice a number of different things. These will indicate to you what to expect from the organisation and you form a 'first impression'. Then the physical surroundings will convey a message to you, both positive and negative. These are all aspects of organisational culture. The nature of this culture is important to staff and customers and it is argued that culture will therefore affect performance so management should and must recognise, control and change the culture when necessary.

French and Bell (1990) forward their concept of an informal organisation and the metaphor of the 'organisational Iceberg'. The iceberg metaphor can be used to depict two contracting aspects of organisational life. The first is that part of the iceberg which is visible above the water and which is composed of the more easy to see and formal aspects of the organisation. The second is the hidden part of the iceberg, which is composed of the more covert aspects of organisational life. These include the values, beliefs and attitudes held by management and other employees, the emergent informal groupings which occur in every organisation, the norms of behaviour which direct how things are done but which are rarely talked about and the politics of

organisational life which are mainly hidden but are a powerful driver of decisions and actions.

The acceptance that the informal organisation exists and can act powerfully to influence organisational activity is reason enough to examine how it impinges upon the extent to which organisations can deal with change. Morgan (1989):

*'The culture and politics of many organisations constrain the degree of change and transformation in which they can successfully engage, even though such change may be highly desirable for meeting the challenges and demands of the wider environment'.*

Therefore, regardless of how well change might be planned in terms of the more formal organisational characteristics, it is the hidden informal aspects of organisational life, which will act to help or hinder it.

## Sources of Organisational Culture

One of the most significant sources of a culture is an organisation's history. In particular the founder and as time passes the top management who take over and run the company. This centers on the issue of leadership. Brown (1995) discusses this and cites examples of Henry Ford and the Ford motor company, Ken Olsen at Digital Equipment Corporation, and Sir John-Harvey Jones and his influence at ICI which long after his retirement he influenced the company through his writings. Another source is behaviour, the behaviours of these leaders acted as an example of how they wanted the company to be managed and run.

Robbins (1990) concludes; the organisation's culture results from the interaction between (1) the founders biases and assumptions and (2) what the original members whom the founder initially employ learn subsequently from their own experiences.

The influence of history is not, however limited to the influence of particular people of importance to an organisation. A broader influence is referred to by Hofstede (1981) who says:

*'The rules of behaviour in industrial workshops in the nineteenth century were modeled after those in armies and monasteries. The structure and functioning of organisations are determined not merely by rationality, or, if they are, by rationality that varies according to the cultural environment'.*

A different perspective on source is the debate around **national cultures**. This debate is known as the convergence-divergence debate. The convergence view is that the forces of industrialisation, use of similar technologies, increasing size will push organisations whatever their location toward a particular configuration with respect to strategy structure and management. Additionally the growth of international organisations increase the need for international managers who bring common management practices to all parts of their organisations wherever they are in the world. Ohmae (1991) puts forward the concept of the 'global organisation', which has no national allegiance only an international common purpose.

In contrast to this view is the notion that differences in countries languages, religions, social organisation, laws, politics, educational systems and values and attitudes (Hofstede, 1980; Tayeb, 1989; Wilson 1992) will of necessity mean that one country's culture will diverge from another.

Research conducted by Hofstede and others supported the concept of geographically identifiable, culturally differentiated regions, which are based on national boundaries. This analysis resulted in the identification of four dimensions that were found to differentiate national cultural groups, a fifth dimension was later added based on the philosophy of Confucianism. These are:

- **Power Distance-** How a society deals with the fact that people are unequal. In high power-distance societies, inequalities of power and wealth are accepted by leaders and those lower in the hierarchy. In low power distance societies, inequality is minimised with subordinates expecting to be consulted by superiors over decision that affect them.
- **Individualism/Collectivism-** Refers to relationships between an individual and his/her fellow individuals. In an individualistic society the ties between people are loose. Everybody is expected to look after themselves and their immediate family. In collectivist societies ties between people are very tight. The concept of the extended family is important and can reach work groups and organisations. Everybody is expected to look after their in-group which will protect them in times of trouble.
- **Masculinity/Femininity-** refers to the degree to which social gender roles are clearly distinct. In high masculinity societies traditional values of making money, 'big is beautiful' permeate the society. In high feminine societies the values of caring, relationships before money, quality of life and 'small is beautiful' are important.
- **Uncertainty avoidance-** refers to how society deals with the fact that time runs only one way. The future is unknown; some societies accept this others seek to reduce it as much as possible. In weak uncertainty avoidance societies people accept each day as it comes and are comfortable with a higher degree of

risk. Strong uncertainty avoidance society socialises their people to beat the future. Precision and punctuality are important in a context of fear of ambiguous situations and unfamiliar tasks.

- **Long-term/short-term orientation-** virtue versus truth. People with a long-term view look to the past and present for their values, they respect tradition and fulfilling social obligations. People, with short-term view look toward the future cultivating habits of thrift and perseverance. They value analytical thinking and search for truths.

These lead Hofstede to conclude that different approaches to organising can be determined based on empirical derived relationships between a country's position on the power –distance/uncertainty avoidance matrix models. If it is as Hofstede maintains that cultural groupings exist and any convergence across them is slow then is a good chance that they will influence organisational cultures in correspondingly different ways.

### **Perspectives on Culture**

There are two perspectives on the topic that create a greater understanding of the concept. These two perspectives are the 'Managerial perspective' and the 'Social Science' perspective.

The advocates of the managerial perspective on culture see a link between culture and performance. They hold that *'A well developed and business specific culture in which management and staff are well socialised....can underpin stronger organisational commitment, higher morale, more efficient performance and generally higher productivity'* (Furnham and Gunter 1993). Its aim is to achieve managerial goals, seen by many to be enhancing organisational performance and controlling labour by integrating them within the organisation. It is based on the writings of people like Peters and Waterman 1982, Deal and Kennedy 1982 and Schein 1985. Its distinguishing feature is that it is both normative and prescriptive. Needle (2000) explains:

*It makes the assumption about employees that it does not explore and constitutes a set of beliefs and values that are deliberately created as part of a management strategy, and which are used to guide behaviour and processes within the organisation.*

It seems to be less concerned with explaining what the contemporary culture of any given organisation actually is, accounting for its elements or assessing its significance. Instead, it takes a pragmatic even utopian approach, recommending what it should be, suggesting how it might be changed so as to encourage greater efficiency and even encouraging managers to act as if that preferred culture already existed.

Ranged against this perspective are mainly academic social scientists that believe that organisational culture is a term that is 'overused', 'over-inclusive' but 'under defined'. The social science perspective is taken by academics that understand organisational behaviour issues and seek to explain differences between organisations. It is an attempt to counter the euphoric and uncritical adoption of the concept. Initially they sought to operationalise key concepts and conduct meaningful research. Later, they adopted a more critical perspective questioning both the value of the organisation culture and its very existence as a phenomenon. This group included such writers as Karl Wreck (1979), Carol Axel Ray (1986), Joanne Martin (1987) and Hugh Willmott (1993). The managerial and social science debate can be considered under five headings:

<i>Managerial</i>		<i>Social Science</i>
Culture has	v	Culture is
Integration culture	v	Differentiation culture
Consensual culture	v	Fragmentation culture
Culture managed	v	Cultures tolerated
Symbolic leadership	v	Management Control.

The 'has' view holds that every organisation possesses a culture with that culture being an attribute of the organisation manifested in its values and attitudes. That culture is then given to members from above. From this perspective culture is acquired by employees and is capable of being manipulated by senior management for its own ends (Smircich 1993). The 'is' view holds that organisations are cultures, which

impose themselves on employees. It is the product of daily routine interactions between members who ongoingly produce it and reproduce it. The 'is' view has been described as the 'root metaphor' and the people perspective that sees the organisation as a system of shared cognitions of knowledge and beliefs.

**Integration** or unitary perspective is a view, which regards culture as monolithic, characterised by consistency organisation wide consensus and clarity. It holds that these integrating features will lead to improved organisation effectiveness through greater employee commitment and employee control, as measured by productivity and profitability. **Differentiation** perspective is a view which regards an organisation as consisting of subcultures. Each represents a fenced in island of localised consensus, beyond which ambiguity reigns.

**Consensual** perspective is a view that assumes that senior managements articulation of culture is the one that actually exists. It places focus on what the culture should be and encourages managers to behave as if the preferred culture already existed. **Fragmentation** is a view that recognises differences between groups (management v labour). It assumes that there will be inevitable conflict and focuses on the variety of interests and opinions between groups. Fragmentation sees organisations as being in constant flux.

Since the managerial perspective sees culture as something the organisation has it also assumes that it is capable of being created and modified by organisational founders or corporate leaders. This view that leaders can exercise cultural leadership brings together in two very important business concepts. Organisation strategy and design and leadership. Making the company culture 'fit' the strategic direction and environment of the organisation. The 'is' view challenge that culture can be managed and instead feel that it should be understood and tolerated. They do however acknowledge that over the medium to long term that managers along with organisational members can change their company's culture in certain ways.

Symbolic leadership is a way of encouraging the employees to feel that they are working for something worthwhile. It treats managers as heroes symbolising the organisation both internally to employees and externally to customers. These managers

possess the values and goals of the dominant elites in order to activate the emotion and sentiment that will lead to commitment and loyalty. The social science view is that symbolic leadership is an attempt to internalise managerial control. Moving from bureaucratic control to humanistic control. From overt control of employees synonymous with Taylor which cause alienation and resentment to satisfying employee needs and providing a pleasant place to work and internal control promoted by Elton Mayo in 1933.

Carol Ray suggested in 1986 that by the end of the twentieth century that there would be a third possibility of directing behaviour through organisational culture termed *symbolic management*. Colin Hayes 1993 supported this and wrote:

*.....the power of organisation culture resides in the fact that it is not just another management technique which can be applied at will, but is, rather an influence upon behaviour which is not recognised as overt 'management'. The beliefs and values which shape employee behaviour are internalised, taken for granted and accepted as unobjectionable; their in lies their force. Culture can therefore exercise the most powerful and insidious form of control because it combines de facto compulsion with perceived freedom from coercion.*

## Culture and Change

A key debate in the literature around culture and change is the challenge of culture change and culture management. Management theorists believe it can, they delve into the manager's abilities in terms of leadership, motivation, and control. They argue that as conditions change the current culture suitable in the old situation becomes unsuitable, therefore the company becomes less effective. In this situation management can alter the culture by altering the factors that created and sustained the culture. Just as culture is learned it can be unlearned. Another argument in favour is that if we accept that culture can be sustained by, top management, selection process and socialisation then by changing these the culture should change.

The argument against puts forward that cultures take a long time to form and cannot be readily unlearned, strong cultures in particular pose a problem. Also there are forces continually at work trying to maintain the culture. The result is that even if change were possible it would take so long as to render the initiative impractical. The people in the culture it is argued joined the organisation because their values matched that of the company, now with a change they will try hard to maintain the culture they are familiar with. A final argument is that if culture could be managed then management would simply 'install' a culture in their company they see as suitable from another company, yet this never happens (Robbins 1990).

The most logical conclusion to be drawn for this is that culture can be sometimes supportive of change and sometimes not. Kanter (1993) offers two extreme types of culture which would act to support or block change.

### Segmentalist Culture

Compartmentalisation.  
See problems as narrow as possible.  
Divide resources among many departments.  
Avoid conflict.  
Avoid experimentation.

### Integrative Culture

Willing to move beyond wisdom.  
See problems as wholes.  
Challenge established practices.  
Encourage differences.  
Create mechanism for new ideas.

Clearly the Segmentalist culture with its narrow view of the world would stifle any innovation and therefore opportunity to change while the integrative culture would be far more amenable to a change situation.

Another element of culture and change is the organisations ability to learn. First developed by Argyris (1964) he highlights 'single loop' and 'double loop' learning. In single loop learning the best way of achieving the goal is examined however the goal is never actually questioned. In double loop learning not only the means are questioned but also the ends are questioned. Johnson (1990) terms this as *organisational relearning* Single loop learning is more aligned with a Segmentalist culture where information is not shared but would not be suitable for strategic change.

The discussion on strong and weak cultures would also have an input here. As discussed above strong cultures while supporting the current culture will become a considerable obstacle to change in an organisation. The conclusion was leading us to believe that in fact a weak culture could in change situations be more amenable to manipulation, but it does leave the question of would we want to maintain a weak culture *after* the change had been made?

At this point the discussion should center on what **type of change** should be followed. Some writers believe that to change an organisation one must change the **attitudes** of the people in the organisation before successful change can take effect (Johnson & Scholes 1993, Kanter 1983, Burns & Stalker 1961). This is not an easy thing to do as Schwartz & Davis determined in 1981 having conducted research on change in different companies. A different way of thinking centers around **behaviour**, (Beer, Eisenstat and Spector 1993). The conclusion here is that to effect cultural change by trying to change values is futile instead one must engage on changing the behaviour and once this is done the culture will begin to change as a result. This is based on the assumption that changing organisational structures, systems and role relationships in the formal organisation will bring about desired cultural change incorporating member's attitudes and beliefs. One important factor however is resistance.

Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) discuss the importance of resistance to change and offer reasons why the members in the culture resist change. They suggest:

- **Parochial self-interest-** people feel they will lose something of value as result of the change. This can result in 'political behaviour'.
- **Misunderstanding & lack of trust-** when members do not understand the implications and perceive that it will cost more than they will gain.
- **Different assessments-** members assess the change differently from managers and see more cost than benefits not for themselves but for the company as well.
- **Low tolerance for change-** members fear that they will be unable to develop the new skills and abilities needed for the change.

Assessing these fears gives managers an indication of where they will encounter resistance and where the culture is incompatible with the new strategy. They then have a choice on how to handle it. They can;

- **Ignore the culture-** not recommended unless the organisation is prepared to shut down.
- **Manage around the culture-** a real option and Schwartz and Davis identify strategies for doing this.
- **Changing the culture-** to fit desired strategic changes. This is what we have been analysing throughout this review and the literature cautions belief in grand scale change, time frames etc. Also the argument around which to change first, the attitudes or the behaviour.
- **Change the strategy to match the culture-** this option can be pursued if the managers find that to change the culture would in fact damage the company's survival. Schwartz and Davies (1981) give the example of merging companies and changing the strategy to suit the existing cultures. The compromise would be changing the culture and adapting the strategy at the same time.

In the final analysis accepting that cultures can be changed, how would one go about doing it. Dealing with Kotter and Schlinger's resistors would be a way. For instance they suggest;

- Education and communication
- Participation and involvement
- Facilitation and support
- Manipulation and cooptation
- Negotiation and agreement
- Explicit and implicit coercion.

The success of these they argue is contingent on situational factors like the amount of resistance, the power of those resisting, the possession of the relevant data for the change, the stakes involved. The implications for managers is that certain considerations must be taken account of if they are to increase their chances of successful culture change. These center around conducting analysis of the current situation, analysis of the relevant factors that will produce the needed change, selecting a strategy and monitoring the implementation process. Key to the manager will be his /her interpersonal skills in dealing with all the variables.

Beer et al (1993) identify six steps to effective change;

- Mobilise commitment to change through joint diagnosis of business problems.
- Develop a shared vision of how to organise and manage for competitiveness.
- Foster consensus for the new vision, competence to enact it and cohesion to move it along.
- Spread revitalisation to all departments without pushing from the top.
- Institutionalise revitalization through the formal policies, systems and structures.
- Monitor and adjust strategies in response to problems in the revitalisation process.

## **An Alternative View Of Culture**

More current thinking on culture is offered by Ulrich (2003). He refers to a 'shared mindset' because it represents the essence of what is really happening. 'Shared' implies common, familiar or memorable and 'mindset' represents a cognition, image or thought. A shared mindset then becomes the identity of the firm in not only the employees but also the customers and the investors.

Shared mindset shifts the traditional focus on culture from inside to outside. From focusing on patterns inside the organisation that affect employees behaviour to focus on customer's and investor's perception and response to the culture. It also shifts the focus from value statements that state what executives believe to be important to the unity that can exist between employees, customers and investors. A shared mindset exists when customers and investors outside and employees inside have a common view of the organisations identity, merging the outside view with the inside view means that customers perceive the firm in ways that match how employees perceive the firm.

Ulrich then links culture (shared mindset) with the intangible value created when it produces an identity in the minds of the stakeholders that is tied to the firm itself and not a person or product. This can become a self-fulfilling prophecy when it affects how each stakeholder behaves toward the firm. For instance, employees join a firm that they perceive fit with their personal hopes and values, they then shape the mindset in the organisation and are themselves shaped by it therefore reinforcing their thinking and actions. Customers do repeat business with a firm if it has a reputation for quality, reliability etc thus producing ultimately a 'firm brand' that becomes well established in the minds of the best customers. Investors are affected in two ways, a firm with a positive identity will attract investors and they are also affected by the extent of the shared mindset operating among employees.

How does one create a shared mindset? Ulrich puts forward a four-phase process:

- Create the desire identity.
- Make the identity real to customers.
- Make the identity real to employees.
- Build an action plan for implementation.

**Creating the desired mindset** centers around a number of actions to be taken with the top team in the organisation, to reach consensus on what exactly the company wants to be known for.

1. Ask each manager to write a response to the question, what are the top three things we want to be known for by our best customers in the future?
2. Collect the responses and categorise them.
3. Add the total number of responses in the top three categories and divide by the total responses to get a measurement of the shared mindset, normally 80% is the desired level.
4. Talk about the themes in the results.
5. Put the themes into words that resonate with customers.
6. Check the articulated mindset with customers to make sure it is right.

The advantage of such a process forces executives to see how aligned their views are with their customers, how the business needs to change in the future and imposes a clarity and consistency about the desired identity and mindset.

**Making the identity real to customers**, Ulrich argues that this is all about points of contact with customers, *touch points*. The desired identity should have meaning and impact for targeted customers and therefore executives need to make it real each time they come into contact with their customers, another way of making it real is to regularly obtain feedback from customers through surveys etc and use this information in employee appraisals and management decisions. Leaders of organisations are encouraged to become customers and get the experience that their customers have in their shops, restaurants and hotels. The basic philosophy in this

approach is that the more opportunities the customers have to engage the organisation the more culture will be real to them.

Employee actions reflect the shared mindset and so **making the identity real to employees** involves three critical factors:

1. Articulate an intelligent agenda.
2. Establish a behavioural agenda.
3. Institutionalise an organisational agenda.

An intellectual agenda changes the way employees perceive and think about the firm. It affects their top-of-mind relationships with the firm. A good agenda is woven into a communication plan by creating a message, choosing an audience, selecting a time frame and identifying the right channels for the message. The message must be a simple one that is easy to remember, as complex ones get lost. The message must get through to all levels in the company and it may need to be given to some customers and investors outside the company. The time frame has to be based on the understanding that the message will not be understood at any one point in time but over time. The way to share the message stems from the impersonal to the personal, impersonal messages suffice for information sharing but the more critical changing behaviour requires more personal contact. Successfully created communication plans enable leaders to craft, communicate and publicise the shared mindset.

**Establishing a behavioural agenda** is important because a new shared mindset only becomes real if it changes the way employees behave, there are also significant implications for leaders at line management level in that they embody the values of the corporation and when they change their behaviour to the new mindset employees gain confidence in the new mindset as a result. For instance managers that solicit input from employees gain more commitment to the decisions made, by tying simple changes to the overall mindset change, the change becomes real to employees. The use of common themes to cluster a number of behaviours is also effective, they are simpler to understand and they unify employee's behaviour. Employees are allowed to see how their behaviour aligns to the overall mindset.

**Institutionalising the organisational agenda** is relevant because the new mindset will only occur if the principals become embedded in the organisation systems and processes. These processes endure beyond any one leader. Such processes are, reward, training and development, budgeting, leadership brand. Reward is acknowledged as being a powerful influencer of behaviour, people will learn to do again and again what it is they are rewarded to do, and training will provide them with the skills they need to do the jobs they receive the rewards for. Processes such as budgeting influence and are influenced by the mindset in two ways, resources will be allocated consistent with the mindset and therefore determine what is important to the organisation and secondly the mindset will determine how the budgets are set and modified. Leadership brand exists when leaders at all levels take action to deliver the right results in the right way, they stand out from leaders in other companies, employees, customers and investors come to trust that the leaders will do what they say they will do. A shared mindset about leadership brand is a significant cultural advantage. When employees understand the intellectual agenda, see how their daily action reflects the desired mindset and experience organisation processes that reinforce the mindset, they become more aware of and committed to that mindset. The importance for leaders is to ensure that all three strands are utilized when changing the mindset, if not they may fail at what they are attempting to do.

**Building the action plan for implementation**, in this phase the ideas from the three other phases' translate into action. These need to be specific, start small and have full leadership support. Actions must center on a number of clear specific things that leaders need to follow and implement. This can involve what Ulrich describes as a *step of change* with each step representing a specific action toward the ultimate mindset. Starting small is advantageous because it allows the managers to keep control while the customers and employees can see tangible differences, thus a momentum builds and confidence builds. Leaders play a key role, they must take ownership of the new shared mindset, be public, visible and consistent on it, talk to employees, customers and investors on it, make it part of their leadership style. They need to express support and commitment privately with peers and subordinates and identify symbolic events to reinforce the mindset and ensure that organisational changes remain consistent with the new mindset. On an ongoing basis they must

review the mindset and hold their direct reports responsible for its continuance and development.

Ulrich identifies a number of specific steps that leaders can take to build a firm mindset:

1. Invite your top team to do a shared mindset exercise and create a unity score for the business.
2. Identify target customers and spend time with them to see if the desired mindset will influence their buying patterns.
3. Make the mindset real to customers by specifying customer touch points and finding ways to connect between the firm and the customer on each touch point.
4. Make the mindset real to employees by creating an intellectual agenda and building a communication plan to share it throughout the organisation.
5. Make the mindset real to employees by encouraging employees behaviour through town hall meetings or other forums where employees change behaviour.
6. Make the desired mindset real to employees by changing the organisation processes to be consistent with the desired mindset.
7. Build an action plan with early successes and first steps.
8. Make sure the leaders are visible, public and consistent in their commitment to the mindset.
9. Ensure that the look and feel of all advertising- and the message it includes- is consistent with the shared mindset.
10. Watch for employees whose behaviour is consistent with the mindset and present both public and private rewards when you catch them in the act.

Peter Drucker offers another view in June's 2004 edition of the Harvard Business Review, *'What Makes an Effective Executive'*. He analysis's effective leadership and effective executives and concludes that they all follow the same eight practices;

- They ask, "What needs to be done?"
- They ask, "What is right for the enterprise?"
- They develop action plans.

- They take responsibility for decisions.
- They take responsibility for communications.
- They focus on opportunities rather than problems.
- They run productive meetings.
- They think and say “we” rather than “I”.

The first two practices gave them the knowledge they need. The next four help them concert this knowledge into effective action. The last two ensure that the whole organisation felt responsible and accountable.

What can be determined from this is the very powerful influence leaders can have on a culture. The more effective the leader the better the culture of the organisation will be in serving customers and dealing with change.

According to Van de Post et al (1998), culture is to the organisation what personality is to the individual. It is a hidden but unifying force that provides meaning and direction. It is also a system of shared meanings or systems of beliefs and values that ultimately shapes employee behaviour.

Van de Post et al (1998) examined the relationship between culture and financial performance of organisations in South Africa. The results showed that culture had a positive relationship with the financial performance of firms. The results also showed that the firms that were more financially effective differed from those that were not with respect to their culture dimensions used in the study.

Scholz (1987) argues that corporate culture has to be kept apart from similar looking concepts like corporate identity, organisational climate or the national culture. Corporate culture is the implicit, invisible, intrinsic and informal consciousness of the organisation which guides the behaviour of the individuals and which shapes itself out of the behaviour.

Poole (2000) examined the relationship between culture and job stressors. He found that executives working in a constructive culture reduced the role stressors in their

work. There was also an inverse relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity in a constructive culture. However the passive culture showed a positive relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity. He also believed that organisational culture (passive or constructive) could hinder job performance, job commitment and job satisfaction.

Cohen (2000) found the relationship between Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions with organisational commitment, while Geiger (1998) found the impact of cultural values on the escalation of commitment. These studies showed a positive relationship between commitment and performance.

From the above review organisational culture plays an important role on promoting organisational success. This can only be achieved by assuring an appropriate culture being developed or shaped in the organisation that matches the managers values attitudes and behaviour.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Research Methodology**

## Research Methodology

### **The use of Qualitative Data.**

I decided to follow a qualitative route of data collection and analysis. The concept of culture does not lend itself easily to meaning derived from numbers or analysis through diagrams and statistics. Some quantitative data was used but considering the amount of access I had to the interviewees and the type of information I wanted to elicit from the station managers and the senior managers qualitative methods were suitable.

Another reason was that this was clearly an exploratory and explanatory study. Thereby requiring semi-structured and in-depth interviews. Each interview was going to enhance my understanding of the issues in DART and therefore I needed the flexibility to change my questions around, ask them in different ways and probe deeper on some issues.

*The main reason for the potential superiority of qualitative approaches for obtaining information is that the flexible and responsive interaction which is possible between interviewer and respondent(s) allows meanings to be probed, topics to be covered from a variety of angles and questions made clear to respondents. (Sykes, 1991)*

Some of the other reasons for selecting a qualitative approach centered on what Saunders et al (2003) describe as favorable situations to qualitative research.

- The nature of the approach to research
- The significance of establishing personal contact.
- The nature of the data collection questions.
- Length of time required and completeness of the process.

The nature of the approach was important because I needed to understand the reasons behind the interviewee's answers and also understand reasons for their attitudes and

opinions. I needed to build on answers received and probe into what the interviewee thought was important as well as what I felt needed clarity.

The personal contact for this research was of paramount importance. Station Managers are typical of semi state managers in general and distrust requests 'out of the blue' for information on their personal thoughts and feelings. The only way to successfully overcome this was to meet and explain to them what the purpose of the research was and commit to each of them that the information gained would not be manipulated. All Station Managers and two of the senior managers in the business unit requested to be interviewed when asked. Only the manager HR for the business sought to answer my questions in writing and this was down to constraints on his time rather than a desire to avoid being interviewed. I was happier that the information be gathered from interviews because as Healy (1991) say:

*"the interviewer has more control over who answers the questions".*

This ensured that the answers were genuine and honest and not some politically correct answers that they may have felt I wanted to hear.

In terms of the nature of the questions being asked they were sometimes complex and sometimes in need of clarification because it was after all human behaviour and beliefs we were discussing. Also the questions were changed around to bring out the strongest possible feelings that the interviewees could express.

All the interviews were taped with the interviewee's verbal agreement and the transcripts of the interviews are at the end of this thesis in appendix 1 & 2.

### **Secondary Research.**

There are very few relevant state studies into transport companies and culture in the Irish context. I did however make significant use of the report commissioned for the Minister for Public Enterprise in 2001 '*The Way Forward*'.(Attley et al 2001) Extensive use was also made of other literature and data from Iarnrod Éireann's

training center in Inchicore. Use was also made of the Annual accounts (2002) for the company.

As good as this data was it didn't serve my research topic fully. Denscombe (1998) states, "Paramount in any consideration of secondary data is the inescapable fact that the data were not originally collected for our needs". The main trust of my information gathering therefore was in the form of primary research.

### Primary Research.

The primary research was carried out to obtain data directly related to my research questions. **Group 1** the Station Managers were selected because they controlled 75% of the staff and were key to any culture operating in the business. Because I was working in the DART business unit I had as much access to these managers, basically whenever I needed it.

The following is a brief introduction to the DART Station Managers. Information compiled by Miller et al 2002 in the career development center in Inchicore.

#### Average length of service of Station Masters

SERVICE ANALYSIS OF CURRENT STATION MANAGERS - SUBURBAN RAIL						
Years	5-10	11-15	16-20	26-30	31-35	36-40
Station Managers	2	1	2	2		

Most Station Managers have worked with Iarnrod Eireann over a lengthy period of time. The shortest period of service is 8 years while the longest period of service is more than 27 years. It would appear from the data that Station Managers have a great deal of commitment and loyalty to Iarnrod Eireann.

Over the past three years, Station Manager positions have become available in Bray, Maynooth and Tara Street. The pace of movement of Station Managers up Iarnrod Eireann's career ladder is fairly moderate - on average Station

Managers spend 4.5 years in the position before progressing further in the company.

### **Absenteeism of Station Managers**

Absenteeism amongst Station Managers is very low. Most Station Managers have a clean record.

### **Profile of Station Manager in terms of gender age and ethnic background**

		<b>AGE PROFILE OF CURRENT STATION MANAGERS - SUBURBAN RAIL</b>							
		<b>25 - 29</b>	<b>30 - 34</b>	<b>35 - 39</b>	<b>40 - 44</b>	<b>45 - 49</b>	<b>50 - 54</b>	<b>55 - 59</b>	<b>60 - 64</b>
<b>Years</b>									
<b>Station Managers</b>			2	2	1	1			

As can be seen from the data above, the station manager population is fairly young, with the majority of Station Managers falling in the 30-39 age range. The Station Managers interviewed in this age group seek future promotion and career progression within the company.

Station Managers with the greatest length of service appear to be happy to stay in their current positions rather than seek further career progression.

The Station Manager population is white and male-dominated, comprising six male Station Managers

### **Training and development activities undertaken by Station Managers**

The training and development activities undertaken by Station Managers include:

1. *The Signalling Certificate* which gives Station Manager a thorough grounding in rail operations;

2. *The IMI Frontline Management Training/ Carr Communication Course* which will help Station Managers to develop their communication and people-management skills;
3. *Safety Management Course* which gives Station Managers the skills to manage their stations and halts safely; and investigate and report accidents;
4. *Computer training in managing accounts;*
5. *Iarnrod Eireann Certificate/Diploma in Management.*

**Career Path of Incumbent Suburban Rail Station Manager.**

Most incumbent Suburban Rail Station Managers have pursued one fairly uniform career path through the clerical career stream to reach their current position. This has consisted of work experience in clerical positions in a variety of stations. These are outlined below:

(1)

*Booking Office Clerk*

*Station Booking Office*

*This consists of work in the frontline, gaining skills in ticket sales and cash-handling, and answering customer queries about fares, timetables, and lost property.*



(2)

*These clerical positions are a springboard for those wishing to pursue a career as a Station Manager.*

**Chief Clerk**

The chief clerk supports the Station Manager in an administrative capacity and takes on many of the Station Manager responsibilities, such as compiling accounts.

**AND/OR**

**Relief Clerk**

*The relief clerk is required to cover the position of chief clerk and Station Manager during training, sickness and annual leave. It is a mobile role covering a specific geographical region.*



(3)

**Temporary Station Manager**



(4)

**Station Manager**

### **Roles and Responsibilities For Station Managers.**

The roles and responsibilities are set out in a very detailed job Description (Appendix 5). There are broken down under seven key areas:

- **Scope** - the management and control of all rail-operating activities.
- **Responsibilities** – to ensure service provision, safety standards are adhered to, staff are trained and refreshed etc.
- **Safety** – to ensure the safe working environment is provided taking into account the responsibilities set out in the International Safety Rating system and Health and Welfare at work act.
- **General Responsibilities** – proactive approach to incident prevention, ensure staff are monitored; suggest service improvements, to ensure premises under his control are secure and maintained, etc.
- **Knowledge Required** – company rules and regulations, various acts, budget controls, duties of staff.
- **Skills** – appraisal, negotiation, problem solving, interpersonal relationships etc.
- **Relationships** – reports to District Manager, communicates with Safety Executive, other Station Managers, Divisional Engineer, DART accountant, HR manager, etc.

I needed to interview others to get an insight from a different perspective. For this I chose another smaller group, **Group 2** the three senior managers in the DART business unit. The District Manager DART, the DART accountant, the Manager HR for the business unit:

- (a) The District Manager, this position in the DART is the most intense. It has the responsibility for everything that happens in the DART system (Appendix 7). The position reports to the Manager Suburban. The District Manager is responsible for the Station Managers and their halts and therefore is a key component to the type of culture desired by the business. This position is the pivotal leadership aspect in the DART business.
- (b) The suburban accountant also reports to the Manager Suburban. The accountant is very 'hands on' dealing with the Station Managers on a daily basis in terms of cash counts, expenditure, budget approval items etc (Appendix 6). His influence on the business unit is significant, he deals with the issue of budgeting and expenditure. Therefore he influences how the station managers think and act in their general approach to managing their stations and halts as mini businesses.
- (c) HR manager, primarily responsible for the training and development of staff in the DART, he is also responsible for managing the staffing levels in the business unit to ensure optimum productivity. He also reports to the Manager Suburban. The current incumbent and is very strong on staff development to improve customer service and company image. His input was of great value because he is very clear on what the culture is, should be and what we should be doing to achieve it.

### **The Problem of Bias.**

Central to my research being valid was the aspect of as acting head of the business how was I going to ensure the answers I received were honest and unbiased. I overcame this problem in three ways;

- I ensured my questionnaire was designed to extract information that was relevant to the station managers. The questionnaire was also completed in a face-to-face interview situation so I could read the body language and probe deeper on questions to eliminate any form of bias. Some of the questions deliberately asked for negative answers.

- Each of the station managers was guaranteed anonymity and they were also assured that anything I learned in this process would only be used to help them.
- In the 6 months I had been working with the station managers I had built up a good relationship with each of the them, which was primarily based on honest communication and respect of each other's views. Any interaction with the station managers prior to the research interview did not preclude negative feedback in our discussions.

### **Questionnaire Design.**

In designing my questionnaires (Appendix 1 & 2) I considered a number of key issues; the question wording, the order and flow of questions, how would I introduce the questionnaire to respondents and how would I ensure that the result would be valid.

In terms of the wording of my questions I made sure that the words themselves were simple and familiar, that there were no embarrassing questions for respondents and that there was no ambiguity.

The order and flow of questions were given a good deal of consideration. I wanted to get straight into the issues yet I needed to build their confidence so that they would answer the more difficult questions. So before each interview I talked through the questions with the respondents and explained how the questions would build a picture as we went through the questionnaire. I started with straightforward questions like what they understood about culture and worked into more difficult areas of strategy and goal achievement.

I spent time introducing the concept to each of the respondents before actually administering the questionnaire and conducting the interviews. This entailed many phone conversations with the respondents well in advance of the actual interview. I was trying to get them to think in terms of the everyday events that actually represented our culture, so that when I finally did the interview each respondent had in

respondents really had benefits for the quality of discussion I then had with each of them.

The final part of my preparation centered on a pilot test of the questionnaire. Because my research sample was limited I chose my colleagues in HR in Connolly to see if they could understand the questions. I also discussed the questions with my tutor and from this a number of questions were rephrased and some questions were moved around in the order (the resulting questionnaires can be seen in appendix 3 & 4). Finally I felt I developed a robust questionnaire that covered the main topics and the respondent would find unambiguous and easy to answer.

In conclusion I am satisfied that the data obtained by the methods employed are congruent with my research needs and aspirations. They identify the main issues in theory and allow elaboration in practice, we will now set out the results achieved.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Results**

## Research Results

### The Station Manager interview results.

**Q 1 Culture can mean 'the way we do things around here' or a system of shared meanings'. What do you understand from the term culture?**

Four of the station Managers had an acceptable definition of culture. Two needed elaboration but once more information was given could then relate to the concept. The answers from the Station Managers ranged as follows:

Culture is:

- (a) "The way we do things around here".
- (b) "Something we inherit when we take over a station. It can be difficult to change".
- (c) "about attitudes in the job, the staffs attitude, our attitude to staff and customers and the customers attitude to us".
- (d) "the communication between all of us".
- (e) "also a straight jacket".

**Q 2 What is the dominant culture in Dart?**

Three of the six Station Managers reported **Safety** as the dominant culture. Everything they do operationally is considered in terms of safety before being implemented. The station managers also insisted on this type of consideration from staff to protect customers.

Three of the six Station Managers felt that the management of **Staff Relations** was the dominant culture. They were focused on keeping booking offices open, ensuring staff are in uniform, dealing with staff for grievance and discipline. Training and developing staff to deal professionally with customers.

**Q 3 Can you list the values of DART?**

All six station managers had a number of values they thought important. The most frequent answers were:

- (a) **Respect for Staff** - this was viewed as critical, respect for the individual, job satisfaction, job creation and security.
- (b) **Safety** - safe equipment and processes must not expose the staff and customers to danger.
- (c) **Customer Service** - delivery of the advertised timetable, to have trains clean, punctual and reliable.
- (d) **Revenue protection and Costs\*\*** – combating fare evasion and running the operation fully conscious of the costs involved.

(\*\* Revenue protection refers to the policy in DART about ensuring customers pay for their tickets before travel.)

#### **Q 4 Do you think that Station Managers have a sub-culture?**

Five Station Managers agreed that they did have a sub-culture. They viewed it as a culture of support and help born out of the common problems they faced, their common responsibilities, dealing with the same hierarchy and having common knowledge. It was further reinforced by the attachment they shared outside the workplace with families and friends.

Only one did not agree with this view. He did agree that they shared certain commonalities but did not rank the ties that he had with the others (which was purely professional) to constitute a sub-culture operating in the DART business unit.

#### **Q 5 What could be better about the Station Managers Sub-Culture?**

Two station Managers felt that communication needed to be improved on a formal basis. They sought the establishment of a Station Managers Forum, attended and chaired by Station Managers only.

Two Station Managers felt the way they operated today was completely satisfactory and not in need of any improvement.

The Station Manager that didn't agree there was a sub-culture didn't offer an answer to this.

One station Manager felt that the sub-culture needed to lose its negative side. He felt that the Station Managers are sometimes "too quick to back each other up" and at times "too defensive".

**Q 6 Can you change the culture in your area? What kind of things would you do?**

All six agreed that they could do something about the culture in their stations and halts. The prominent areas they sought to change were:

- (a) **Staff performance**- a lot of their time is spent on absenteeism, uniforms, cash balances and cleaning stations.
- (b) **Staff attitude** – They are constantly seeking ways to get through to the staff about customer respect, customer service. Particular attention is needed they felt to drivers and the staff in the halts. Connected to this was their desire to improve relationships with their staff, build rewards for good performance and open channels to help staff help themselves.
- (c) **Trade union resistance** – a very key area for attention in their view. They see it as important to get the staff to trust them to sort problems before making it a union issue. This they felt would improve staff relations in general if they and not the union could sort the problems.
- (d) **Current work practices** – some of the station managers believed that the new deals for staff were causing a feeling of unequal treatment among different grades and this was causing problems as people sought equity in their own way.

**Q 7 What do you see as priority for Station Managers?**

All six agreed that the **staff issues** were the priority. The station managers themselves felt they needed to free up more **time** to deal with the staff. They needed to get more

**training and development** for the staff and they needed to tackle the issue of **poor performance**.

**Trade unions** were the next priority. They felt that the support function such as HR does not lend the support it should. Issues arise and the Station Managers attempt to get answers but answers do not always get back as quickly as they should and this encourages the staff to seek the trade union out to solve the problem. Some station managers express frustration at this, as they know the staff should be looking to them for answers. Many weeks or months of building trust can be destroyed over one simple issue not be dealt with properly.

The whole issue of **revenue protection** is key for them. Looking at their stations and halts to see where the weaknesses are. Coordinating with the traveling ticket checkers in random checks to enforce the by-laws in relation to fare evasion.

#### **Q 8 What are your three main goals this year?**

All reported similar goals, the most frequent ones identified were:

- (a) Improve customer service – better designed timetables, more facilities at stations
- (b) Improve staff relations – less grievance and disciplinary cases, more training
- (c) Advance technology to improve safety critical operations.
- (d) Tighten up on revenue protection measures – ensure the traveling public understands that fare evasion will be tackled.

#### **Q 9 Do Station Managers see themselves as legitimate Managers?**

Three Station Managers viewed themselves as legitimate managers and three did not.

The three that said they were legitimate managers cited the following reasons:

- (a) They held responsibility for service delivery and all that entailed.
- (b) The buck stops with them
- (c) They are responsible for the training and development of the people they manage.

- (d) They are the link between the senior managers and the staff.
- (e) They are responsible for the revenue generated in their stations and they have to operate within specified cost parameters
- (f) They have to make management decisions all the time.

The three station managers that did not see themselves as legitimate managers cited these reasons:

- (a) They saw themselves as 'dogsbodyes' having to do the jobs of their subordinates when somebody failed to report to work.
- (b) "More like supervisors than managers".
- (c) No control over hiring or firing.
- (d) No control over budget setting.
- (e) No planning role in the business.
- (f) Important decisions are handed down, no involvement

**Q 10 What inhibits Station Managers from achieving the desired Culture for DART?**

The following reasons were given:

- The trade unions were the single biggest obstacle.
- Management on the DART pandering to the trade unions to keep them sweet.
- Lack of time.
- Lack of resources, money, staff numbers.
- The recruitment and selection process not getting the sort of staff needed to operate in the DART environment and thus breeding a culture of laziness.
- Management not following up quickly enough on disciplinary cases. Staff loosing the fear of being on a 'charge'. Coupled to that they felt that to dismiss a staff member was next to impossible and the staff knew this. This also bred the attitude of 'why bother'
- Station Managers being distracted with work more suited to clerical personnel but budgets would not allow their employment so the Station Manager had to do it and spend less time dealing with the culture.
- Having too many goals issued to them, too many objectives.

- Lack of support from other sections such as HR and maintenance, or indeed these functions forcing their priorities onto the Station Managers.
- One Station Manager made the point that staff turnover is virtually non-existent in the business unit and the good staff get promoted leaving the poor performers in the halts, disgruntled and unmotivated and thus problematic.

**Q 11 Do the District Manager and the Manager Suburban communicate the values of DART through the right channels to our Station Managers?**

All the station Managers agreed that the senior managers espoused the right values such as; customer care, punctuality, cleanliness, safety and staff appreciation. They felt that the right channels were being used such as meetings, posters, mail shots to staff and the use of company newsletters and magazines. However they also felt that improvements could be made on several respects:

- (a) Too many meetings saying the same thing
- (b) To dependant on e-mail to send messages. This will not reach all the staff.
- (c) Some actions demanded by the senior team to 'live' the values often place extreme pressures on the Station Manager but the senior team take no cognisance of this.
- (d) No priority or direction on which values are the most important.
- (e) The senior team is not out of the office enough. The station managers stress the importance of being seen by the staff and allowing the staff to met and talk with a senior manager, this they felt would have twice the effect of a message on a notice board.

**Q 12 Do you think DART operates in a competitive environment? What do you think our strategy is for the next 5-10 years?**

Two station Managers said yes and four said no. The two that said yes indicted the following competitive pressures:

- (a) Dublin Bus initiatives to expand services.
- (b) Current government policy in relation to deregulation of state companies.
- (c) The introduction of the Luas and the Metro to Dublin.

The four station Managers that didn't believe DART had competition stated;

- (a) Cars, buses or bikes cannot and never will get people into town as fast as the DART service.
- (b) " We are a monopoly and nobody can touch us"
- (c) The public perception of DART was positive and therefore it was considered to be a good service.

In terms of the strategy for DART going forward the results are:

- (a) Increase capacity of DART trains
- (b) Increase the frequency of services.
- (c) Bring projects such as Spencer dock to the Dublin Transportation Office.
- (d) Electrify the lines to Maynooth and Balbriggan.
- (e) Develop lands where possible to increase car parks so people can park their cars at stations and commute into the city.

**Q 13 If DART was not a semi state business, what would be different?**

The range of answers on the positive side were:

- (a) Four station Managers believed that the power of the trade unions would diminish
- (b) Four station Managers believed that staff attitude would improve as job security would disappear.
- (c) They all believed that overall the customer would benefit.
- (d) One Station Manager believed that government interference would cease.
- (e) Technology would play a bigger part in daily operations.
- (f) The company would become profit driven.
- (g) Station Managers would be better rewarded for their efforts.

However on the negative side the range of answers were:

- (a) The 'railway employee' heritage and culture would be lost.
- (b) DART would become less human.
- (c) Pressure would increase on them and their staff to perform of face being removed.
- (d) Safety would suffer in the name of profit (similar to the UK situation).
- (e) One Station Manager believed that the current station Managers would not survive in a private environment.

**Q 14 How good is DART at achieving its goals? How good is DART at putting resources in place to meet goals? How good is DART at its internal processes and operations? Is DART good at picking up new challenges or does it wait for new goals to be issued to it?**

- Four Station Managers felt we met our goals well, two did not. The key issue from those that did not agree was that DART set too many goals on too broad a basis to be effective.
- Allocation of resources, one Station Manager felt he would have to demand resources to get them, another felt having to put a business case together for resources was time consuming, particularly if the issue was a minor one. Some welcomed new technology because it lessened the need for people or speeded up communication and knowledge about events in the DART.
- A number of Station Managers stated that because of the lack of human resources good ideas were being held back for fear of being tasked with their completion.
- In terms of picking new challenges they all felt that the business unit waited to see what was wanted corporately before issuing new targets. They felt there were areas that DART could bring up the standard without top management approval but did not do it because of time or resources restraints.

**Q 15 Any Other comments?**

Just two Station Managers contributed to this;

- (a) One wanted to state that overall he was happy with the relationship between the Station Managers and the Senior Managers in the DART. He felt that it was open and honest within and between the two levels.
- (b) The other Station Manager wanted to make the point that he felt the pay for the grade was too low. In terms of responsibility in the Station Manager's job he felt there was an imbalance between pay and responsibility. He drew comparisons with other jobs in the company that had comparable pay with far less responsibility. He indicated that in his view, a significant factor in the low demand for Station Managers positions when they became vacant was the low pay.

## **The Senior Manager Interviews Results**

### **Q 1 What does the term 'Organisational culture' mean to you? Describe our culture**

Each of the three senior managers had a very clear understanding of the concept of culture. The HR manager defined it as "*the way an organisation behaves*", the Accountant defined it as "*the philosophy of the people at work*", and the District Manager defined it as, "*the way work is carried out*".

The respondents gave a number of different descriptions of the Culture in DART:

- Traditional internal focus of a monopoly company.
- Operationally focused, get the trains from one point to another.
- The old engineering influences still strong today.
- An element of 'Us and Them' still in existence.
- A degree of cost and revenue concern in the business.
- Less commercially and customer focused than it should be.

### **Q 2 Can you list the values of DART?**

All three agreed that the core values of DART were a clean, reliable and safe service.

### **Q 3 Do you consider the concept of culture a legitimate management concern or another form of employee control?**

All the senior managers saw culture as a legitimate concern for them and DART as a whole. The accountant did add however that it could be used as a subtle form of control and if used correctly he saw nothing wrong with that.

### **Q 4 Do you think the station managers have a sub-culture of their own? What do you think it is?**

Two senior managers did not believe the Station Managers to have a sub-culture. As a result they did not offer an opinion as to what it may be like or how it operated. They did recognise commonalities in the job but felt that is where it stopped. The accountant did believe that they had a sub culture. He felt that they supported each

other through friendship and believed that they saw themselves as a little 'family' in the DART unit.

**Q 5 Does it fit the dominant culture or is it in conflict?**

Only the accountant offered an answer here. He felt there was fit but it was a poor one. He described their sub-culture as 'semi aware' of the overall culture of DART.

**Q 6 How could the station manager's culture be improved? How can you help them?**

All the senior managers felt that improvement was needed in areas such as commercial thinking, more adaptable toward change, more performance driven and customer orientated.

**Q 7 How do you think culture can be managed and changed?**

All senior managers clearly believed that we could manage our culture in DART and change it. We should be looking at corporate strategy to take our lead, translate that into clear goals for the business unit, make sure the right person is in the Station Managers position who can then locally communicate the vision, develop and reward people. The accountant saw it in terms of putting in key measures that the Station Managers could be guided by. For the District Manager it centered on proper structures and strategy to help Station Managers manage their areas effectively

**Q 8 What Organisational culture changes do you see as priority for Station Managers?**

The priorities for the Station Managers in their view was the ability to take on more autonomy, focus locally on customer needs, become more focused on performance of their stations, staff and the booking office staff and have them realise just how much of a contribution they make to the business.

**Q 9 What's your role in the achieving the priorities with Station Managers?**

To support the Station Managers in this the senior managers felt that they needed to improve communication, reward, and training strategies. Provide better policy and

procedures in relation to cash and revenue and provide Station Managers with a clearer vision and goals.

**Q 10 How can you influence the culture operating among the Station Managers?**

They felt that the most important thing they should be doing as senior managers was to **listen** to the Station Managers. From this the next thing was to **help them** with the problems (not solve it for the Station Manager). They felt they should be letting the Station Managers know that the senior team will **support them** in any way possible and never ignore their problems.

The accountant cited the example of the current practice in relation to cash management where the Station Managers and the senior team work well together. The current practice developed from a number of incidents in the past with cash management and resulted in a number of Station Managers being removed from their positions. However lessons were learned, the current agenda in relation to revenue protection and cash management is now very high in every Station Managers mind. Specifically improvements in training, education and procedures in cash handling resulted. All the senior team agreed that this was a significant improvement to the Station Managers culture in all locations.

**Q 11 Do you think that the goals of our Station Managers are in line with the overall strategy of DART?**

All three senior managers did not believe the Station Managers goals were aligned to the overall strategy of DART. They offered a number of reasons for this;

- They were not performance managed or rewarded to achieve corporate goals.
- The senior team was not communicating properly what the goals were and thus causing confusion among the Station Managers.
- The Station Managers goals are dictated by local events and they have a belief that as long as they fulfill goals on a local level they are in fact contributing to the overall strategy.

**Q 12 What inhibits Station Managers from achieving the desired culture for DART?**

The senior team was very clear on this issue:

- Lack of accountability.
- Blame culture.
- Lack of leadership skills.
- No clear, strategic view.
- No feeling of control.
- Lack of training on how to be good managers.

**Q 13 Do you think the District Manager & the Manager Suburban communicate the values of DART to our Station Managers?**

The HR manager felt that we suffered from lack of a clear vision, which he added was an organisation wide problem. This he felt prevented a clear message getting across to the Station Managers. The accountant felt that on a corporate level we did not espouse the values however on smaller issues we had combined talents of being methodical, accurate and getting the Station Managers to 'buy into' ideas. I asked the same question of the DM, not surprisingly he felt that he and I did a good job but suffered from time constraints and a heavy workload.

**Q 14 How do you measure Station Manager performance? Do they know & understand what you're trying to measure?**

The HR manager had a number of measures in place such as, attendance at training programmes and absenteeism levels (both for the Station Managers themselves and their staff).

The accountant had in place a weekly cash balance sent to him every week to monitor actual cash flows through the station and halts. He also had an assistant that would carry out random cash/audit checks on the booking offices. He also had an independent report carried out by the Revenue Control Office (RCO) in Connolly that monitored every month how well the Station Managers made their returns.

The District Manager had a number of measures in relation to punctuality, the number of customer complaints for each Station Manager's area, the number of grievance and disciplinary cases being heard from a particular Station Manager's area.

All the senior managers agreed that the Station Managers understood that these measures were needed and had no problem with any of them. The only issue as the senior team saw it was that Station Managers that were performing well had no incentive (except their own desire to do well) to maintain constant high standards.

**Q 15 Do we operate in a competitive environment, what is our strategy 5-10yrs**

All three agreed that we did have a competitive environment. The district manager and the HR manager viewed competition in terms of the political agenda with public service contracts having to be negotiated and fulfilled. They believed that if the current management could not deliver then government would look at who could and give the operation to them.

The accountant also cited examples like new entrants to the transport market in Dublin such as Luas and Metro. Competition would come in the form of efficiency of operation in addition to high, frequent, reliable and cost effective service levels to match the needs of Dublin city.

The strategy for DART was similar for all three;

- Increase capacity by operating bigger train sets.
- Electrification options on the Maynooth and Northern lines.
- Investment in new signalling to improve frequency through the city center.
- Make a return to the exchequer.

**Q 16 If IE was not a semi state company, would it be different?**

The major change the senior team could see was a radical change in the focus of the company. They believed **profit** would be the driving force behind all decisions. Also they felt that a greater clarity would be put into how the company operated, issues like customer focus would be raised. They also believed there would be more analysis of our 'product' to ensure it was meeting customer needs.

They believed in terms of staff, the company would secure far greater flexibility as the 'job for life' and the monopoly 'comfort zone' would disappear.

The accountant did qualify his opinion however but stating that he did not believe there would be a radical change quickly. His experience of the train operating companies (TOCs) in the UK proved that they still had a number of problems from the British Rail days (BR), and that privatisation had brought its own problems with the number of accidents and fatalities.

**Q 17 How good are we in achieving our goals? Putting resources in place to meet goals? How good are we at internal processes and operations. Are we good at picking up the challenge or waiting to be given new goals?**

- **Goals achievement**, all agreed DART is good at achieving the goals set. Safety and punctuality were cited as the most successful.
- **Resources**, They felt that we often do not have enough resources in terms of money and people. We try to do the best we can but are frequently trying to do too much with too little.
- **Processes and Operations**, strong in areas such as safety and cash management weak in areas such as customer service.
- **Challenges**, the DART business does not set its own challenges, it waits until corporate strategy and objectives have been set and it takes the challenges issued as a result and implements those. One of the big obstacles stopping DART from setting its objectives is the fact that people are 'fire fighting' on a number of issues particularly, staff all the time.

**Q 18 Any other comments?**

No other comments were added.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Discussion Of the Results**

## **Group 1 Analysis of The Station Manger's Results.**

**Q 1 Culture can mean 'the way we do things around here' or a system of shared meanings'. What do you understand from the term culture?**

Four of the Station Managers understood the term immediately; two needed further clarification on the concept but quickly understood the idea once explained. They all offered complete and satisfactory answers to the question. In fact many of them offered Drennan's (1992) definition of '*the way we do things around here*'.

What can be determined however is that they did not understand the concept of culture in the deeper sense that Schein (1992) would advocate:

*'The deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously and define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organisation's view of itself and its environment'.*

Only one Station Manager spoke about attitudes and deeper thought processes behind staff action.

The research shows that even though an understanding of culture exists among the Station Managers, a greater sense of understanding needs to be created. In the recommendations I will set how through training we should achieve that.

**Q 2 What is the dominant culture in Dart?**

The two most important responses from all the interviews were **Safety** and **Staff Relations**. It is not surprising to have safety as one of the most important given the amount of investment and training in developing a safety culture in the company generally. What is a little surprising was that only three Station Managers rated it first. The other three station Managers rated staff relations first.

The general feeling among DART management is that safety must be the first priority. This leads me to conclude that something radical is happening on staff issues to push safety off the top priority for three of the six Station Managers in the business.

What could be happening is the issue of poor performance and industrial relations is taking up too much of the Station Managers time and taking focus off more important safety issues.

Another important point here is what is missing from dominance in the culture, which is the customer. All the station Managers believed that we were not as customer focused, as we should be. The customer was part of the system instead of the system being there to provide a service for the customer:

*"...We don't see our reason to be here to serve the customer, we see it here to runs trains"*

*or*

*"...you will tend to focus on the customer to try and make sure that they are not going to complain and make our day a misery".*

### **Q 3 Can you list the values of DART?**

The results produced four key values:

- (a) Respect for Staff
- (b) Safety
- (c) Customer service
- (d) Revenue protection and cost control.

What can be determined from this is Station Managers are acutely aware of what is important to the business. These four key values could be translated to all parts of the company. So DART Station Manager values are not only in line with senior managers values they are in fact in line with the overall values of Iarnrod Eireann.

### **Q 4 Do you think that Station Managers have a sub-culture?**

Five of the respondents believed they had, one believed they had not. The important factor behind this finding is that the five that believed they had all had a long history together, they rose through the clerical ranks. The tendency to believe in a sub culture may just actually exist from their many years of association with each other and not specifically because they are Station Managers in the DART business.

#### **Q 5 What could be better about the Station Managers Sub-Culture?**

They reported two issues here. Communication, certainly the need for more effective communication is needed among the Station Managers. Whether a special forum as two station managers felt was needed is the solution is not clear, but some of them at least recognise there are weaknesses in their communication system. Two Station Managers believed the current sub culture to be suitable, this is questionable as there is too much dependency on the quick phone call to solve issues.

A second issue focuses on the comment of their speed of 'backing each other up'. This defensive technique that they employ to support each other can often limit their view on issues with potentially damaging consequences for them. This also indicates that there is not enough desire to challenge each other on important matters operating within the group.

#### **Q 6 Can you change the culture in your area? What kind of things would you do?**

All had clear views that they could change the culture in their stations and they all felt that the three main issues were:

- Staff.
- Trade unions
- Current work practices.

The Station Managers tended to concentrate on their own areas only and did not tend to think of the business in general terms. They reflected an attitude that if they solved the problems in their area they would be contributing to the DART business. However

there was no coordinated way of ensuring that solving problems in one section wasn't in fact creating problems in another.

All of them viewed the trade unions as the biggest obstacle to changing the culture. They felt the staff were too quick to go to the union to get problems solved. The Station Managers felt partially responsible for this as they didn't always give the time to deal with issues but they also felt that support functions and senior managers in the DART were not always as helpful as they could be.

In terms of the work practices the Station Managers felt that the new deals for staff were causing problems as some grades of staff were looking at other grades with the perception that they had fared better in the deal and so these staff (particularly in the halts) were seeking to balance the situation in their minds by altering attendance without proper agreement. This was leading to a lot of disciplinary cases being sought and trade union activity.

**Q 7 What do you see as priority for Station Managers?**

Staff issues were identified as a key priority. Dealing with poor performers, discipline and grievance cases, at the same time trying to encourage and train the high performers.

The only other big issue was revenue protection. They all felt that revenue protection measures in their stations and halts needed improvement. They didn't agree with the fact that the traveling public could abuse what is considered to be a good and cheap service so it was very important to all of them to reduce or eliminate fare evasion.

**Q 8 What are your three main goals this year?**

Goals for this year were.

- Improve customer service
- Improve staff relations
- Advance the technological side for the business.

- Improve revenue protection.

We can see a lot of the same themes coming through here. The picture was building of what the station Managers considered important, how they saw their role fitting into this and the kind of things they believed they needed to be doing to achieve what they wanted to achieve.

### **Q 9 Do Station Managers see themselves as legitimate Managers?**

The results were split down the middle, three felt like legitimate managers and three did not. The differences between each of the station managers centered on the view they had of the job they did. For instance those that believed they were managers focused on responsibility, being a link between staff and senior management, decision making. Those that didn't believe they were managers concentrated on the work of their subordinates and the times they found themselves doing the work itself, the elements of the job they didn't control and being excluded from key decisions.

I think it is obvious from this that significant development work needs to be undertaken with the Station Managers to give them the leadership skills they require and have them understand that their position in the DART allows them so much autonomy but limits will apply.

### **Q 10 What inhibits Station Managers from achieving the desired Culture for DART?**

They cited many reasons for this:

- Trade unions
- Lack of time and resources.
- The recruitment of unsuitable staff
- Having too many goals.

The one thing that stood out from this question was that the Station Managers cited every obstacle but never included their own skills and knowledge deficits in their

answers. Is it their belief that they are not an obstacle to themselves? This was interesting in that it was clear the Station Managers laid all the responsibility for their problems on the systems, procedures and their superiors in DART. They failed to see themselves as part of the problem and seek ways to improve their behaviour and performance to improve the culture operating in their stations. This was a key finding.

**Q 11 Do the District Manager and the Manager Suburban communicate the values of DART through the right channels to our Station Managers?**

This question sought to find out what they thought of the senior managers views and values. All the Station Managers felt that we did a good job on getting the message out but they also felt we could be stronger at times.

The real result was that they wanted the senior team out a lot more to spread the values and the message of DART on a personal basis. This was really important to them. They also wanted to get away from the perception that when a senior manager appeared on the ground that trouble was looming for one of them.

They also expressed a desire to follow a clear agenda but felt we were not providing that for them.

**Q 12 Do you think DART operates in a competitive environment? What do you think our strategy is for the next 5-10 years?**

Two Station Managers felt DART had competition and four did not.

The Station Managers agreeing that DART had competition thought about government policy and the increasing incursion of more and more private operators coming in to the transport market. They displayed an ability to 'think outside the box' on this issue. The four Station Managers that didn't believe we had competition stuck to narrow views on car and bus use and determined that they were not really competitive with what we do because they could not shift the volumes we do in the time we take to do it.

However the risk of competition to DART is real and it would only take a change in the political environment to start introducing operators to certain routes around the country or allow an operator to run DART as a stand alone business. Most of the Station Managers are seriously underestimating the threat of competition. This may be linked to their narrow roles and responsibilities narrowing their outlook overall.

All Station Managers view the strategy for DART the same way. Increasing capacity, frequency, expanding the electrification of the railway line. This concurs with corporate strategy currently as we see the development of the DART upgrade project expanding station platforms and building new stations on the north side. Additional DART units have been purchased and are on course for delivery in July 2004. So in terms of strategy the Station Managers have a good idea of where the business is going.

**Q 13 If DART was not a semi state business, what would be different?**

The single strongest feeling was that in a private situation the trade unions would be less powerful, the staff would be easier to deal with as the issue of job security for life would be gone and overall they felt the customer would receive a better service. They did however feel that key elements of DART that existed today would also disappear, such as the concern for safety, and the concern for staff well being.

Many believed that even though the DART business would be better run the cost of this improvement would far outweigh the benefits. The whole culture would change to a profit driven agenda, customers would have to pay far higher prices for tickets on the DART than they do today. They all felt that the UK example was a good example of how not to privatise a railway.

**Q 14 How good is DART at achieving its goals? How good is DART at putting resources in place to meet goals? How good is DART at its internal processes and operations? Is DART good at picking up new challenges or does it wait for new goals to be issued to it?**

This question-sought answers to how they viewed our everyday operations, processes and what impact that had on our goals. Most of the station Managers believed that goals were being achieved, particularly punctuality. Two felt that too many goals were being set by the business and they didn't know how they were performing on any of them. It is this feeling of helplessness that must be tackled in the Station Managers group as matter of urgency.

They all felt that resources were available to the business when it was deemed important but the difficulty as they saw it was that the resources would not be released just because a station manager needed them. The senior managers would have to discuss it with the top team and than a decision was made to release resources. They expressed frustration with the length of time this could take. The lack of human resources they felt was now so bad that it was stifling initiative as good ideas went unactioned or good ideas were not forwarded for fear of being laboured with their completion. Some Station Managers expressed regret at this but remained convinced that it would continue until they were allowed to have more staff.

Leading on from that point the issue of picking up on new challenges and setting new challenges for the business was also suffering as a result of the resources issue. Many Station Managers had ideas on how to improve various issues in their halts but would need extra staff to achieve it. Without these extra resources it would be difficult to complete, as no sign of extra resources were forthcoming this bred an attitude in the Station Managers that they would tackle new challenges when tasked by senior management and then giving them a stronger bargaining position to demand more resources. As a result most of them felt the DART waited to be given new challenges from the top team.

Another reason they felt this way is what they referred to as the 'culture of blame'. This lead to a fear of taking the initiative. If they failed they would be blamed and sanctioned but if an idea from the top or senior managers failed then a senior manager would have to face the consequences. The 'blame culture' they saw as a real blockage to innovation in the DART business.

From the research questions asked it is evident that a number of issues on culture are coming through. The strongest is in relation to their staff, how they see themselves and their view of trade unions as the single biggest obstacle to them in creating the culture they desire in their sections.

In terms of understanding the concept I am satisfied that Station Managers and the senior team in DART understand what culture is about. Indeed many of them used Drennan's (1992) definition of 'the way we do things around here'. What I am concerned about is that the Station Manager's understanding in particular, doesn't go beyond that. The basic assumptions and beliefs that Schein (1992) talks about didn't come through very strongly. The senior team did expand a little more but overall I feel the DART management need to develop their understanding and question deeper why the culture is the way it is in their areas.

The importance of the culture as a subject to DART has for me come screaming through in the research, they know what they want, they know what it should be but there seems to be a lot of confusion about how to get it the way they want it. Linking this to French and Bell's (1990) theory of the 'iceberg' the main problems center around what going on under the surface with their staff in the stations. The informal organisation is very strong among the staff and as Morgan (1989) suggested can prove to be a major constraint in building relations with the staff. The Station Managers are convinced that its down to the trade union. Could it be instead our underestimation of the tasks and consideration needed to forge links with the staff and thus reduce the need for unions to sort every little issue?

I think another factor that they are underestimating is the 'Irish culture'. Brought out in some of the interviews as a 'culture of laziness' operating among the staff in the business, it could in fact be a national cultural issue in that the Irish will work hard but only to a point. After that they need increased stimulation and visible value to spur greater effort. I'm not convinced our Station Managers are providing that.

The evidence from the research questions (appendix 3) for me clearly demonstrates that the management of the DART believes in a 'Managerial' perspective of culture. As Smirch (1993) argued; culture is handed down by top management and is capable

of being manipulated. All the interviewees felt they could change their culture but also believed that they had to create the culture desired by Head Quarters. Another reason is because of the 'consensual nature' of the culture in DART they all accepted the Chief Operating Officer's plan for DART as being the right one. They also conducted their daily activities as if the desired culture of safety, reliability and performance is there, we just 'fall down' on it every so often. It is not visible to the staff they control from what they are saying the research. A further aspect of this particularly in the senior team was the belief in strategy and leadership, that it will create, maintain and change the culture when the top team exercises their 'cultural leadership'.

Some Station Managers did seem to be getting at the 'interpretive view' of culture, understanding to a degree that the culture of DART was in the hearts and minds of the staff. They expressed this by talking about the good staff, the railway culture in DART.

The literature from Brown (1995) and Robbins (1990) in connection with 'Artifacts' is validated in the research. Their attention to staff uniforms and the presentation of the stations are cultural symbols that the Station Managers understand should portraiture a positive image of DART to the customer.

Using Handy's (1993) culture types, the obvious dominant culture in DART is the 'role culture'. I can see this for myself on a daily basis. Our stable environment, jobs defined by function, authority drawn from position and the high governance of rules and regulations on everything we do. In existence also in the DART is the 'task culture' centered on specific projects that get completed efficiently and effectively.

In terms of how strong or weak the culture is on DART, it is clear that there is a very strong operationally ethos combined with safety, engineering and revenue. The staff have a very strong union bias from years of management neglect so the distrust is very evident. As many Station Managers believe our culture is weak in terms of the customer, no real belief that they have to serve the people to any great extent. This has been fostered first of all by the success of the economy and the numbers using the DART everyday and also by the monopoly culture in that the staff do not see any threat from competition. Neither do most of our station managers. If they believed

more in a threat to the service (maybe deregulation) they might intentionally or otherwise spread this to their staff and reduce the comfort zone to increase performance.

In terms of changing the culture on the DART I feel the station managers have a very 'Segmentalist view'. They view their problems in their areas only, they rarely think of the entire business unit, they firmly believe that the union culture will stifle any effort they make so they wait a lot of the time for the senior DART team or the top team to issue decrees before acting. This is linked also to what one Station Manager said about the blame culture. None of them want to take the initiative only to find out they were wrong and facing a sanction, it is safer to act on the senior managers instructions, at least if that goes wrong the senior guy will take the hit. Thus experimentation is avoided or at best very minimal. It also goes back to the lack of resources and keeping ideas under wraps for fear of being tasked with its completion. They are also governed by the desire to avoid conflict.

If we were to discuss the culture of DART using Ulrich's shared mindset approach I'm afraid the results would be poor. All the Station Managers believed that we do not consider the customer as well as we should. When we do consider the customer it is to avoid complains and hassle. We do consider their needs in terms of tangible items such as seats, waiting rooms, having pleasant stations to stand in, but they don't think in terms of a greater benefit in creating the atmosphere of helping the customer, wanting the customer to be satisfied and happy with the experience from DART. As Ulrich says to focus on the 'touch points' to ensure that we interact with the customer in a way they view us as positive and helpful. In relation to investors the management of DART see a vague link to government as an investor, with the exception of two, nobody else made reference to the investment being poured into the company and the resulting expectation to provide value for this investment.

## **Group 2 Senior Manager Results Analysis.**

### **Q 1 What does the term 'Organisational culture' mean to you? Describe our culture**

The senior managers had a very good understanding of the concept of culture. This is evidence that they had all completed a formal educational programme both inside and outside the company. Their description of the culture in DART highlights the fact that DART is still governed by tradition, with the old functions of engineering and accountants dominating the corporate landscape.

They still viewed an 'Us and Them' culture in existence primarily because of the heavy dependency by the staff on the trade union and the low trust the staff had of management in general.

The major element missing from the culture as they saw it was the focus on the customer, the focus on the commercial reality of running a railway.

### **Q 2 Can you list the values of DART?**

The values of DART were simply *'a clean, reliable and safe service'*. All the senior team agreed that this was simply on the face of it to achieve but very difficult to achieve in reality. Many problems existed to slow progress for instance, the monopoly state of mind, industrial relations issues, the slow maturity of investment, staff attitude and commitment. All the senior team felt that a lot of work needed to be done particularly by the Station Managers to have all their staff prepared to fully meet the demands of a growing city.

All the senior team did agree that the safety issues were being fully addressed in terms of resources and training. The next step was to extend the commitment to safety that the management and staff clearly shared into other areas of the business.

### **Q 3 Do you consider the concept of culture a legitimate management concern or another form of employee control?**

All three saw it as a legitimate concern. To view culture as tool for a kind of mind control would be an abuse of its positive effects on the workforce. The accountant did add however that if certain aspects of culture were used properly it could be used to control certain situations. I do not agree with this, if staff view the management trying to manipulate them through what ever means then all trust is lost. Trust is key to a successful culture in DART.

**Q 4 Do you think the station managers have a sub-culture of their own? What do you think it is?**

Two senior managers did not believe they had a sub-culture as such. Instead they recognised that certain commonalities existed in the job but these commonalities did not constitute a sub culture. Only the suburban accountant did see it as sub culture.

The interesting feature of these answers is that in my opinion the suburban accountant is closer to the station managers than the other two. He sees how they operate and how they interact with each. He has formed a closer bond to the Station Managers than the District Manager or the HR manager. Interestingly he calls them a 'family'. The question then is, has the accountant a better understanding because of his closer links to the station managers or do the other two senior managers have a better understanding because they have a little distance from the station managers. My view is that the accountant has the better understanding which demonstrates that the senior team need to spend more time getting to know the station managers. That would help them to manage the station managers more effectively and thus the DART business unit more effectively.

**Q 5 Does it fit the dominant culture or is it in conflict?**

Only the accountant offered an answer to question five, in relation to the 'fit' of the sub culture with the overall DART culture. In his description of it being a poor fit I found myself agreeing. They are only 'semi aware' of the overall culture of DART. They spend so much of their time narrowly thinking and dealing with the issues in their local areas (which they would argue is their job) that they do not think of the consequences of their actions on the business as a whole.

**Q 6 How could the station manager's culture be improved? How can you help them?**

The senior team felt areas such as commercial thinking, performance and customer orientation were fundamental areas for development. This highlights the need for some structured management development for the station managers. The lack of skills in this area was quite significant when you consider that these are the senior managers of the future. The company needs to train these people now so that they can successfully progress to senior levels in the future.

**Q 7 How do you think culture can be managed and changed?**

They all agreed that it could be. The senior team however looked at strategy issues, corporate targets and succession planning. They didn't break it down into how that would work for the station managers. This is an ongoing problem for DART with the two levels of manager talking about the same ideas but in two different languages.

**Q 8 What Organisational culture changes do you see as priority for Station Managers?**

They all agreed that more focus on the customer, on staff performance and to develop the ability to take responsibility for their areas.

This is a key determination as a major issue for the station managers generally is the slowness to take responsibility and be accountable for the action taken in their stations. They need to stop asking the senior team for permission to tackle even the slightest issue. The senior team needs to set out clearly the boundaries of such actions so that station managers do not make decisions they have no authority to make. If culture change is to happen in DART successfully then this needs to be addressed by all the DART managers.

**Q 9 What's your role in the achieving the priorities with Station Managers?**

They all felt their role in achieving priorities with the station managers was through strategy and policy formulation and implementation. The senior team believed that if they can make more effective strategies as guidelines to station managers that would

encourage the station managers to make more independent decisions within the set guidelines. The senior team believed the benefits of this to be quick resolution of issues at local level, less involvement of the senior team in small local issues, less time dealing with the trade unions more time to devote to improving standards for the staff and the customer.

**Q 10 How can you influence the culture operating among the Station Managers?**

In relation to the senior team influencing the station manager's culture they were clear that they needed to listen more and offer more support. The station managers did have key issues that they needed addressed and the senior team felt that because of their own heavy workload some issues were allowed to slide. However they also realised that to leave a small issue for too long means having to deal with a bigger issue in the future. If the right type of culture was going to permeate through the DART business unit the senior team needed to devote more time to the issues affecting the station managers. This focus would allow the station managers to gain confidence in their own abilities knowing they had the backing of the senior team.

Some lessons had been learned the hard way in the business unit. Some station managers were removed from their positions for cash management failures. The results of this however is now two teams of managers in the business unit very focused on cash handling, sharing information and monitoring the situation very closely, practically on a daily basis.

**Q 11 Do you think that the goals of our Station Managers are in line with the overall strategy of DART?**

They agreed that the station managers were not aligned. The station managers in their view were to focused on local issues. However they did feel that this was not necessarily a problem created by the station managers. They felt the senior team were more accountable in this. Our failure to communicate what goals were important to them or our constant changing of important goals must be confusing. The fact that the station managers were outside the performance management process they also believed was a significant weakness. If the station managers could be brought in on this process they would quickly begin to change and focus on the results that offered

them rewards. The senior team were convinced that this would significantly broaden the station managers outlook to see how they could contribute not only to the effective operation of their own halts but the overall objectives of the DART business unit. They also felt that the goals they would set would be more fully adhered to in this situation.

**Q 12 What inhibits Station Managers from achieving the desired culture for DART?**

They all agreed that the major issues were lack of accountability, lack of leadership skills, no feelings of control and lack of training on how to be professional managers. In a broader discussion they felt the whole way of recruiting station managers needed to be addressed. The fact that it was not a desired position in the business also made it difficult to get good candidates. Some issues around that were again reward and development. They believed that the job needed to be associated with more positive developmental and progressive elements of the position.

**Q 13 Do the District Manager and the Manager Suburban communicate the values of DART through the right channels to our Station Managers?**

They were quite critical here believing that we did not in fact get the values of DART across to the station managers. We failed on the big issues of corporate values but were more successful in the local values important just to the DART. This made me think, were we as DART managers just looking after the local values and not taking a corporate look at the company like the top team to see how DART fitted into the company? If this were the case then could the station managers just be reflecting the culture that they saw operating at a level above them? In other words just propagating the culture of narrow focus and self-interest. It was clear to me then that if we were to change that focus in the station managers then we would have to start with ourselves.

**Q 14 How do you measure Station Manager performance? Do they know & understand what you're trying to measure?**

Each of the senior managers had specific and robust measures in place. However they felt that when these measures highlighted a poor performing station manager it proved

very difficult to correct that manager. They felt this way for a number of reasons; (a) the station managers could always point to some function or policy that acted against the station manager achieving his goal (b) the station manager's belief that no real action could be taken against them unless it was connected to cash in some way (c) the station manager's constant referral to the senior team before acting in the belief that if failure occurred then the senior manager was implicated and therefore would take (or at least share) the penalty.

The senior team felt that these attitudes mitigated the consequences of not performing to the standards required in the station manager's minds. This was further supported by the fact that the only station managers to be removed from their positions in recent years were removed for not implementing stringently enough the company's cash management policies resulting in a loss of revenue for the company.

Another point on this was also the station managers were outside the performance management process and had no incentive to perform to higher standards. The senior team felt it was not enough to develop the measures without developing the rewards. They also felt that it would put them in a stronger position than to act on poor performance, however the decision to involve the station managers in performance appraisal was a decision that had to be taken at top management level. The senior team agreed that this situation would continue until this decision was made.

**Q 15 Do we operate in a competitive environment, what is our strategy 5-10yrs**

All the senior team agreed that DART was in a competitive environment. But rather than cite cars and buses as competition they saw the political arena as the place where DART's competitive fortunes would be won or lost. To continue to operate as a semi state the company needed to demonstrate its ability to manage the transport situation in Dublin, grow to suit new demands but do so while curbing its costs. This was the challenge given by government to the top team and thus down to all management levels. The senior team felt that currently this objective was being achieved and DART was playing its part.

**Q 16 If IE was not a semi state company, would it be different?**

The big change for Dart if it were not a semi state company they felt would be the focus on profit. Currently DART is not allowed to be fully competitive as it has to get approval from the Department of Transport for fares increases. The success in getting a fare increase is often linked to government policy on inflation and the state of the economy in general. The average fare for the DART today is €1.70 even in these times of economic prosperity. So the DART focuses on cost efficiency and service level provision.

They also felt that the current culture in DART was very human focused. Employee well-being was very important to them. The company not only honoured the statutory obligations placed upon it but on individual cases helped employees through many personal crises. The senior team were able to quote many cases where staff were facilitated well beyond what any reasonable employer would have to do. This mainly centered on pay and time off to deal with personal issues.

The great benefits to the organisation as they saw it would be a change to dealing with poor performers. In a private situation the 'job for life' did not exist and so motivated employees to perform well or be dismissed. The DART had no such facility. Between legislation protecting workers rights and the clever use the trade unions made of this legislation it was virtually impossible to dismiss a member of staff. They felt frustration with this as they felt the majority of willing and capable employees were often disillusioned with the perceived lack of sanctions being taken against poor employees.

Only the accountant believed that no real change would occur, he looked at the UK experience with privatisation and felt it had failed. He acknowledged some of the issues around customer service improvements etc but felt that safety had been compromised for profit and it had cost lives. All the senior team agreed that it was too high a price a pay and efforts should be concentrated on improving the DART within the confines of a semi state environment.

**Q 17 How good are we in achieving our goals? Putting resources in place to meet goals? How good are we at internal processes and operations. Are we good at picking up the challenge or waiting to be given new goals?**

In terms of goals and resources the senior team had mixed views. We did perform well in safety, operations and punctuality we did not do well in customer service and cost control. With our resources were trying to do too much with too little and our processes again were strong in safety but weak in customer centered areas of the business. The combined effect of lack of certain resources and the very stringent cost control programmes was to diminish the desire to try new challenges. The business unit they believed waited for the top team to issue challenges and at the same time supply resources to achieve it. This had become in their view the way things were done in DART.

It echoes back to what the station managers said earlier about lack of accountability, not wishing to be the one to blame and not wishing to forward ideas for fear of being tasked with their completion.

The one thing this question did bring out was the fact that all the managers in DART felt they are constantly under pressure to keep up the many facets of running the DART system. This leaves no time to seek or implement improvements.

As we can see from this discussion the two teams in DART share many similar views and differ in their views on certain things. Before discussing that, it is important to understand where these difficulties in our culture originated. It would not be fair to solely say the managers in DART are responsible for this culture among themselves and the staff. It has its roots in the past.

### **The Historical context.**

In a report commissioned for the Minister of Public Enterprise in 2001 the history of the company was explored and gave a number of insights that largely explain the reasons for many of the views expressed in the interviews with both sets of managers in DART.

The historical context of the company saw the monopoly culture of the company coupled with demotivated management and problematic trade unions combine to significantly obscure the customer.

*“...IE was exceptional among commercial semi-state companies in that it did not face the kind of competitive challenges faced by telecoms, airlines or buses. This reinforced the monopoly culture already in place, did nothing to incentivise management to adopt best practice and encouraged the development of restrictive practices by employees and trade unions. In this situation the needs of the customer were significantly neglected.”(Attley et al 2001)*

The report went on to identify areas of what it called ‘*a culture lacking in customer focus and commercial discipline*’. It viewed the management as weak in planning, with a poor business model, a line management being undermined and a collapsing IR and disciplinary system. It had ‘*significant shortcomings*’ in structures, Information and training. All this combined to produce a situation with low staff morale and considerable customer service weaknesses.

Since the publication of this report and indeed the efforts of management going back to 1997 finance and other resources have been made available to the organisation. Investment in new train sets, new DART units and new signalling have been made. The training center in Inchicore has been properly staffed and managed to provide a wide range of courses for all staff. The one area still under development however is management training. So while the legacy of neglect was wide and deep in the organisation and the DART the situation has begun to improve.

### **The Two Management Teams Views Discussed.**

Broadly reviewing the two sets of interviews it is clear that both management teams share a lot of similar views for instance;

- (a) They both understand culture in the same way

- (b) They both recognise that we are not customer focused and a lot of work needs to go into becoming more customer focused.
- (c) They share very similar views on the future strategy of the DART. This is very important as the business clearly wants to expand and to have both sets of managers convinced this is the right thing to do is a significant step in making it happen quickly and successfully.
- (d) They both see the potential benefits to the organisation to take a more private sector view on running a railway, however they all share the same concerns in relation to sacrificing safety for profit. They all agreed that effort should be made to incorporate the customer in to their thinking and at the same time provide value for money for our main shareholder the government.

They do however differ on a number of key issues;

- (a) The senior team did not believe the station managers have a sub culture yet most of the station managers do believe they have one. This is important for the senior team not to underestimate the link the station manager's share with each other. The senior team must learn to tap into this group's culture to ensure it never works against the overall objectives of DART.
- (b) There is a distinct gap in the perception of what is blocking the desired culture. The station managers see it in terms of not being involved in crucial decisions combined with other forces such as trade unions and scarce resources. The senior team views it as being the responsibility of the station managers to take control for their own areas and display leadership to their staff. This is an important in so far as it has highlighted that each team is waiting for the other to solve the problem and so it could result in no action being taken.
- (c) The two teams differ greatly on the issue of competition. The DART is quite clearly in a competitive environment yet four of the six station managers do not believe it is. The senior team is convinced it is. So how could the opinions differ so much? The senior team needs to look at how it deals with this issue because the message has not gotten through to the station managers. If it hasn't reached the station managers then they will not be imparting a sense of urgency to their staff in performance terms thus reinforcing the false 'comfort zone'. The key determination is that if this line of management sees no

competition then they will not fully appreciate the need to improve, they in turn will not motivate their staff to improve.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

Iarnrod Eireann is going through a rapid transition and change. The legacy of neglect left deep and wide deficits in all areas of the company particularly the management. However what has come out of this research for me is a very strong desire by all the managers in DART to make the changes needed to improve the DART service and its image to the customer.

The most impressive result from the research is the alignment within the two managements teams of what the real issues are;

- (a) People
- (b) Resources
- (c) Customer service
- (d) Training and development.

Many top management teams spend a lot of time trying to get their middle managers to agree on the issues, the DART management already has this agreement to build on.

They also share a common understanding of each others jobs and the difficulties involved. There is a real cohesiveness between the station managers and the senior team. It works on a daily basis from the informal phone conversation to the formality of the monthly meeting. The openness and honesty operating between the two teams is a key strength for them. They may not always agree with each other but they have the positive working relationship that allows disagreement without any long term damaging effects.

The Station Managers have a deep and solid appreciation for safety. This is very important to them in every thing they do and is reassuring that DART is running a very safe operation.

Both management teams share a very positive future outlook for DART and they support the company's decisions in terms of expansion. They both share the same strategic views for the business unit and are willing to proactively support the top team in securing the necessary objectives to make the strategy a success. They all

identify strongly with DART as sub business unit of Iarnrod Eireann, having the view that in a way it is a very special unit in the company. This unity and shared belief is something they can make into a powerful force for influencing their staff to develop the desired culture in DART.

Station managers do not currently have the necessary skills to fully develop themselves and their staff to make DART a fully customer service oriented business unit. The reasons for this are many. The history of neglect, the lack of investment in management training, the poor recruitment and selection process, the lack of benchmarks for station managers and the lack of consequences for those that fail to meet the measures that are there.

Station Managers suffer in nearly every competency required for the job (Appendix 9). Four key competencies seen as key for the organisation were; (Miller et al 2002):

- (a) Business Knowledge
- (b) Operational skills
- (c) Interpersonal Skills
- (d) Personal Qualities

These four competencies cover their knowledge of the railway up to their commercial appreciation needed for the role plus the planning, decision-making and leadership roles they are required to carry out. From the interviews it was clear that the station managers felt they were not involved in the planning process or key decisions taken and were therefore lacking in these skills. It will have to be addressed so the station managers can assume the full responsibility of their role.

Developing out of this was the particular attention that needed to be paid to finance and cost control. The interviews clearly showed that station managers lacked the understanding to implement budget controls on their operation. Their dependency on the suburban accountant in this respect was enormous. The suburban accountant was feeling the pressure of constantly having to re-examine how each station manager was performing on his budgets and warning them of possible overruns.

Another key factor is the poor succession planning and recruitment of people into the station manager's grade. Up to now they were always filled from the clerical ranks. This was done in a semi-structured way where certain people followed a career path of Clerk, chief clerk, temporary station manager, station manager. The entire way along this path the clerk never had any real responsibility for people or needed operational experience. Only when appointed do these become the issues and at that stage it is often too late, the company has a station manager without the required skills. This applies to all the station managers on the DART with the exception of one who came through the traffic. He has excellent operational knowledge as a result but like the others lacks the finer details in relation to finance and customer service.

A major factor preventing the right quality of candidate getting through is the way the company advertises for station managers. They insert a simply advertisement internally which does not give any information about the job. The fact that three station managers have been removed from their positions in recent years further hinders the ability of DART to promote the positive side of the job and get different people interested. Recent agreements with the trade unions now mean that staff from all grades can apply for management positions. The DART senior team needs to explore these possibilities and gain as wide a pool of candidates as possible for future station manager development.

The gap in perception on a number of key issues between the two sets of management in the suburban is worrying. The fact that the senior team don't recognise the sub culture that exists in the station manager's grade can potentially lead to resistance from the station managers if the senior team fail to think in terms of how they will all be effected by decisions taken. The accountant was the most acutely aware of this subculture and how it worked which was evidence that the senior team needed to spend more time with each station manager.

Another conclusion in relation to the barriers to culture development in the DART was the fact that the station managers were waiting for the senior team to solve the big issues like trade union resistance or implement new policy while the senior team were waiting for the station managers to take more responsibility locally and reduce the

number of issues before taking action. The main difference was how each team saw how the barriers were to be overcome and each waiting for the other to solve the problems. This highlighted the need for more discussion between the two groups in relation to problem solving. The business was in danger of seeing little or no effective action being taken as each team thought it was the others responsibility to do something about it.

From what has been said above the single biggest conclusion to be drawn is that Iarnrod Eireann, as a company and DART as a business unit do not train our station managers to be professional managers. How can the senior and top teams expect them to perform when we don't set down the guidelines properly for them to follow, and we don't provide the basic skills in people management, finance and operational knowledge? We do provide training in safety critical elements of their work and this has shown consistently throughout the research to have tangible benefits. The organisation now needs to move into the areas of properly advertising the position, recruitment and development and reward to gain the best possible station managers for the business.

In the next section I will make specific recommendations on how we should achieve this.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Recommendations**

## **Recommendations**

Specifically in terms of attracting and developing the right candidates for the station manager's position I make the following recommendations.

### **HR PLANNING / TRAINING**

- **Structured Succession Planning**

Succession planning for Station Managers is currently happening in a somewhat semi-structured way. Current practice should be documented and further developed to ensure that suitable candidates are identified and groomed for potential vacancies. This should be publicised to ensure candidates are selected in a systematic way from as wide a pool as possible.

- **Role-Specific Induction Training for Potential / New Station Managers**

Development of induction training for the role, including exposure to all activities undertaken by those reporting to Station Managers, to ensure full understanding of all role requirements.

- **Skills Development**

The increasing demands on Station Managers in relation to business, financial and people management make this a priority area for training. Both existing and proposed courses need to be assessed to ensure that this need is fully addressed.

- **Training Evaluation**

This already takes place for some courses – particularly those related to safety. Where this is not the case, a system needs to be devised to measure the effectiveness of transfer of knowledge from training to job-related activities.

### **SELECTION AND ASSESSMENT**

- **Improved Communication**

Increase knowledge of (and correct misperceptions of) the role through more effective communication. This involves re-evaluating the advertising for Station Manager roles in terms of both content and design. It could also incorporate the use of information seminars in conjunction with advertising to ensure as wide a selection of possible of applicants.

A key element will be to publicise the increased mobility as a result of the new agreement – i.e. the opening of the Station Manager role to operative staff. Overall awareness of this change appears to be low.

- **Introduction of Short listing**

Short-listing for interviews would increase cost-effectiveness, as well as avoiding unnecessarily increasing expectations.

- **Building Expertise around Recruitment**

The need here is around increasing the numbers of trained interviewers as well as building on the existing expertise.

- **External Recruitment**

In certain circumstances consideration should be given to external recruitment.

## **COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK**

- **Competency Profiles**

The new competency framework (appendix 6) should be used to identify and address future candidates for the role, as well as to maximise the strengths and address any development needs of existing jobholders.

### **Culture Strategy Group.**

- Referring back to the station manager's forum desired by a number of station managers, this concept should be developed into more of a 'Culture Strategy Forum'. This would involve station managers and senior managers on the DART coming together at two monthly intervals to discuss issues purely in relation to culture. A member of the top team could be invited to attend some of the meetings

in order to contribute to the agenda of simply take something away and see if could be applied to the whole organisation. The type of issues the forum could deal with would be;

- Barriers to effective DART Culture.
- Communication with Staff.
- Leadership & Relationship building.
- Training & Development needs.

### **Commercial Appreciation**

- Station managers on the DART currently (and all future Station Managers) should go through a training process so that they fully understand how to operate a business paying particular attention to costs and cost control. It is no longer feasible for the suburban accountant to monitor their costs for them. They need to be taught to actively manage their budgets and implement cost controls that would be of benefit to the whole business unit. This will also make those among the current group feel more like managers and address the deficiency and lack of confidence some of them have from not fully believing they are managers.

### **Specific Measurements.**

- The senior team needs to introduce specific measurements to encourage and guide the Station Managers in achieving desired goals. Some measures are in place such as punctuality and absenteeism. Other areas in need of development are complaints in relation to both staff and stations. This needs to be broken down further into type of complaints made, actions being taken to address these complaints and what costs are associated with these actions.
- More use of the independent report by the Revenue Control Office (RCO) to ensure that returns are made timely and accounts are being dealt with in the right way.
- The one initiative that would significantly help this process is the performance related reward system in the company. The Station Managers are currently outside this process. They should be brought into it as soon as possible and have some of

their rewards linked to the overall performance of the business unit. This would assist in getting them to think corporately.

### **Further Training.**

- The senior managers in the DART need to further develop their skills to allow and encourage the station managers to develop at a steady rate. The idea of a personal development plan (PDPs) in use for the top team should be cascaded down to the senior DART team and the station managers. This would allow certain time frames to be agreed and the training provided to each manager.
- Further to this a 'development planning workbook' or schedule could be developed that would identify training needs and opportunities. These should focus at on-the-job opportunities as well as more formal educational opportunities.
- Each station manager interested in advancement should be given the opportunity to experience a higher-level job such as District Manager. This could give the individual insight to the pressures of the position before actually being responsible for it. This would allow station managers to make career decisions early and put their energies into achieving the advancement they desire and not necessarily follow the path that has traditionally existed for them.
- Some station managers indicated that they did not wish to progress any further. This gives an ideal opportunity to the DART to set these people up as mentors who could teach future station managers the practical skills needed to be a station manager. This could be done at little cost to the business unit and offers the senior team a robust method of analysing the potential of future candidates.

### **Further Research.**

- Culture change and culture management is the key to Iarnrod Eireann's success. However I stress that I have only touched the surface of this topic in relation to DART. I recommend that a further in depth study be carried out. This could include the top management team and middle management team, the trade unions (both local and branch level) and individual members of staff

in the stations, halts of all various grades. The benefits of such a study would far outweigh the cost.

- This research could be replicated on other business units of Iarnrod Éireann to determine if the same results could be found for other groups in the company.
- A cross-functional study in a number of business units would provide an in-depth analysis of how the culture in the company operates and impacts across the organisation. This would serve to provide highly valuable information to top management into how all the departments interact to provide a service to our customer.

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**Appendix 1**  
**Station Manager interview Transcripts.**

**INTERVIEW WITH STATION MANGER ONE**

**WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2004**

**Q 1: Can you tell me Culture is often being described as the way we do things around here, our system of shared meanings what does culture mean to you?**

**SM:** I think the question that describes culture fairly well is the number of things that we have inherited its something that's not easily changed, It is very much the way we do things round here it also can be straight jacket I think, people just see the culture I suppose as a way that we do things, I don't we have much more I'd like to say

**Pat:** so you understand the term culture right anyway right that's the question is to clarify for research purposes that you understand what I am talking about you know what I mean, okay so

**Q 2: What do you think the dominant culture is in DART at the moment do you thing we are very customer focused or very internally focused or is a mixture of two or three big things?**

**SM:** dominant culture I don't think we are being very clear I wouldn't see it as not customer focused, I think we are probably quite old fashioned in that we just run trains, and even at that at times we are a bit slack, just trying to think it through a little bit, a dominant culture on the DART, yea as I said I don't see any dominant culture on the DART I think we are slow to see that we are here to provide services for the customer, even if the word customer is not a, I wouldn't it's a growing term on a DART but I wouldn't consider it a conventional term, we use passenger, we don't see our reason to be here to serve the customer we see it here to run trains, there dosen't seem to be any huge emphasis on at ground level anyway with regard to revenue that we need to improve revenue about cost cutting, so the dominant culture is definitely not business driven

**Pat:** so its more operations, just run your trains A to B and if the customer can fit in with that well and good, alright that's good,

**Q 3: What do you think the values of DART are at the moment? What values do you think we have?**

**SM:** maybe be a little bit parochial about this and maybe talk about how I feel that might be mainly be a good starting point, I think we are as an organisation everything is more human orientated ye know as in staff helping staff, I would think that staff are beginning to see that although they would be a lot of grievance there about past baggage,

**Pat:** do you think we pay attention to costs?

SM: again its growing, but its working its way down but at ground level I'm not too sure if there is a buy into it yet we need to raise the awareness and again ye know culture change but I think at ground level there is a complete misunderstanding

Pat: nothing to do, when you say ground level now are you talking about the supervisors underneath you is it? Or are you talking about your Station Managers?

SM: yes I would say my level down sort of thing actually its more front line staff ye know that will include drivers platform staff, not too sure if there is a real need for cost cutting just seems to be a bottomless pit of ye know, keep going, there is a feeling there essential service and its not going to stop. If I loose money there or not its still going to keep going, and we are all going to be still here

Pat: what about the value of earning revenue do you think that's in the DART do you think that is important to us?

SM: personal level I think at my level and particularly at both level, revenue improving revenue would be a priority again personally I would feel as a priority and obviously I have this opportunity I'll take advantage of it, I'm not too sure if there is again a huge belief in developing revenue, again I suppose if we come from maybe I'm jumping ahead a bit, the difference really between a Semi State and this is part of the culture again baggage that would take us from the past is that we are Semi State it would be there in the morning and our money will be there on Thursday there is no real, there is a security there so there is no we don't feel in anyway vulnerable regarding our values and ways and maybe if it was a little bit more ? linked into revenue or the business we may be a little bit more concerned about it

Pat: okay so just want to summarise that cause we've three good values there right we seem to have that there seems to be a human in a staff element of DART that we value our staff, we value at keeping our costs down and we value trying to get our revenue up but we're either slow to do it or we kind of fumbling around trying to do it like we are not clear on how to do it or what to do is it? We do seem to have the values but we are not caring how to do it

SM: I think part of the problem is that between the Management and staff I'm reluctant to say enough on them cause I don't like ? but there is a little bit of that I just think the link between Management and staff if a bit vague, and I think for any organisation and again I'm moving into personal things here, for any organisation is function well we need professional front line managers because they are the link between the management say and the staff, and the weaker the link, the weaker the front line manager the weaker that link will be, so I would see

Pat: are you talking about when you said front line managers now are you talking about..

SM: Station Manager's

Pat: right yourself and your colleagues

SM: very much initially the Station Managers the line manager as in the Station Manager rather than a DTE type person because the line manager is that link the person who links a manager to staff under him or her, and I really feel you know we need to seriously look at our front line manager levels of professional variety that's the only way we will raise awareness, we can have all the awareness we want at Senior Management levels when ?? are down its that

Pat: and you seem to be saying that even if the message does get down to them they need to be trained to understand it kind of thing, cause the message is they don't know so they don't understand it so they do nothing about it,

SM: they briefly continue continuity there

Pat: so the message needs to be right but they need to understand it, okay right. The theme Sub Cultures now just for clarification a Sub Culture we'll say upstairs you have the engineering office, you have an accounts for the sake of argument and you can walk even though they are on the same floor and we work for the same company you can walk into the two offices and get two completely different reactions so each office even has its own Sub Culture, so my question is.

**Q 4: Do you consider that yourself and your colleagues have a Sub Culture of your own do you think you have?**

SM: my experience of it is I don't think so but coming maybe from a different background maybe a unconventional background for this position maybe I just don't see maybe I'm just not long enough in the position to see it, but I can see where it could very easily happen, and you gave the examples maybe of say three different offices and the Divisional Engineers have a Sub Culture I could understand it happening with Station Manager's that they could feel neglected, which I do think maybe

Pat: do you think there is bond between ye at some level?

SM: its probably a bond because inadversity you tend to get

Pat: do you think you see a common enemy of some description, could be me could be me it could be Senior Managers, and draws ye closer together to say well have to protect one another now against, does that operate at all now?

SM: because the common duties and common responsibilities and I suppose common grievances that's why there would be a certain amount of unity there, I'm not too sure if there is a Sub Culture though ye know I don't see it as a Sub Culture as such but there would be a certain amount of sharing of I'd say

Pat: yea I just going to write down here tend to see at common enemy at some time, right so your saying there is a kind of bond at some level, like other feedback has been if there is a question about ticketing or revenue or something like that that one Station Manager would have no hesitation in ringing another one

SM: there would be a lot of that, without a doubt we'd be sharing

- Pat: weather that is strong enough to be a Sub Culture then is arguable, so you think its because you are geographically broken up?
- SM: well that would be on reason, the other reason is again from a personal point of view is that I wouldn't come up as a lot of them, when ?? come up to Bray to any of them and maybe I just don't have that personal bond with them or the connection which I'm don't feel the need for, its just maybe another Station Manager will have a different cause he or she may have come up and they have that bond
- Pat: they have been doing the job longer with the others or something, do you think the Station Manager's should have one?
- SM: yes maybe for a team approach yea and again I'd be reluctant to call it a Sub Culture but I think as a team approach ye know benefiting from another person's experience like a synergy type of thing but I'm reluctant and nearly sort of seeing Sub Culture now as a bad word, or a negative word,
- Pat: but yea it can be if it works against, we say what DART is trying to achieve right if the six of ye banged together we are going to stop that now you are operating as a unit to stop something going ahead but if you came together and said well there is the GMs idea and the GM, wants to do something about revenue protection and ye came together and said right this is how we are actually going to achieve it now that is where you are operating as a positive six, so there is two sides of it, so what do you think of the Station Manger's forum?, just where the Station Managers come together no District Manager nobody else chaired by a Station Manager and issues thrown out on the table and discussed
- SM: yea its like it might be something that could be done a little bit down the road I felt a clarity of vision would be great really ye know, greater interaction with the Management, part of the problem is everybody is snowed under and once things are going alright people are let get on with this job and again my situation I'd feel like if you missed the service review group on a Monday for a couple of weeks and there is no Station Manager's meetings you quite possibly may not talk to anyone for a couple of weeks, if things just wen't alright
- Pat: so you are leaning more the other way to get the District Manager and the GM more involved not less
- SM: the Station Managers forum on its own I'm not too sure if there is value there, but a group of Station Manager's led my a senior manager definitely value in that because we will be singing off the same hymn sheet, yet
- Q 5: What could be better about the Station Manager's culture? But have we agreed that there isn't really there is relationships there is common bonds but its not strong enough to be a Sub Culture so, so you think that question is relevant even that what could be better about a Station Manager's culture? What could be better about the Station Manager's dealing with each other even ?**
- SM: well I think this goes back to the forum maybe right there has to be some benefit in it, but I'm not too sure if it's a priority, I think greater leadership is a priority

and I think the organisation is seeing that now that we have great leadership you know with clarity of vision coming from the COO and that's what I believe that's what I feel there should be clear targets the Station Manager's should be brought into performance management like they should have been one of the first into it without, it's a line, it's the line managers are I would see as more important

Pat: okay in your area in your station and your halts do you think you can change the culture in your area first of all, do you think you can change it

SM: yea

**Q 6: What kind of things would you do to change it or what kind of things are you doing to change it?**

SM: the sort of things I'm doing are issues on the performance of staff actually doing their job, cleanliness, improving relationships internal relationships with members of staff, say with Drivers then a bit of a sense of urgency punctuality getting on a train on time, getting away obviously with everyone the customer care, and I don't know if I mentioned presentation of themselves, fairly basic ones now you know

Pat: but still that's why you and I are on the same wavelength sometimes when I hear discussions about and they're up here, if you build your house on sand your house is going to fall down so when I hear you talk you know what I mean we have to get it right you get the guy in the uniform if he has a problem that he might just come to you first that he might just go to shop steward that's what I like about you that we share that get it right here and this will look after itself with a bit of direction so okay there's the few things that you will do list them in priority then for me

**Q 7: What do you see the top three things out of that?**

SM: customer care has probably covered a multitude, but customer care is definitely a priority

Pat: staff relations would that be another big one would it?

SM: internal relationships and I'm a bit concerned cause it seems to be unique where I am that we have such bad relationships but then you know punctuality of trains the urgency of drivers getting to their trains.

Pat: customer care & staff relations

SM: I just think punctuality

Pat: delivering the service I know what you are saying, they would be the top three for you, this kind of question sounds the same, just go bigger picture now for a second

**Q 8: If you could set your own goals this year just your area what would be the three main goals that you would go after?**

SM: it is a very similar question, but customer care would have to be there, if I was given the authority to actually make serious changes I would be looking at revenue and improving revenue, so we have customer care we've revenue and again I'd have to say delivery of service again and all that that entails as in drivers on trains on time especially on shunts, critical shunts there isn't that many of them yet that they are critical and people have to be made aware

Pat: to that is what you are doing down there you kind of saying to the guys right we have 30 shunts but these 6 are the ones that we really important.

SM: basically only 3 or 4 but I would see them as crucial to the service instead of sort of 15 of them they become another list so we've pushed a few of them.

Pat: and then you have the guys thinking in terms of these 3 or 4 shunts I have to get that's very good.

**Q 9: Do you think Station Managers see themselves as legitimate Managers in the DART?**

SM: personal opinion yea without a doubt

Pat: they do see themselves as Managers why would you say that?

SM: I suppose again I'm just using my own experience without sounding flippant about all this with 70 + staff you would have to see yourself as some sort of a Manager with that amount of staff, while we don't have the DASH Upgrade with a €6 million turnover, well that's our responsibility you'd have to see yourself as nothing other than a Manager, ye know a ¼ of the DART turnover 70+ staff 30 odd drivers ye know there is a lot of responsibility for delivering we have a busy input into the overall delivery of a DART service so I couldn't see myself otherwise to be honest with you, I would think In general the Station Manager's would see themselves as Managers

**Q 10: What barriers do you think exist to the Station Manager's today to achieve their goals?**

SM: time is one of them,

Pat: so what do you feel you have too many priorities

SM: your just snowed under the whole time without a doubt time is the biggest obstacle to change, just say the question again Pat

Pat: what inhibits Station Managers from achieving the desired Culture for DART or another way of putting it? Or another way of putting it is what barriers exist?

SM: I would say time up to recently maybe again as I said before is maybe a lack of clarity of vision and clarity of vision are a clear target provided by Senior Managers, resources have to say resources,

Pat: okay what about trade unions do they block you from achieving what you are trying to do?

SM: yes you could say this is a culture part of our culture trade union resistance and its difficult I think my philosophy on it I think its part of the way the job operates until somebody with far more senior position decides we are going to break this down there is nothing I can do about it I can't change it, maintain the relationships is my philosophy

Pat: so you feel there is almost a feeling of helplessness in the DART at many levels I think what do you think?

SM: I'd agree with that yea

Pat: because there is no desire for an argument.

SM: and maybe there is a good reason for that ye know I'm quite philosophical about it maybe there is good reason for it and I would actually question again weather it would be a good move to take it on because there would be a lot of blood ye know, I've an open mind

Pat: but it affects how you work at the end of the day you know you can't push the envelope cause you won't be thanked

SM: can be frustrating

Pat: I see it yea and that's actually a barrier then cause you know that you could go a step a further with a particular individual or a driver for instance but you know that if you go to sort him out something will probably happen here and you probably won't get the backing and you could be told that you were wrong

SM: in ways I think in my location its maybe a little bit better, I just see the Reps in Fairview are difficult and will not budge and that is very frustrating and that maybe the reason at some point to actually take it on.

Pat: Some people say to me a lot of the time is they should be sorted out

SM: very very simplistic view

Pat: they are key staff, drivers are key staff they are awkward but they are key, if you sort them out your alienating them aren't you

SM: even taking them on ye know people forget a lot of goodwill certainly I've said this before I've had a lot of goodwill, we have serous staff shortage nothing to do with the drivers at all so like there is two sides to the point they have a very bad reputation but as I say fellas have done me favours.

Pat: that's were my eyes opened when I came over here too to be honest with you I came over thinking that these fellas were just a bunch of non cooperative so and so's right, they're not but some of them are but most of them are not and unfortunately they give themselves bad press then with the Pearse situation and then the feedback coming back to me is that a lot of Drivers in Fairview and I believe Bray are embarrassed by this refusal

- SM: I think they are actually misrepresented and I don't agree that would be unusual with trade unions but I think those that are actually representing them
- Pat: but this key now you are one of the first Station Manager's to actually hit on the heart of it how much damage this is actually doing how it filters right through and its creating now I'm not putting it all over on the trade unions but they really are too strong.
- SM: we have to thread very carefully along those lines
- Pat: and its damaging the DART
- SM: I find myself doing it but again we inherit the culture I'm not going to change it, I will emphasis the philosophical side of it because that's really what it is I'm not to change it you know, if the COO says in the morning lets do it he is giving an instruction I'll follow, hes the leader but I doubt if when we do it if we go through it an examine things? our strategy for dealing with drivers I think at the end of the day we say we'll chip away rather than say I can't do that, I think it would probably be a prudent policy and the damage that it could create and even I'll give you another example I called yesterday about the security situation on the northside, I'd be concerned that that could actually get out of hand because Drivers are a sensitive bunch so I got the numbers emergency response no. and then the head guys number I've told the reps if there is an issue if you don't get some sort of response from the regulator you can ring me and I will ring STT myself and this is my concern they have to have the power to say were not going any further they know they can do this without any real
- Pat: what your actually saying to me there if I understand it right is that your investing your own time and energy into this what you believe is that the manager should invest more time rather than ring the CTC they'll sort It for you leave me alone, and maybe that is a step change that has to happen not only in Bray because you have a difficult bunch of people but in the likes of Malahide and Sutton, for dealing with the station staff and how many of them feel that they can ring their Station Manager on a Sunday morning and say this isn't right, and how many Station Managers have said give me a ring if you are stuck, I think it's a key issue ye know, anyway that was good, so now you can have a go off the Managers In DART now right, when I say Managers in DART again its myself the DM, HR manager and the accountant so this is a double barrel question
- Q 11: Do you think that the Managers in DART espouse the right values to the Station Managers and if you do or you don't do they us the right channels?**
- SM: I do think they have the right values yes definitely, my concern with them would be them being snowed under and there probably just I'm a microcosm of their job, I get snowed under, they're snowed under up here would be the overall thing, but I do think the values are comfortable enough with.
- Pat: what about the channels they us is it good enough is it frequent enough?
- SM: I have a little bit of a problems about coming up to meetings the whole time its 40 minutes away its 40 back half the day is gone for meetings, like the SM in Maynooth can say the same yea I just find a bit of time out of the office, there the

main channels I'd like to see more of them out and about, ye know pressing the DASH type of thing and that it wouldn't be an occasion when they arrive it would be more the norm, management by walking about, I'd be a believer in that on the ground all the managers, the managers meeting the staff, and local managers themselves.

Pat: how do you think your colleagues would react to that the Managers would be out more and about, would you think you are being watched or something?

SM: no I don't think so initially, it would fairly quickly become part of the culture initially I suppose It would be an occasion rather than something that is normal, with regularity it would become normal, I think everybody would be more on their toes.

Pat: and you think that meeting aren't always the best way to do business

SM: well meeting are usually precisely to do business. I think management by walking around and meeting someone informally and spontaneous items come up its an information gathering exercise as well and its being in touch with what's going on on the ground, and it improves trust and all that and demonstrates commitment, and I think the fact that you are seen to make an effort or a Manager to make an effort to get out there I think it appreciated

Pat: kind of does things for his credibility so

SM: oh without a doubt

**Q 12: Do you think we have a competitive environment do you think we operate in an competitive environment?**

SM: The market, I would say yes, I'm not too sure if the awareness is there of it again with my location I think we have a very competitive environment with cars competing with us Dublin Bus we may quite possible in the future have private operators competing with us, but the actual situation in the short term is that we have ??? coming in while that might increase public transport ? I think Dublin Bus is going to benefit, and we have to respond, we are in a very competitive environment, our figures for passenger sales are down 30%, for the Brazil game we had staff everywhere and there was more staff than there were people went through but I believe up here was pretty good the numbers but yea I would be very concerned about it

Pat: we should be reacting to that so and you put forward a proposal yesterday about a fast DART into town,

SM: like a certain amount of experimentation involved but even if we got one in and we are actually ? put a little bit of work into it and it worked successful we could follow up the following year by as another look at it, we have to respond.

**Q 12a: What do you think the Strategy is for DART looking forward now 5 even 10 years forward what do you think?**

SM: I'm not too sure its not very clear to me now I know we are going through tremendous structural change with the new GM coming in an that, the strategy isn't very clear to me, certainly to come across and what I see of stuff sent out to me is that we have to increase services that assuming that our customer base is going to keep improving and improving, now I'm not too sure if that is going to happen now but ye know it I'm not too sure what the strategy is

Pat: to be honest with you I don't think anyone is, I suppose there is definitely terms of expansion anyway we are going to go to 8 piece DART's whether we are going to actually up the frequency its all around business case then its all around proving that there is a need and all this kind of stuff, yea its an interesting thing alright, we are definitely going to get bigger in some shape or form, like there is talk of electrifying the Maynooth line, there is talk of electrifying maybe as far as Drogheda, so I would think that if the way the current pie has been cut up that everything under the wire has been dark and nothing but a wire over it has been pushed away, but I think if the wire extends then DART will extend, like if they electrified to Laytown for instance or Drogheda I think that area would come back under GM DART.

**Q 13: If DART was not or if Irish Rail was not a Semi State Company what do you think would be different about it?**

SM: I don't think there'd be trade unions. I don't think we would be as human as organisation, I do think there is a genuine belief that we should take care of our staff,

Pat: your hitting on a key point there now cause there is a belief there now that private industry really looks after its people they are better paid they are better trained, my wife works in private industry they're treated badly.

SM: I do agree with you there an I do think private industry is down to its very much the bean counters run the show, very much running the show and every penny, which its not an organisation I would be comfortable with that would be I suppose the big thing, we may be a lot more competitive in that every figure would be analysed and we would probably be more efficient but I think we there may be a lot of losses there we may loose certain cultures that we have ye know some of the staff are very very good there are very strong relationships with customers, that sort of thing may go away,

Pat: we'd loose the commitment in our railway type ideal

SM: one of the advantages we have is we do have this railway culture, and that we may loose that, it may sort of end of that McDonalds type culture, a machine to do things, ? yea I do think we do have that railway culture

Pat: Do you think ultimately though if it wasn't a state company that did have to as you say the bean encounters had the control, do you think we would run trains better? Do you think the service would be better?

SM: I'm not really too sure cause I'm not into the whole free market thing and that it will regulate itself, I would have to say

Pat: look at the UK experience, not exactly great is it?

SM: no not great at all no, a bit of a disaster

Pat: what I'd like to do is like to go over to the UK and see kind of similar company to DART.

SM in theory more efficient the British experience would I think it would be fair to say that the British experience is saying that actually British rail wasn't all that bad now, that it was actually run pretty well, I think railways are a difficult industry to run and I wouldn't be bought into and to be quite honest with you I'm not bought into going private, I'm not against it but I'm not

Pat: you have your fears around it your concerns around it

SM: the benefits and you'd have to say that the English experience for instance that you know the big one against it ye know

**Q 14: How good is DART do you think at achieving its goals?**

SM: achieving its goals, I'm not too sure what the goals are but I think we run a good service yea and I think that actually the whole thing runs pretty well, the actual mechanics of the service as in getting the cash in getting the trains running, getting the drivers into their Cabs, I think it works well

Pat: we are carrying a 100,000 bodies a day roughly so

SM: it worked out pretty well but there is some basic stuff that I would like to see improved ye know

Pat: like what know just off the top of your head

SM: again customer care

**Q 14a: When DART agrees that there is a goal to be done how good is it at putting the resources in place to achieve that goal?**

SM: I'd have to say again I'm not too sure what the goals are but I

Pat: just talking in general terms if there was something agreed now up here with the Station Managers meeting in the next half an hour, that we are going to do something in in your area, we going to dispatch every train bang on time, do you think you would get the support and resources

SM I think I get the resources I demanded, if I demanded resources but I do feel that the line management maybe are not supported very well taking a special view on railways that we are in the business of running trains right, we seem to support people outside it so they have they own little world, I don't think it actually down to running trains it should be supporting the person who is actually delivering the service, I'm not too sure if we do that

Pat: you nearly think that the operations management is supporting the support services.

SM: yea there is a bit of that, its not clear like that the support should be supporting the line and I just feel again when I look at my location I don't know whether it's a microcosm of DART's but I just feel that there is things going on there, there is too much money coming through, there is too many customers going through for the amount of staff we have there and particularly the ones in the critical position as it Station Manager and Chief Clerk, the Chief Clerk needs to support the Station Manager, I think it will come, well I have no doubt it will come but yea I'm not too sure if the support is there

Pat: so basically we can agree so that we do we an agree goals but we are not always the best at actually saying this is what we need to get the goal and then making it happen, so it almost the case of the goal is agreed and your expected to muddle through.

SM: there is no marks for predicting rain you get the mark for building the Arc ye know, you need the support you know, if you want to its okay to set a target but yet the back is not with the support and resources so I'm not too sure if that is being done and I have a feeling that might be part of the problem with my station, no disrespect at all to my predecessors but there was a certain things were neglected just simply hadn't time defence mechanism took over and maybe I do it to a certain extent as well ye know you have to you need the support ye know, maybe the staff were neglected before.

**Q14b: Do you think DART is good at picking up Challenges ourselves or do we wait for somebody to issue a challenge to us before we react to it?**

SM: in the context of Irish Rail or in the context of?

Pat: the DART, just try keep it to the DART, do we pick up challenges ourselves or do we wait for Top Management to tell us take another €10,000 off the payroll up your percentage?

SM: I think we are appalling bad, I'll give you an example were still now, I started driving a DART in 1994 there was a shortage then I started loco driving in 1985 that's nearly 20 years ago and there was a shortage of driver then, I've never seen a situation where we have actually had a full complement of staff, anywhere I worked as a driver, I was a meeting with yourself in the last 6 months maybe it was around December January and the Senior Management there were still not convinced there was a shortage of Drivers, I can't understand why it would fill at this point trying to convince them when there is a shortage of Drivers, when you break down the fluctuations in holidays sickness ye know our primary resources for running the DART as a Driver and we still have a shortage of Drivers, the amount of Management and time that actually goes into actually keeping this thing going, my time I like ye know I spend ye know hours on the drivers rosters like that's nearly another driver ye know, so yea I think the fact that..

Pat: is it that I'm not telling Top Management strong enough or is it that Top Management is not prepared to listen what do you think the problem is?

SM: I think it might be a mixture of both I just don't there maybe at Senior Managements level they understand fully how the job operates but then I would actually blame DART you know, if you don't get at it one way we have to get at it another way, and if it means producing reams of paper to do it if it means bringing them out and sitting them out at the roster then that's what we have to do, if we don't have a belief at Senior Management level that we have a shortage of drivers we are going to go nowhere, and so I would have to us that it is very strong and if that's the case with driver shortage it will be like that with everything else ye know I think maybe if Senior Management could see things as maybe being a lot simpler

**Q 15: Have you any other questions or comments?**

SM: just about the Station Managers level itself and what its pitched at and its such a crucial position as I said earlier the link between Senior Management and the front line I really think the package the financial package is pitched far too low I'm not saying that it should be brought up to DM or something but there something there it should be brought up and I think there is people there and executives in similar and higher positions with a fraction of the responsibility within the organisation so I think they are

Pat: you think you will get a better calibre of Station Manager

SM: you will yea because I don't think the demand for the Station Managers job was really there because people see it as too much trouble for what is worth, you would definitely get a better quality of candidate obviously the more people you have interested the chances of getting better Station Managers but I have a strong view about responsibility, if you have the responsibility you deserve to be paid for it.

Pat: okay is that it?

SM: thanks Pat

**END OF TAPE**

**INTERVIEW WITH STATION MANGER TWO**

**WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2004**

**Q 1: Culture can mean the theorists say some theorists say that Culture means the way we do things around here, what do you understand from the term Culture?**

**SM:** I don't understand it suppose it in a similar way in my thinking it would be the manners and attitude of yourself and your fellow workers which may be different if you like from your attitude and manner outside of work or within a different department in work, basically is the way I see it

**Q 2: What do you think is the dominant culture in DART at the moment?**

**SM:** its very my opinion a revenue orientated culture almost every aspect of the job in my point of view untimely comes down to the accumulation of money not necessarily in a bad way but surely in important very much so every aspect of the job

**Pat:** were money driven so?

**SM:** money driven not necessarily in the must think money as much as we can but purely in were in business to make money, were here to basically our primary goal in all respects and as such we should consider it important

**Pat:** so there is a distinction, you seem to be making a distinction so that we are money driven but we are not profit driven

**SM:** no well I in reality I would imagine that the higher up go to the ladder the profit is important, that's not the way it might appear, like ??? the ladder, it merely looks like we are interested in gathering up as much revenue as possible, not necessarily to make profit but surely cause we should be doing it

**Q 3: What do you think the values of DART are today? What is important?**

**SM:** well in relation to the public obviously we provide a service that no one else does, we certainly are creating plenty of jobs for people as well, we run a service that brings people all around the country, well with the DART around the City Centre and so on and outline stations, but ultimately other than Dublin Bus we provide a service that no one else does, we do our best to provide a timely service, dosen't always work out that way, that's what were certainly I would consider it a goal that we all try to achieve a punctuality a punctual service and that's again would be mine

**Pat:** A Sub Culture can be described as a mini culture separate from the dominant culture right so were are all here busily working up and towards as you say to make revenue, to provide a service to the public that's punctual and create job security for our staff right, but then the Station Manager's.

**Q 4: Do you think they operate as a separate group themselves and have their own little sub culture operating do you think?**

**SM:** in my experience I would say that due to some degree they become a little island in a stream isle the big islands if you like the closer into town you get the more that dominant culture or revenue revenue revenue but the further out you get and in this case in Dun Laoghaire I think there is more of an attitude of certainly again money is very important the revenue protection and so on is very important but just running a day to day service is what their sort of primary goal is to ensure that halts are kept open that staff are in on time, in neat appearance, keeping stations clean and tidy and I don't think that that much emphasis then again my opinion the revenue end of it, its certainly very important its certainly something that often is mentioned on a day to day basis but I don't think it's the primary goal when you get into a station under a Station Masters control is money money money, its more along the lines of just keeping the service going, keeping the passengers happy and keeping staff happy at the end of the day because the staff are as easily annoyed in some instances as the passengers can be I don't think money is as important the further you get away from sort of the city centre if you want as maybe it should be or maybe it is in the city centre it dosen't become as a relevant issue

**Pat:** your doing Station Manager now for the last 10 weeks right have the other Station Manager's rallied around you have they rang you to say look if you are in trouble give me a shout, have they done anything like that or have rang any of them and said look I'm new here I'm not what' s the best way to handle this or handle that or have you ye know what I mean?

**SM:** as a matter of face I was very pleased to see that as soon as the word started getting around that I was going to be out there a number of Station Masters not all mainly ones I knew from other things has all contacted me in some way weather it be in person if they passed by or by phone to offer help and assistance if I needed it now again I was very happy to receive the help but in honesty I decided I'd go it alone and try and do my best certainly here in Pearse Alan Scully offered assistance and help he has been out in Dun Laoghaire before I did contact him a couple of times on issues that I wouldn't be clear on but I wanted to go it alone basically but they all very helpful for the most part offer assistance

**Pat:** and that meant something to you going out there you felt you had some level of support you felt if you were in trouble

**SM:** yea it does yea because obviously when I was going out there, there way plenty of offers of assistance but not from Station Masters but certainly it's the Station Masters now who know better simple things day to day things that I might not be familiar with where I could easily make a mistake by making a decision that wouldn't be the way to go they were offering assistance on that sort of level if there was a day to day thing that I wasn't sure how to do that's I have to do is pick up the phone and ask and they would be able to help me out and I always found that all Station Masters are very helpful in that regard they don't always do it but they do offer to help, sometimes they'll offer help and when you go looking for them you can't find them. We are all busy here at the some stage or another

but I was touched I suppose the honest way of saying is that they all, the group of them that deals again people I knew most were all willing to If I needed it

Pat: so if we agreed that the Station Managers have their own relationships going on because they see themselves as the common job, common responsibilities & common problems and stuff like that and that's probably led them then to that they knew some of the problems that you would encounter, so they say look I will help you out.

**Q 5: Just in your experience in it so far what do you think could be improved by the current Station Managers with each other?**

SM: I'm not sure if there actually is a need for improvement I would imagine if you sat down with all of them they would all have different opinions on a lot of things, they do tend to rally around each other or just in general and consider themselves a sub group amongst Managers simply because it is a unique situation is I suppose for all of them, it's a different job from many in the company, but I think in honesty now I wouldn't say that they need that there is anywhere they could improve, perhaps maybe sort of look at it from the other end they are all too quick to back each other up it think in some cases, some case maybe stepping back and taking a look at the situation might benefit rather than be sort of jump on the band wagon, they are all too quick to back each up I think in

Pat: hes one of us

SM: exactly very defensive at times certainly in the past now I can't think of any recent at the moment, but certainly in the past I've seen how they all gather around like the cowboys against the Indians and sort of an attitude

**Q 6: Do you think you can change the culture that operates in your station and its halts and if you can what kind of things would you do, what would you like to do?**

SM: well certainly staff wise, certainly I've see it in a lot of places I think in goes in my location as well that there is a sort of an attitude and I don't well I'm not sure if its down to unions, there is an attitude where they'll do so much and no more because they know that if they really want to kick up about it they could going running to the unions ye know if you asked them to work extra hours or work a rest day things like that, and that attitude personally drives me mad we all occasionally have to do things we don't want to do work long hours when we don't want to do it just to keep the place going its what we are here for in the first place, occasionally we have to bend over backwards to do it, I'd like to see a change in that but I think that sort of change is a job for tackling unions attitudes not just people on the ground and that's a big step to take. I think it can be done certainly out in my station I found all the staff to be very helpful which I was very glad to see and they are all willing to listen to what was said, changing peoples attitudes after years of doing things the same way can be difficult but I think it can be done without too much difficulty but I think there is there will always be certainly in Irish Rail there will always be this attitude in the background that I'll do so much and no more because I don't have to do it because if I don't really want to do it I'll go to the unions and moan about it and that's exactly what happens you can only ask so much and you can see by the glimmer in their eye ye

know sure If I asked the union they wouldn't agree to this and that's a terrible attitude to have

Pat: do you think there is something you could do down there to circumvent the unions get them coming to you first rather than going to the union

SM: I think certainly again not it this job but in a previous job the attitude was occasionally we did have to do things that we didn't want to do, but there was I'll scratch your back if you scratch back attitude which I don't think it worked on a company wide basis because you get into this attitude where you know you owe me a favour attitude but I think in the smaller little groups like out in a station or in the station halt you can get away with it you can offer one of your staff some time off if he needs it if he is willing to help you out maybe when somebody calls in sick and you want to keep a station open longer and things like that were willingly done then in my station, there was a few odd instances where we didn't have a shift covered and somebody was willing to stay those extra few hours obviously they just want to get paid for it, but that's not the issue often with people am I going to get the money, I'm going to have to work a long hour and then do the same hours again the next day again or something like that, I think that's worth trying but I think its also open to abuse you owe me cause I did this I owe you because you did this for me and all that sort of thing and that can go the wrong way easily but it is something I used to do in my old job and it worked perfectly because it was just the attitude of the company where jobs had to be done but you then on the ground level would say I need you to do this but taking care of it for you, the next time you are in trouble I'll take care of you I'll get somebody to cover you this sort of attitude and it does work well and it builds a certain level of trust as I say is open to misuse there is always somebody who wants to take advantage of that fact I did you a favour so now you owe me this attitude but I'd certainly from getting to know the staff then out in my station I know they are all willing to do their part some of them more than others obviously there is always someone who don't want to do it, I would talk to that attitude not so much as a friendship thing I think there has to be a certain line drawn between your manager and then the rest of the staff and certainly an openness ye know you come to me and you have a problem I'll help you out and maybe you'll be able to help me someday when I'm short someone needs a job or someone to do a job or something like that

Pat: its about building relationships

SM: it is yea there is a little bit of give in take in it and once you get the balance right if often works perfectly

**Q 8: What would be your three main goals this year to achieve in the Station and its halts?**

SM: well with all the stations I'd like to see some improvement in the booking office facilities I don't think any of then they all seem like a ruin that was built 40 years ago and its just been built on and built on and built on and its just something personal that I don't particularly like if I was working in a booking office like that and I had to walk into it every day even though they are kept in good condition and staff are good actually about keeping them in good condition its something that would drive me mad

Pat: okay so that's one we'll say you could improve the facilities for the staff in the booking offices

SM: working environment for the staff I think it needs to have a certain level of comfort especially in the booking office their spending long hours in it and they are in there all day long bar breaks and things like that and its nice to just have a certain if you like a funny disposition around you a clean and tidy environment now that is not to say that they don't keep it clean and tidy its not quite as it could be.

Pat: what would be goal no. 2?

SM: and all the stations I think I'd like to see they all sort of again its all an old style with all of them I know that the DART Upgrade is improving the way the stations look we even saw like sort of whenever I walk into any of the stations not just the ones out in my area I get the feeling of an old dilapidated building or and old sort of area there is rarely any cover if its raining out on the platforms and things like that I'd like to see passengers who are happy don't complain its as simple as that in my station there is an area where they can stand around the booking office its not completely enclosed but its enclosed enough and give them some protection and you don't customers complaining to you that there is no shelters down on the platform there is a couple, we actually got a complaint that there was no seats on one of the platforms things like that these are simple little things they aren't too expensive done but they just never seem to be done, even my time up to this point I made early enquires about getting some seating put in on the platform and still haven't been able to get it done, and its like banging your head off the wall it's a simple thing to be done everyone gets something out of it I know its money spent but its another thing I'd like to see done.

Pat: okay so that's staffing and customers have you a third one?

SM: em difficult to say know to be honest with you I think there is something most of the jobs that need done to be done are in the pipelines really to some degree or other with the upgrade a lot of things that need to be done are going to be done, off the top of my head to be honest I can't think of anything

Q 9: **Do you think Station Managers see themselves as legitimate Managers? In the business?**

SM: no to be honest with you in my opinion I don't think so and certainly in my opinion I don't think so it dosen't have the feel of it if you like you are out on your own, you are running certain locations so you are in charge of buildings, in charge of staff, in charge of the services running through those stations you are too some degree in charge of the passengers but I don't think I don't honestly think that any of them feel including me that they are an actual Manager, I don't think the word fits well with the job, I know that the job has the responsibilities of a Manager, employing staff, paperwork, bills taking care of all that sort of thing but I don't honestly think that the word Manager and a Station Manager I don't think the two gel well together I think that Station Managers feel that they're slightly higher up than the other staff on the ladder again, but I don't think that they feel as if they are a Manager because I think to some degree they often feel

that decisions are taken out of their hands at a certain level the decision is taken out of their hands and put on to someone else, sort of I am trying to think of a good example of it, but I do think there is a sort of an air of attitude and gain it's a negative attitude, I don't have to take too much responsibility for this cause I' not a real Manager, again the old way of saying it was that we were a Station Master and I think that's sort of the whole term is also the view I'm in charge to a point after which someone else will take over someone else will take responsibility and my responsibility will diminish as they take over it and I think they all have that attitude.

**Q 10: What is the main barriers do you think that exist for our Station Managers in the DART from achieving our Customer Focus, Commercial Revenue, driven culture right, we might agree that we are not always very good at it so what barriers what stops the Station Managers from being as good as they could be we'll say?**

**SM:** well for instance we'll say just back to the platforms and the seating a simple request was put through so further information was requested I then had to go off and get still waiting to get it and again I think its company wide you would find it in a halt somewhere you'd find it in Connolly, I'll get around to it, I'll eventually do it its on my list of things to do sort of attitude we all have a lot of work to do which is fair to say but I think its something that maybe we could get into in greater depth again is that there is absolutely no pressure put on anyone that they feel it, I could get on the phone and I could scream and shout to beat the band at someone and they still wouldn't feel any pressure to do anything at all, I'll get to it I'll get around to it and I think just an attitude I've see no matter what in the company to a great degree you'll ask for somebody for somebody for some information they have it but they won't do it there and then they will get back to you at a certain date and if they don't you'll follow up with a phone call if they don't get back to you and this sort of hop skip and a jump goes on and on and on for weeks and you will eventually put it on the backburner in favour of something else that has come up and before you know it months have gone by and nothing has been done, and not even forgotten its just

**Pat:** and does that affect the credibility then of the staff cause they see you then as the Station Manager not achieving something you said you do

**SM:** exactly and it makes you look ineffectual despite the fact that you may killed yourself to do it but its never actually going to happen

**Pat:** barrier is coming you cant get that person to move

**SM:** somewhere down the line you might have to deal with 3 or 4 people and one of those three all it takes is one of them to block it in some way, I'll get around to it, I'll get back to you and that's it, it collapses around you and no matter how much you chase it up it won't happen unless you have everyone sort of in agreement to get it done and I find it in other circumstances I've seen it and certainly then out in my station I've seen it that you can only chase it so far and after that you have to wait and the waiting period seems to be quiet long

**Pat:** what other barriers do you think are there for Station Managers

SM: the staff can stand in your way there can be staff who don't like change again talking about people who have been working for years and years and years and they don't want to change the way they've been doing they're comfortable with it, but just cause they are comfortable with it doesn't necessarily make it the best way of doing things they staff can block it but I find for the most part certainly in my area most of the staff are very willing to listen to what you have to say and they are happy to try things usually people are quick enough to say it but I wouldn't consider staff to be a bigger problem as maybe and then again it comes down to I don't constantly go back to money but I think to some degree if you want to get something done you have to have money to do it and money is tight to put it bluntly as well that buying a pencil is a bid deal at the moment and sometimes you do have to throw that cash out there and put the money behind something whether it be through people or resources or just pure and simple cash put that money behind whatever it is you want to do to make it happen and hopefully it once it starts to happen it will have been worth it maybe you will receive more money back from it maybe there will be extra revenue to be made out of it or maybe it'll be dead money but will have been worth it because passengers are happier or staff are happier

Pat: what's your experience of trade unions would they be a barrier would you describe them as a barrier, would you describe them as a help?

SM: mercifully my experience of trade unions has been limited I would consider it in my honest opinion is trade unions are nothing more than a barrier to any change whatsoever whether it be good or bad they block everything back to I've been doing it this way this long and not changed in its attitude and I think the trade unions only foster an attitude they in my opinion to be very rarely interested in listening to you proposals they are more interested in saying no we are not going to do that and once a month will go by and eventually they might turn around and say that's a great idea we will do it but they will have caused delays in my opinion the trade unions one of our actually I do say they are our biggest problem time energy and resources are spent dealing with trade unions could be spent on something else.

**Q 11: The Senior Management in DART right described as myself, the DM Manager HR and the accountant right just take those four do you think they espouse the values of DART to Station Managers?**

SM: I'll start at the bottom and work my way up the accountant is not to make a joke of his position money obsessed and he can't help it its part of his job, the pressures he feels are to save money and I honestly think again as a different story for me it would be easy for me to say I'd stand up in a room full of accountants for Irish Rail and say okay we are going to spend this money cause we have to its easier said than done we have a lot of pressure done but I think his emphasis is far too much as saving money I don't think he sees the benefit of spending a little bit now and again now certainly having said that he does try to make everything as fair as possible but I think ye know you can save money up to a point after which you really starting to nit pick about things that sometimes if you feel a bit more heavy handed when it comes to saving money that maybe he should be but that's an outsiders opinion, ye know I understand that he has pressures that I wouldn't want to have to deal with. An honest opinion about HR, without kicking him around the place I've never heard anyone have anything

good to say about him and in my own dealings with him I have never been able to get and answer out of him without a six month delay on everything,

Pat: its frustrating and your trying to manage stations and the staff are looking for answers from you and again you can't get it done from one of the Senior Managers in the DART

SM: and that's not just from my own experience, I don't want to go into it that opinion would be held by many which is a shame.

Pat: because the message hes sending is you guys are not important to him

SM: I think that would be pretty much word for word what I would probably say his message would be we are not interested I'll get back to you ye know you can wait because I've got other things to do

Pat: and what do you think do you think hes hoping you will go off and solve it a different way then is it or that you are

SM: yea to be honest with you I feel that HR would be only to happy to let you go and find it somewhere else rather than do it himself or get one of his staff to do it which isn't exactly you couldn't exactly have a huge staff and as such I would expect him to answer some questions, when he started certainly I put it down to the fact that he was only new so hes not going to know all the answers at this stage now in my opinion I think he sends out the wrong message, a nice way of putting it

Pat: what about myself and the DM espousing the values of DART which we have kind of concluded that a lot of the values of DART are around punctuality cleanliness job security service provision, reliability so these are the values that we come in ever day and we are trying to live and work everything we think we are doing is to send that message, do you think that is going out to the Station Managers, do you think they understand that from us.

SM: I think without yourself and the DM that those opinions are put across to be honest I don't know if its done enough certainly in the past when previous managers were here again you probably know from your own experience that they had a way of getting the message across to repeatedly beat you with it every chance they got it would be mentioned if he was walking by you he would mention it and for better for worse it did work that particular way of doing things does work it's an aggravating way of doing things it does you get the message across but maybe resume the line message of ye know you're a bit thick and I'm actually telling you which is a bit insulting to people ye know I'm going to keep saying this every time I walk pass you until you start saying this to me first whereas with yourself and with Joe I think you put the message across but you don't beat people to death with it but possibly the beating to death people with it definitely works and possibly they are just putting that message out isn't strong enough

Pat: how do you think we could improve it so do you think we could use more channels?

SM: yea the Station Masters meeting tends to get all points across certainly communication with e-mails, memos telephone calls that sort of thing I don't know again you are treading the dangerous line of becoming an annoyance and whether it is an insulting thing to insulting thing to say to you or the DM to say you are becoming annoying about it, it has that effect on people, don't mention this again to me know I don't want to listen to this attitude, whereas if its done in a measured way people take it on board but they don't feel like they've been clattered over the head with it

Pat: do you think that the DM & I should be out in the Stations more telling the people

SM: I think that might be actually not a bad idea I think certainly with the higher up you go with Management not that everyone will be jumping for joy when the Managers turn up the inbred attitude that a Manager has come to see you, you are in trouble, but I think

Pat: Important cultural point so that if the Manager turns up you are in trouble

SM: its automatically not good no Manager ever came out to see you cause they were happy

Pat: that's a huge cultural thing now so if you see a Manager your what have I done what's happened

SM: I think it would look better if there was more of a presence felt if not as in a bad way your out to see how things are running ask how things are running tell people what has to be done and go on your way and everyone is happy cause you were there and there was noting bad said necessarily and the message was gotten through, I think the message gets through but only to a certain degree and perhaps pushing it a bit more would be of a benefit but to be honest when people are happy they usually do stuff ye know a happy Station Master keeps everyone happy by doing everything he has to do because it keeps everyone happy, but it also makes people lazy they think aw well Pat is not to say anything to me now for another 6 months I'll just leave it till then, it can foster laziness people weather it be a Manager or a junior member of staff If I the Station Master don't pop into the halt every now and again they will forget about me and soon they won't ye know I had one case where there was one particular halt I hadn't got out to in quite a while and I spoken to this chat on the phone a couple of times but I picked up the phone and rang him and he had no idea who I was and his attitude on the phone was who is this person bothering me now he got the wrong message because he should know who I am the minute I ring up and should show me the proper respect if nothing else because hes not he dosen't realise who I am because I haven't been present enough for him to realise so I made it my business to go and say hello because ye know if they feel the manager isn't around there's a laziness I don't have to worry about him because he's hardly likely to come out to me

Pat: and I can also say that I know how important enough it is to come out to

SM: equally so they might feel

- Pat: then they start to dislike you automatically and sort of well if I'm not important to him well he's not important to me now.
- SM: if he asked me do something I'll do it whenever I'm ready to do it you couldn't be arsed
- Pat: never see the effort anyway
- SM: exactly this attitude where ye know I'm not important enough to be seen as such, my work isn't important enough to do but again for the most part in fairness to yourself and the DM and to the manager HR and the accountant I think the message gets through but I think there is a certain negativity to some aspects of it, certainly the HR aspect not to be picking one particularly person I think there is a really bad message going out
- Pat: for people who are not important enough
- SM: its not worth their while to ring up they will get no response
- Q 12: Do you think DART operates in a competitive environment?**
- SM: to go back to a point I was making earlier about there never seems to be pressure on people I don't think it's as competitive as it could be I know that DART as a company has no visual rival there is no one out there who can turn around and say would you mind just as much as you are and we are going to take what you've got away from you, we have a monopoly to some degree there is the buses there is going to be the LUAS all that sort of stuff they'll all impact on us but none of them can hurt us as much as we can hurt ourselves and I think we did hurt ourselves because this sort of lazy man's attitude ye know there is no one out there going to touch it so ??? we could do better in a lot of aspects, we could do better with our revenue control which is being worked on at the moment I mean that's an ongoing thing that isn't really but its still something its probably something where you could throw a bit of money at to make it work better ye know more staff things like that, that's a long term thing but in answer to the question I don't think we are competitive at all, we do I know there is occasionally threats from Dublin Bus been on a route or something like that and I forgot to mention that they are bringing on a new route
- Pat: A quality bus corridor up in Bray or something
- SM: yea that might cause us some damage, but I think there is an attitude where we say they'll never do us any harm ye know they can't
- Pat: you don't have to worry
- SM: if they hurt us there we will increase the service somewhere else and we'll be ok we'll cover ourselves one way or another, we should be looking towards the future, sooner or later whether it be government or internal something like that somebody Is going to put the boot into us and we'll be all very surprised by it happening, somebody will just up and say by the way now I'm going to take all of that off you because I'm going to do it now and we'll all be looking at each other going how did that happen

**Q 12a: What do you think what in your view should be our strategy for the next 5 or 10 years what way should DART be?**

**SM:** to the future certainly again a lot of these things are being done we are improving the stations the DART Upgrade is going to improve the length of the Stations the general layout of the Stations which will mean increased capacity for passengers which is what they are screaming for as we speak, but we'll always be one step behind the demand I think I don't know if it will ever ? to get ahead of the demand, we always try to be even up, we should certainly be looking towards that but it is in hand to some degree, I think in fairness the future is difficult to tell

**Pat:** should we be looking at expanding the DART we'll say should we be looking at electrifying the Maynooth line?

**SM:** I've heard it mentioned many times, certainly the more carriages we are getting in now would facilitate it to some degree and I'm sure there would have to be a study done and probably has been study to facilitate that sort of thing, I think it would be ideal in an ideal world if would be the thing to be done, considering lengthening the routes, considering going out to different places cause we have to grow, we have to constantly grow we can't just sit still and hope that what we are doing now is enough cause it is never enough and we can see even as we are now were striving to catch up with the huge number of passengers that are trying to use our service and we can't facilitate them all all the time we do run into problems, we have got to keep growing and to be honest although there is growth to be seen with the DART Upgrade I don't think it is entirely in the right direction as you pointed out maybe lengthening of the line somewhere electrifying down to Maynooth or something like that would be the ideal thing to do but again I thin studies would have to be done the longer the trip the less suitable are DART is to us, but having said that I'm sure there is many passengers who will say exactly the same thing about our new railcars that this is basically they weren't designed with a long trip in mind they are not comfortable uncomfortable passengers complain, complaints lead to problems, complaining passengers don't use the train and before you know it you are losing revenue.

**Q 13: If the DART were not a semi state company, what would be different?**

**SM:** Lazy attitude among individuals would disappear, people would feel the pressure more, we might become more competitive and get people out of their cars but I also believe that our safety record would suffer.

**Pat:** Could you manage better in a private situation?

**SM:** Yes in ways I could be more ruthless, I could get better results and I feel I would have more power. I would less time worrying about the unions and I could replace poor performers. I think there would also be more emphasis in terms of reward for my efforts. However my job security would be gone forever.

**Q 14 How good is the DART at achieving its goals?**

**SM:** Not good, we have good intentions but too many obstacles like time, attitude, staff resources. Sometimes I feel that we haven't tried hard enough.

Pat: What should we be doing so as a management team?

SM: We should make our meetings more effective; I think currently they are not. We get fed up with repeating the same issues and so no problems are addressed or there is no follow through.

**Q14a: Do you think the DART team are good at setting goals or do we wait to be handed objectives?**

Pat: Some people do come with ideas and try to implement them however we react mostly to things and this is not good. In general people know what needs to be done but are sometimes unwilling to follow up on them. Deadlines are meaningless and there are too many things to do. I feel that there is a culture of laziness sometimes in the DART.

Pat: What culture would you like to see in the DART business going forward?

SM: One that makes people feel that their job is important, give them a sense of pride. They should understand that we rely on them. Staff currently have no expectation of being thanked for their efforts and there is a lot of hurt feelings out there.

**Q 15: Any further comments?**

SM: No Pat.

Pat: Thank you.

**End Of Tape.**

**INTERVIEW WITH STATION MANAGER THREE****TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2004**

**Q 1:** Culture can mean the way we do things around here or it can mean a system of shared meanings between people, what do you understand from the term culture?

**SM:** you have to say that to me again

**Pat:** the way we do things around here how we do business, culture can mean how we do business so does everything we do in the railway everyday and the DART everyday geared towards the customer for instance?

**SM:** its not always geared towards the customer but there are several categories where it would come into it, there would be customer, operations, safety and I don't think any single one of those are prioritised ahead of any of the other ones, various different departments there are people who will be definitely customer orientated but they are not necessarily in the train stations there is people who are operationally motivated then not necessarily in the train stations then again they are but in my opinion it depends like I know the people who are employed for me and the people that I see employed in the stations from Balbriggan to Bray are not always the people who should be working in those locations not always and some might have been in the job a long long time but they have come from somewhere other than customer focus backgrounds and they are not always suitable for working in booking offices or vice versa there is operations people who shouldn't be anywhere near customers, now this will come about from some of the older people maybe who have been in the jobs for decades now at this stage ye know and they are not going to change.

**Q 2:** What do you think is the dominant culture in DART at the moment are we more aware of the customer are we internally focused to much are we too focused on the staff what do you think we spend a lot of our time in DART managing?

**SM:** I think we trying to manage it all equally okay but maybe a priority in safety but a priority in safety is only some peoples priorities not necessarily be always mine, cause would necessarily apply to me so much ye know nor would operations so therefore for me alone probably it woud probably be customer orientated and when I say that I mean that we have all my stations all the time are always dealing with customer and what we want is to have customers complaining to us as little as possible, so we get as little grief make our job easier day by day so you will tend to focus on the customer to make sure and try and make sure that they are not going to complain and make our day a misery, in the operational sense I am probably thinking for the staff in the operation sense we will try and

do the best we can but again its to avoid for us trouble down the road because mostly the staff I have are staff with long time experience and we can see a problem before it sprouts and that's always our aim to stop it before it happens.

**Q 3:** Do you think you could list the values of DART Suburban values being what's important to the DART business, do you think you could list three of them? Just what you think is important to the DART business?

**SM:** well my perception of the DART probably maybe probably really the same as everyone else's is that the DART to us is a system that actually a customer can rely on we would like to think that it, its part of Dublin city and remains so and people we think if you mention the word DART you're not thinking negative your thinking positive okay, and em

**Pat:** so we'll say reliability is one value so we have what else do you think, reliability of service, what else do you think will be important to us?

**SM:** Job satisfaction for the people who work there when they finish its important because if the people who you are working for is not happy their going to make everyone else's life a misery around them and to do the things that we do the right, its all gone out of my head now...

**Pat:** well I mean if there is anything you want to add afterwards you can send me a email or something, cause this wont be written up for a couple of weeks

**SM:** somebody was doing a kind of survey out in Malahide I think it was school kids or something like that and one of the questions asked was what colour does DART generate when you say the word DART to somebody what colour does it generate in your mind ye know they didn't mean the colour of the train but in your mind most people said yellow for some reason yellow being a bright colour nobody ever said black or brown or grey that comes up as a negative

**Pat:** so yellow would be a bright positive colour

**SM:** yea I think something like 40% of people said yellow but

**Pat:** so what they are actually doing is associating their feelings with the DART then, so 40% of people see it as a positive service

**SM:** there was lots of other bright colours as well, the bright colours were 90% of the people the dark colours only 10% I also think about DART you don't really think negative at all ye don't even the people who have a hard job getting on the train say at Clontarf Road or Grand Canal Dock, they accept because if it comes on time as least its coming weather its coming full or not is another thing

**Pat:** so the three values I have at the minute at are we'll say are the reliability of service, job satisfaction for employees and doing things right at the

start, right they are three good ones, there is a thing called a sub culture right so we'll say if the culture of DART was around the reliable service, job satisfaction and doing things right the first thing right, that's the culture of DART but there is making up that big culture is a number of sub cultures there called little groups the example I have give so far is you can go upstairs in this building and you can walk in Divisional Engineer's office and you can go down the hall and you can going into our District Office and even though It's the same company we are all working for the same company, there same offices on the same floor you walk in to two completely different environments, you will probably get two completely different reactions I'm not saying which is good or which is bad but you probably will you won't get the same reaction in both offices right and that's actually because there is different cultures operating in those offices and that explains the difference when you walk in and people say hello to you and people stop and talk to you or they ignore you right, so based now on a group of people with similar jobs

**Q.4: Do you think that the Station Manager's have a sub culture of their own ?**

**SM:** yea

**Pat:** why would you think that?

**SM:** do you mean Station Manger's just together themselves or the staff?

**Pat:** no just themselves this group of 6 Station Manager's, like if there was going to be a party in this office right and we invited all the people and the six Station Managers were invited in do you think the 6 Station Manager's could end up in a corner together?

**SM:** yea I think they would, well I don't think all of them maybe but I think maybe four or five

**Pat:** most of them anyway so why do you think that would end up in a corner together?

**SM:** because those six particular people are doing six jobs that are broadly similar not all the time we have the same problems we are dealing with the same hierarchy we may all get different reactions from the hierarchy's I don't know we would have a common bond something in common to talk about, but that's not necessarily true with just the six Station Manager's I think that if you also took in the six staff who are in the Suburban Rail office that the six Station Manager's and the six staff in the Suburban Rail office would intermingle equally

**Pat:** on yea

**SM:** I'll give you an example say we were at the Station awards that were over in Dublinia and there were 100 people invited I would know 90 of the 100 but id still end up myself with the other Station Manager's like all in Pearse even though they are colleagues that I have know for years it

depends on suburban we just seem to end up because we all deal with the same thing

Pat: yea I see you have a common bond you have the same problems you've similar jobs yea that defines kind of sub culture

SM: we know the same people we have all funnily enough myself the SM Sutton, the SM Pearse we know all the people in all the locations now and especially now with all the people in all the rotations there is very few of us that don't know all the people in all the stations, we would know, I have my 25 I also know Sutton's 25 as well and I know Bray's 25 and so on and we can talk about other things as well

Pat: you can talk about other things as well so you have an awful lot of common knowledge so as well, right okay I suppose this sub culture another way of describing it is relationships you have these relationships with these guys and girls because you are all in a similar type job.

**Q 5: What can be better about the sub culture?**

SM: about our time together is it?

Pat: what could be better about what can be better about the relationships between Station Manager's what would if you could improve something between the Station Manager's relationships what would it be?

SM: well I don't have any particular problem with any of the Station Manger's at all like

Pat: no no it's not having a problem with individuals now, do you think you should communication better or do I ....

SM: I think we communicate as well as anyone can be expected, there's a rare day goes by when I'm not talking to one of them of there talking to me and I appreciate that fact a lot that of the six of us we all each have different views or better at some things that others ye know and I'll well aware that operationally I'm no genius so I will ask Paddy or Ritchie or someone like that for help, other people might ask me about other things that I might be ok at but I don't have a problem

Pat: so do you think it operates fairly well so this relationship between the Station Manager's so you share information your communication with each other the whole time and you help each other out

SM: well from my point of view I am I don't need any more help from them I appreciate the fact that I can get help from anyone of them there is not one of them that I would be afraid to ring or ask for advice from

**Q 6: What sort of things would you like to change in your area in relation to the culture of the staff or the way you do business in the halts?**

SM: with the staff?

Pat: yea what would you like to change?

SM: if I had the choice again I may not have taken on some of the people that I have working for me but a small minority and I felt that the people who came to me where people I needed at the time because of the viability plan that came in, I didn't always interview them myself they were picked for me and when they came to me I thought they were simple and what I would have done on a selection ?? I would have let him go within a week because I knew they weren't the people for me ye know but never the less I persisted with them and I'd still to this day take only experienced staff or older men and not younger people on the job I find that they are the ones who would be more disruptive to the stations and the way they work and try and make sure that when the staff are coming into my station and its halts that I am the one that picked them I can fall by my own decisions them I'd have no qualms about letting somebody go within days who wasn't suitable for the job with the job that choice wasn't give to my for some of them now I have come to regret that in the months then that followed and there is no real reason to change that

Pat: and is it their attitude is it, their attitude to work or their attitude to turning into work that's a big problem is it? You can't rely on this is it?

SM: I've nobody that doesn't show up for work and I've nobody that does anything like that but I always feel that there are people like that who look for more than the more experienced staff who have lived through the days when the pay was bad and they are the ones who appreciate that the pay is good things are too easy for the younger people coming in the wages are too high for the job they do and that a bad thing cause these are people who are not being supervised by and large they are not being supervised at all ye know so their culture is to do as little possible for as much as they can get fair enough the culture of the vast majority of the fellows that I have is to do as best we can the whole day long and every day they then in turn would be disrupted by the people only are 1 or 2 it would appear to them to get away with murder and then the next thought is maybe I'll done the same thing and see what happened ye know and that can happen so If I was going to change anything I am going to be the one that picks them and I'm going to be the one that lets them go and I'm not going to give them a second chance goes back to another way which would be a weeks trial and if I don't like it let you go, I don't thin I need anybody but if you'd like to make it clear that you'd like the job what I really want to know is do I like you?

Pat: yea very true and then a clear understanding or whatever

SM: yea you just go back to where you came from

Q 8: **What would be your three main goals that you would like to achieve this year?**

SM: Fellows that work with me are all great fellows no real enemies none of them they would say that I should have more time to I think that my time

management is poor now I don't think its my fault that its poor because I prioritise but I do fall down in taking care of what for me to be an extremely small thing to them is not and I want to be able to have more time to deal with the actual minor issues no there is nobody upset with anything else like that, they all know why they haven't got safety shoes, they know why its taking 5 days for me to ring up and maybe get a pothole filled in or something, they know why that is ye know so anything No. I got to be getting myself more time

Pat: how do you think you are going to do that? Do you think that there is a way of doing that?

SM: I am working to that now but it's a long long process there is so many backlogs of things that I have to do by the time that I get to the level to where I can come in some morning and sit down and say what will I do I haven't had that in nearly 2 years, you come in and you hell for leather at it, so you be getting there, most guys cause haven't been there they end up in another place ?? months at a time or doing something for somebody else and nothing got to do with my people at all and it would take up a lot of the time that I would be using to give to them and say I don't know I think I should be able to give them more time and if I can do that by the end of that's year and I hope to that's the only thing I need

Pat: any other goals, we've had staff issues anything else you'd like to do?

SM: I don't think so because when I have a quiet moment and we're sitting there no I don't think so I have a good relationship with all the staff that are there, they tell me what needs to be done I prioritise in my head and you either do it or don't one or the other ye know, but a really good relationship with staff so that to me is most of the battle it stops them dissention it stops me having to do things?

Pat: do you think that's in line with the overall DART Suburban Goals do you think they are kind of building staff relationships is important to people like myself and the DM or do you think we really don't care how you treat them once you get the work out of them

SM: No you have to treat them, the staffing issues are hugely important for the Station Manager staff relations among the staff themselves is very important as well because if it's the wrong mix of staff it can lead to trouble among themselves as well and that's going to reflect them come back to you to deal with and you don't need that either so is important to have the right mix of staff and then that you have a good relationship yourself with the staff ye know

Pat: so you think that by doing that that you are actually fulfilling the kind of corporate DART goal as well of three people with respect and blah blah blah, do you think of it in those terms that your actually working in towards that do you know what I mean like what you're doing locally with different people with respect and getting a positive relationship with them and that if you do that locally that you are actually feeding in to a

kind of a bigger picture that's trying to do the same thing that all the DART staff.

SM: I don't think every Station Manager has the same relationship with the employees they have as I have ye know

Pat: do you think they should?

SM: I do think they should yea, I recognise as well that there are people in other locations mine to a lesser extent who are out to be disruptive who demand more than anybody else but look for more than they actually deserve and I wouldn't have thought that the Station Managers if it was me I wouldn't have kept them I would have found some excuse I would have found something to make sure that I be able to get rid of them within the rules but I would have found the rules if they had broken to get rid of them

Q 9: **Do you think that Station Managers see themselves as legitimate Managers, do you think the six Station Managers see themselves as Managers ?**

SM: yes they do yea

Pat: why would you say yes?

SM: well they have to be because they are the liaison all the time to the people there is the Station Foremen, the Depotmen, Drivers they're a go between upper management meet the trade unions to a certain extent, any problems that they have they will always come to the Station Manager first hopefully to deal with it, they have no other choice but to recognise the fact that you are a Manager

Pat: what about in terms of just you were taking there you were saying that you have a business separate so obviously you think very strongly in terms of costs and revenue and process stuff.

SM: suitability of the staff

Pat: suitability of the staff right, do you think the Station Managers when they look at their halts and when they look at their staff do they think in terms of costs, revenues?

SM: we're all six different people we will all take a different priority mine is all always revenue its not necessarily costs but I will try and make sure and do something that would cost me €200 to do something I would put €400 back in revenue back for doing it, now we don't all think like that in fact I don't think too many of the other Station Manager's think like that at all, its just part of the business in my head I tell guys to come in and work 4 hrs overtime on a Saturday afternoon because there is a rugby match in Lansdowne Road because that 4 hours will cost €80 the benefit of bringing them in would be an extra two or three hundred euro, but then somebody else would say why did you bring in this many and work for 4

hours ?????but you shouldn't be bringing in people, I don't care I know I've done the right thing, other priorities are I couldn't give you examples I don't know any ???? but costs I take the SM Pearse for example he probably wouldn't spend 4 pence like ye know and he would rather do without, but he'd also do without the revenue as well because of even when asked to buy flower boxes to put them down, help the stations make them more attractive people might think to come back down the line.

Pat: okay you feel that they do see themselves as legitimate managers but would it be fair to say that they need to expand do you think?

SM: yes yes

Pat: ye know in terms of a manager must be responsible for the planning, 4 functions planning, controlling, coordinating, executing

SM: an actual thing about the Manager know I don't know from the others but I know myself but I was never trained as a manager to my knowledge neither were the others, if they were I don't know about it, never trained in any way for to do this job, it's the kind of a thing when I came into the company 30 years ago nearly now we actually did have a Manager and the Manager was always Mr Something or other I don't think I have ever called anyone Mr since 1976 you kind of think that gradually goes out its right you be horrified if someone called me mister

Pat: it puts up a barrier there.

SM: there was people who you would not call anything but Mr and it was the respect they had, the respect is no ? now cause nobody is calling you mister they're calling you Pat its no less than that and I hope that the respect that you're give is because you deserve the respect you have earned the respect what with, anyway I was never trained to be a Manager it was a thing that was gradually brought on say in relief clerk which is not really that a manager but its sowing the seeds of management into your head, more responsibility, people asking to do things and then don't do them but at least you know your positional responsibility even as a relief clerk and even if you in a ticket office or something like that but one week you'd be selling tickets next week your managing Arklow station or something like that so for me it's a very gradual thing to do, skills are always different themselves

Pat: so it should have been in terms of looking at people for development and giving them the skills before they got into the job

SM: maybe I'm the wrong person for the job, I'll never now if I was or not I was given the job cause I think only two people applied for it and they were happy to give it to me cause the other person never done it before, but therefore its that right or wrong I don't know, seemed right at the time

Pat: kind of getting back at there's no succession planning no taking people where they are going to go next

SM: that's right well the person themselves also doesn't where they are going to go next, open up the Weekly Circular and say there's a handy job in revenue like be an accountant, maybe I'll work in revenue control I'll be good at doing this that or the other but necessarily what you are good at you might like to do it or you might like the hours or you might like, that's throughout the whole company that kind of attitude, it was also mine when I was starting off we'd look at jobs and being a CO3 my next up was a CO2 so I applied for maybe for 4 /5 Co2 jobs all completely different and the one I got was a computer operator in Oriol Street, a computer operator coming from a ticket office in Heuston and now I'm a computer operator I know nothing about computers absolutely nothing and I was never able ever from the time I was three years as a computer operator knew nothing about computers three years I couldn't believe it and eventually they found me out and I was then asked to train other people even though I don't know what I'm doing myself in the first place

Pat: I suppose getting back looking at the overall culture of the organisation then how could that happen

SM: in my book its still there

Pat: its still there that we can still put people into jobs that we really don't know weather they are suitable or not

SM: do these people really want this job or do they just want the promotion and the money that goes with it, there is nothing worse than working in a job where you might be getting loads of money but actually hate the job, waking up every single morning and dreading the day, I've never had a job that, I loved the computer dept in Oriol street by the way

Pat: that's a brilliant example now and we probably to get back to your point your probably putting guys into booking offices like that we are probably making Shunters that are like that we're probably making guys drivers that are like that they are looking at the money, their looking at its cool to be a driver but they don't really want to do it, they don't want to be a driver

SM: people who are drivers and work alone they love working alone and to be a driver to them it's probably perfect for them if they are loners they gone all day and they are not bothering anyone ye know

Q 10: **What barriers do you think exist to you in achieving the culture that you want to bring in your area? Things you want to change, what barriers are they what obstacles are blocking you?**

SM: I think, well the main thing for blocking anything in my station I'm a bad example for this I tend to work alone and achieving anything that I ever want to achieve there now I've come across very very few obstacles in anything I want to do and some of them were outrageous and I've got away with some of the stuff I have I don't particularly have a barrier if I had a barrier its probably cost of doing something or implementing something ye know, now I'd be well aware of the cost but it could be

customer, anything like that at all some things you can find are simple and you can't achieve a simple thing cause its irritating ye know but I generally really don't have any barriers cause with experience will tell me in know where to go to achieve I know the people to ask to get it done and even though there is people to ask that will hide it on me, get it done that way so it will still be done, don't really have any

Pat: do you have any trade unions barriers or anything like that, there's nothing in your station at the moment that you would like to change but you know if you tried to do it

SM: I don't operate that way in my station, no that's not our way of doing it and our way of doing it is we'll ask we'll talk about it, we either won't do it or we will do it we will do it if its right, we won't do it sometimes it could be right and we still can't do it but I've explained why we can't do it and why might try and get around with another method or something like that, practically no trade unions problem at all, in fact we were struggling to find out who the NBRU Rep in my area was even though we have three members and were still not sure which of them it is, meetings with trade unions to me are informal things and only because we have to, because everything we think everything is done on request and if its not there is an explanation as to why its not been done, loads of things that are suggested to me that we should do are actually done because there are probably right cause I've got staff who are equally as experienced and more experience in working the railways than I am, so I might take advice on it and do it if its right

Pat: do you think you are getting around a lot of the barriers because you are actually dealing with the lads you bringing them on board and your, sorting the problems together really is it?

SM: they would look at me more as a colleague than a boss which to me its never if I ever was a boss of someone, I'd like to think that we can get around things that they can ask me, that they wouldn't ask cause they would be afraid to ask and therefore its not done at all.

Pat: and do you think they'd come to you before they go to your shop steward with issues?

SM: they've never in all the time dealt with shop steward since 1988 I've never had a shop steward come to me and say why I didn't do this, its been suggested that I do something

Pat: any of the senior managers in DART now when I talk about senior managers in DART now I'm describing four guys just about the DART at the moment, I'm talking about myself, the DM, the HR manager and the accountant, are any of those guys a barrier to you in doing anything you want to do

SM: or the other people who where there, I've never had a barrier but then again I wouldn't ask for something unless I knew or explaining the reasons fully behind it, I wouldn't implement something without talking

advice on it, I can't think of anything off hand that ever stepped in my way of doing something, its come the other way of course, suggestions would be made and I wouldn't implement then but I'd have to explain why it shouldn't be done, its always a very good relationship with anybody that's ever there ye know

Pat: seems to be the key to it, I agree relationships are the key.

SM: I don't mean getting on with other people for a happy relationship I had a good relationship with the previous DM not particularly so with the previous suburban manager, but it wouldn't stop me asking his advice or him asking mine.

Q 11: **Do you think the current senior managers in the DART espouse the values of the DART to the Station Managers?**

SM: talking about the senior team?

Pat: Just those four do you know from us what's important to the DART business at the moment?

SM: I do but, I think that the way us four us six and four different managers operate is still on a helping each other basis more than anything else, its not that you have to tell us what the culture of the DART is were helping each other to understand what the culture of the DART is, I might not be to happy with demands being made and that I felt were unreasonable and I felt may lead to a row or something it never happens and it shouldn't happen cause what would happen I as see it is our price would be sought for each other as to weather I'll give you an example the car park in Rush, will we clamp them, I say yes you say no okay now I say now I'm not sure did I say yes or you say no I don't know it dosen't matter because we have worked out a way and understood and we haven't clamped cars in Rush because we have covered ourselves very well by meeting the TD's we took advice from even beyond as to weather this is worth doing and probably people in Rush so its not being done and we really haven't heard too much about since ye know its still going on but its still there

Pat: hasn't gone away that's exactly the perfect example of dealing with the customers and as you say it was worked out together rather than either demands being made or instructions being issued or stuff like that

SM: another manager might have said clamp them and then you can see what is going to happen next there is going to be murder, your going to have those TD's coming on and they are going to be demand this and then running down and ah sure I couldn't do anything about it, but if they were brought on board that was done the right way, it dosen't matter we still have an opinion

Pat: its hasn't gone away and we are still I hope to drop down with the COO shortly to show him because, okay so your happy enough that the senior guys in the DART are kind of sending the messages about what's important out to the Station Mangers you think they are doing that yea?

SM: what important about the DART is something that we all share with each other

Pat: like the message is on punctuality now the message is on revenue protection, the message is on the traffic light report

SM: what happens there is its explained to us why is this not done? and what the consequences are above, across and below us.

Pat: and do you think that's the way to do it do you think if the DM or the accountant has something on the traffic light report that's the way he should do it

SM: there is no point in the accountant coming along and making to me that to me its seems absolutely stupid to ask us to do something that I think is incredibly stupid and have to explain to me what you have to do, I'll give you an example again, cancelled right, cancelled tickets if somebody said last you have to send back all the cancelled tickets to revenue control because Sean didn't do and I said, I have more to do that look after cancelled tickets, its to me have absolutely no revenue value whatsoever to me its seems an absolute there's no way they could ever be checked by anybody in revenue control so what you just tend to do is nothing so I did nothing it wasn't until I was in revenue control myself with RCO and we wen't along and he showed me various documentations and stuff that I realised if I was in Rays position I would have demanded myself that cancelled tickets be brought into the locations its only when you understand exactly why he was doing it, otherwise you won't do it, seems stupid yet they still ignore it ye know, if its explained to you exactly why its needed

Pat: and the whole thing that changed your mind was the fact that you saw where RCO was coming from and you say ah well he does need it does make sense to him if he gets the tickets in

SM: Sean himself it wasn't that Sean did anything wrong its just that Sean didn't understand himself what RCO was talking about

Pat: and I think there is a suggestion that's after coming in that all the Station Managers pay a visit to RCO was that you was it? Pay a visit to RCO, very good idea

SM: I want other people to know

Pat: and bring their clerks with them I know you don't have a chief but bring their Chief who ever has a Chief clerk.

SM: it's the most informative day out that I think anybody can have this is just a part of the culture personal culture is that some of these places are like secret societies and one of them is the revenue control office another is probably the CTC, the divisional engineers I don't know anyone in there but places that relate to me is CTC the RCO and maybe the personnel

office, the perception that I would get of the revenue control is that don't go near that place it's a dark uninviting place with people who don't smile which is actually not true at all.

Pat: I think you are making a key point its to get the message to the Station Manager is what's important but then behind that why its important who its important to and this not being put upon to upset your day

SM: that's what it was to me

Pat: the other angle is then to kind of put your money where you mouth is and let the Station Manager have time to go in and see why its important to the way things need to be done, and they come out and they say there not just trying to upset me they're actually trying to do something and the need me to

SM: it doesn't happen to me but I know it happens to the others Cecily this happened Cecily, Cecily actually doesn't know anybody in the RCO and therefore she wouldn't know who she was dealing with and she never met these people until she wen't in for a day and fortunately I know most of the people in there having dealing with them all the time for years like but Cecily didn't know anybody so she was getting a query from a faceless person she has no idea who it is ye know it's a name on the bottom of a page and it might be its only until you meet the person even hello how are you doing your Cecily and your and now you have a face behind the name

Pat: and its not half as frightening

SM: no and that's with a hour in the RCO or in CTC can do for you.

Pat: I picked up on your report I was just reading before you where saying I think it was you, I think your report said that all Station Managers should pay a visit in here

SM: I didn't have to do it myself I had been dealing with them through for the Bray incident so in order for me to get the pieces of the tools that I needed I had to go in there one day, I know Margie and I know Anna is in there now and all these people so I know them all anyway, so I find it easier to go it so, but when I was in there meeting Ray about cancelled tickets and explain why and that's all you need explanation as to why you did something and generally its done then, with the same cut would apply to other operational things as well.

Q 12: **Do you think that we operate in a competitive environment in DART?**

SM: no

Pat: why would you say no?

SM: competitive environment is where you have competition doing the same thing relatively easily for the customer to get to, the DART is not some people will say it does have competition it ahs cars bikes walking

motorways all this but to me it doesn't because you've a car it will take two hours, use a bike you will be worn out going to work, walking could be a long way might be an easier and healthy way to do it, take a bus, bus lanes still could take an hour, DART is twenty minutes there is no competition to twenty minutes into town from most DART stations ye know, that's no competition at all so therefore people are going to use it, where is the competition to DART there isn't any, I know people say there is course there is competition but there isn't really, to me competition is somebody your providing a service somebody providing exactly the same service that makes you trying to be better than then otherwise you won't have a customer, what reason do we have to be to be better than a car , we don't, we don't have to be better than a bus either, we don't have to be better than anything we are very lucky that we still have a high public profile and a good perception about us from the public that means we are doing the competition we don't have people think we have could make us be a very poor service which is not the case so actually we are very lucky that we provide a good service without competition without real competition

**Q 12a: Do you think our strategy should be in the next five years in the DART what do you think what should we be doing?**

**SM:** now the DART itself I believe is at capacity there is very very little room for capacity anywhere or room for growth between Bray & Howth & Malahide the room for growth is in the satellite towns north of Malahide ye know and having visited there recently there I would be horrified if we don't have a strategy to deal with all these people, because builders are putting the houses by the 100 in all of the locations that we have as far as Drogheda ye know

**Pat:** but do you think it should be a strategy to electrify to Drogheda?

**SM:** yea not just Suburban, I wouldn't support it to Drogheda I would though to Balbriggan ye know and if you electrified to Drogheda your asking the country to ask for trouble cause the whole east coast then would be just houses all along the rail lines we wouldn't get away with that whereas if you block it at certain points I would imagine Balbriggan would be the stop, if you block it there well then at least you know that's a far as people are going to go, this happened at London Heathrow airport is the last stop its not going to go any further and never will because the city is contained within those boundaries

**Pat:** what about the Maynooth line? Do you think we should electrify the Maynooth line?

**SM:** yes but its not going to happen easy if you electrify the Maynooth line or it will be an easier thing to do to electrify the line as far as Skerries and Balbriggan ye know, I can't see why they don't electrify the line to Dublin Airport and run it through Malahide or Howth Junction, if you don't do it soon there is going to be houses in the way there all over the place and there's going to be no way of getting through to Malahide

- Q 13:** **If DART was not a Semi State Company what do you think would be different about it?**
- SM:** we would have less staff and more technology, computer technology, the staff would be of a different type of staff probably worst paid
- Pat:** do you thin you'd find it easier to manager or would it be easier to manage or would it be more difficult
- SM:** I think It would be more difficult to manage, because you would have less resources to manage, when you are not relying on public funding the only way the business won't operate if its going to operate on profit so if its operating on profit it wouldn't exist not if its going to be a profit in it and the only way to make a profit is your costs your expenditure and what's coming in, the DART to my knowledge dosen't do that and probably never will but it was run by a private enterprise they would find a way of making it which is not really what we have to do, we are not motivated to have to do that despite what the CFO and the rest of the people on the RCO say its not in our nature to have to do that cause we know in the back of our minds that somebody is going to bail us out somewhere ye know
- Pat:** so we are not profit orientated?
- SM:** well we like to think that we try to be profit orientated ye know but the vast majority of people 99% of the people here have no idea what its like to have to survive in a private enterprise world at all cause we haven't had to its not our fault that we are like that, we just haven't had to ye know because despite threats from the RCO accountant it never had to happen ye know its never our staff would never have to live in a world where they have a job this week but will they have one next week they don't know this, but they do know that they have a job no matter how bad they are that's dosen't exactly
- Pat:** that's a bad thing about being a semi state that even no matter how bad they are they know they have the job, whereas if they were in a private sector if they weren't up to scratch that they would be let go
- SM:** they would be let go tomorrow, I go through staff I think no body there is guaranteed, the results of that though is that the staff that are there are girls who are reasonably well paid know that if they are not good enough I will get somebody better its as simple as that, I don't mind being taken to any employment tribunals at them before I don't care so it's a couple of grand to the girl save €10,000 by letting her go, so our attitude is completely different we wouldn't want to go to an employment tribunal nobody would ever want to do it for you, we would try and find a way out of letting then go gracefully or allowing sick leave or anything like that I heard this morning some bloke allegedly had a gun produced on him a Harmonstown and hes been off sick ever since do you think I'd tolerate that, I'd want the girl back tomorrow ye know
- Pat:** whereas our guys are so well protected yea yea okay

- SM: that kind of think wouldn't happen in a private world
- Pat: do you think there would be more pressure on the Station Managers if it wasn't a state company do you think it would be more pressures to perform in terms of revenue/costs
- SM: the managers wouldn't exist, I don't know which if the six of us would survive in a private enterprise, I don't think any of us would survive.
- Pat: why would you think none of us would survive or none of the Station Managers would survive
- SM: the pressures that are being put on us would be completely different than they are now, what's the biggest pressure we have now, some guys would just say its just getting up in the morning, get the alarm ye know, ifs it a private enterprise your expected to do far far more because if you don't, if you don't perform to the standards, simple as that in a private world there is no second chances usually and if you don't do your job properly the job wont exist, nothing like it is here at all wouldn't even come close to that kind of an attitude at all
- Pat: even though we are a state company do you think that we should be trying to encourage our Station Manager's to think more in terms of not that they were in a private sector company but that they should do more in terms of cost and revenue that they should pay more attention to it
- SM: your asking me what I would do if I was the Managing Director of a private DART, I don't know actually what I would do
- Pat: what if you were a Managing Director of a Semi State DART do you still think that you could do stuff to make our Station Managers think more in terms in revenue costs
- SM: there is no difference between Semi State and State, no of us Aer Lingus or something like that, were Semi State, okay but of other Semi State bodies but there is no difference between State or Semi state
- Pat: what I'm trying to say is we've agreed that if you were not a Semi State if we were a private organisation the pressures would be different on the Station Manager in some way they would be able to manage better cause they could now let go the guy that's constantly late for work or the kind that won't wear his uniform they can say right ? and I'm going to get another guy in the morning to replace you that guy is gone, in one way they would be able to manage better cause they would have their freedom cause the MD of this private now wants to know the bottom line from Malahide the bottom line cost the bottom line everything what are you doing about it
- SM: I would have to have to just take my station there for example I'm the Manager there and were a private company, and we usually take we'll say

€20,000 a week ye know a Managing Director would ask me to improve on that figure.

Pat: that's the perception that's good, do you think that we should try alright the Station Manager's alright it's a state thing who cares but should we care? As DART should we care and should we be looking to the Station Manager's to say more attention to your costs more attention to your revenue what are you doing about upping your revenue, do you think that was the way

SM: that's the way the three shops that we have that's the way there operated and were nice people towards for a better way. I still have we've a Manager in each shop if the figures are down I ask the girl who's managing why and she'll tell me because people well didn't like the brand or something at the same time we can reward her when the takings are up ye know, she will be rewarded with a bonus at Christmas or something like that whatever it is she will be rewarded in other ways as well with clothes or whatever we do we do

**END OF TAPE**

**INTERVIEW WITH STATION MANAGER FOUR****THURSDAY 29<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2004**

**Q 1: What do you understand from the term culture?**

**SM:** well could you explain a little bit more Pat really because what ye know

**Pat:** okay how we culture particularly in we'll say the Station Managers in the DART how we do our business right, are we focused on all, are they all focused on the same thing?

**SM:** no were not as Station Managers were not we would be focused on different things, primarily I suppose because of the areas we work in, certainly in Bray because of the Drivers you have to be focused I would say about 70% of your time is spent on driver issues and others issues would be affected by that, traffic staff and issues dealing with traffic staff but cultural change from one location to another em obviously revenue would be high up there in the agenda as well, a lot of it would depend on the location of the culture

**Pat:** So you would think there is a culture anyway ?

**SM:** there is a culture

**Pat:** and each Station Manager maybe creates his or her own in their station or halt?

**SM:** yea you would possibly inherit a culture from previous Station Manager's or from the Staff that are there depending again on the individuals some places have very strong minded individuals and they could dictate certain cultures.

**Pat:** right okay so you think there is a shared mind set in there?

**SM:** there would be yea

**Q 2: What do you think is a dominant culture in DART at the moment?**

**SM:** for Station Manager's now or? The dominant culture really I suppose is for most of us to try and keep our heads above water ye know in terms of staffing levels, everything trying to keep our safety, in we have so many different things so many balls to keep in the air if you like at one time that we are really just trying to keep our head above water and its very hard to actually manage and plan for the future when you're just..

**Pat:** In you stations now in your halts now right what's kind of the constant message that you would send to your staff when you are dealing with them is it customer service, is it operations stuff, keeping the stations clean, what's kind of the stuff that you find you are chasing, your pushing?

SM: keeping the stations open would be a main thing and cleanliness ye know certainly to try and keep staff on board that they are not disappearing out of stations and going to the shop every 10 minutes, a bit of a battle but I getting there and Cleanliness as well

Pat: Cleanliness so that's kind of, you're kind of customer focused, the booking office is open so people can buy tickets and you want them to have, so your kind of pushing the customer focus

SM: yea and revenue as well

Q 3: **What do you think are the values in DART ?**

SM: DART as a business or?

Pat: yea DART as a business what do you think we value I suppose one would be punctuality would it, that would be, we all strive towards that every day that would be one, what else do you think?

SM: revenue protection would be up there, safety, we aspire towards customer values but I don't think we are there yet by a long way

Pat: why do you think that?

SM: because of culture maybe coming back and certain things that have maybe happened in the past, the revenue protection and the safety are taking over from maybe watching are backs if you like, and the customers are key objectives because of these others things ye know

Pat: so what should we if we create or get together at tomorrows meeting and we say right we are going to create a new value of customer focus, what would you find yourself doing out in Sutton now to push the customer focus value type thing?

SM: well I suppose really a lot of it would stem from myself as being Station Manager over the staff and would be to free up time to deal with staff more often that I can ye know but it's the simple thing like sitting down having a cup of tea and talking about football or whatever but because of these other issues or whatever you want to call them its very very hard to get the time to do things like that

Pat: so you are saying you are very internally focused so you can't deal with the staff then in terms of getting them to think more of the customer, were too busy looking in at ourselves all the time?

SM: exactly, worrying again about as you say punctuality and safety, revenue

Pat: okay that's good, there is another thing then in the literature that I call the sub culture, and these are described as cultures distinct from the dominant cultures so, we already said that we kind of have a dominant culture of customer service, but we mightn't be doing it very well but its what we are working towards, and then we have sub culture, a sub culture is a group of people in their own, like an accounts office, now they are all in the one office and they might be different

from the engineering office down the hall, now the difference may be, and then they are called sub cultures.

**Q 4: Do you think the Station Managers have a sub culture of their own?**

**SM:** as a group, we probably would do yes and again it will probably come into a question that you asked earlier on because we do share information and try and some people are obviously better at doing things than others and people have strengths and weaknesses and because we share that we probably would have a sub culture alright

**Pat:** and that works then, and you're geographically broken up you are all over the place, like would you come together informally?

**SM:** No, it would be more phone calls or I have an issue here how would you deal with this issue, most people would have come across something similar in the past and generally it would be informal

**Pat:** is it one of support so kind of support each other?

**SM:** we do yes

**Pat:** do you find yourself speaking any different language from any of the other sections of the railway?

**SM:** em yes like this morning the maintenance people it seems to be opposed rather than helping each other out ye know

**Pat:** so it's a supportive sub culture, that you support each other, and is it all would it be geared then for supporting what DART is trying to do ?

**SM:** probably in the long term yes

**Pat:** and what about the short term?

**SM:** sometimes you are going to have negative things that are going to come up, stuff from revenue control and stuff like that and initially you would kind of what the hell is going on here attitude like, you know in the long term of certain disciplinary issues, revenue issues that we can talk through on, if you do it certain way we will get more information

**Q 5: We've said that there is a Station Manager's culture, so what could be better about it?**

**SM:** I don't know if you could improve on it, certainly we share an awful lot of information, informally and we can speak bluntly than if we could have formal meetings and you know you can get a lot more information across if it was kind of a formal issue

**Pat:** so you kind of saying that you're happy enough with the way it works at the moment is it that you can ring the SM Malahide or ring the SM Dunlaoire or you can ring someone and they'll probably know something and vice versa, and you

have actually gone to other stations to help other people out with cash balances and that and you've been asked like and ring in and say any trouble here, has anyone every come to you to help you out like that? Or have you asked anyone?

SM: em not to help as such with cash balances but certainly with returns after Bray the people who where there came back and I wanted stuff explained more that actually helping with the balance as such, no problem with people coming out.

Pat: that's good isn't it, now just getting away from the Station Manager's from the minute just thinking about your halts and your stations, we'll say there is a culture operating in your halt at the moment on the northside some of its good some of its bad maybe right but

Q 6: if you could change some of the things out in your halts what would it be?

SM: Flexibility I suppose would be a major concern ye know, staff moving between stations, staff leaving booking offices unattended.

Pat: is that a big probably do you think?

SM: yes in certain locations not all locations

Pat: and what do you think makes the difference between the crowd that are there as they should be and the crowd that are not

SM: again I think its culture issue Pat that the stations more likely for people not to be in them are the ones that were attached to Connolly originally the ones from my station seem to cause less problems and I don't necessarily think its because I know the guys a little bit better.

Pat: so you're saying the halts that were under Connolly are the ones that are more troublesome for you now, and obviously they would have come from a different type of Station Manager and different regime, because they were more InterCity wen't they, like Connolly is more InterCity than it is DART and maybe these guys felt a little left out

SM: I think they did yea and a lot of it was kind of basic things like uniforms and shoes and stuff like that

Pat: okay and you are getting to grips with that?

SM: Yea obviously there is parts of the stuff like those physical things that you can get for them is relatively easy but to be actually in the stations more frequently is harder to do unless you are willing to come back out late at night an that your kind of defeating the purpose of it as well because they see you are just watching them all time

Pat: that if you don't trust them they not going to trust you, isn't that it

SM: exactly

Pat: so that's flexibility and attendance in terms of staff presenting themselves for working and just uniforms is that fairly good

SM: no its not as good as it should be again its these three stations would be more likely to, I'm a little bit tied on it at the moment because I wasn't there when the uniforms were issued and there is a lot of excuses being used like I didn't get this of I didn't get that so the uniforms are due to come out in June again so I'm going to let it lie until then and I can then really chase guys you haven't got your shirt or whatever

Pat: I think you have just answer the next question, its and I think these seem to be the top three, flexibility, attendance and staff presentation, are they the most important things to you when you are operating in Sutton every day Tom?

**Q 7: What is the top three things you would prioritise or change the culture operating in your halts at the moment?**

SM: yea the cleanliness of the station is and issue as well

Pat: okay, you have to keep chasing, why do you think that it bothers these guys is it that don't want to come outside of the booking office

SM: no they don't they just want to sit there

Pat: and if the rubbish mounted up

SM: they would just let it mount up

Pat: they would take no pride in the stations do they not?

SM: no no

Pat: why do you think that is?

SM: I don't know

Pat: is it just because the people we're recruiting ?

SM: It could be its very hard because when you are recruiting people and there coming in and they see this environment if they are not if your not recruiting correctly you want to get people who have a strong enough will themselves

Pat: take a bit of pride in their work

SM: this isn't right let's do something about it

Pat: when you see some of the guys down at the best station awards, and you see some of the stations

SM: it's the same guys every year because that's the way to do work, Mark in Howth Jctn, he would take strips off guys for not doing and I used to kind of us him cause mark would be more blunt with people

Pat: Oh he would yea and he get away with it yea, you came up with the same approach they would be straight in saying they are being bullied and harassed, whereas mark feels he can talk their language and they don't react to him alright so we're saying you have 4 priorities so that you would change that you would try to change in your area as we speak today, kind of the flexibility can you do much about that cause that's kind of tied into 5/7 is it?

SM: well it is and did run as part of the ongoing monthly meetings and like all these changes its very very slow and take one step forward and two steps back but your its time, time consuming as well.

Q 8: **Just overall for your halts right what are your three main goals this year?**

SM: staffing levels, to get us up to our correct staffing levels,

Pat: anything else anything in relation to the DART Upgrade or anything like that

SM: no really, certainly to improve the attendance at booking offices, the flexibility would tie into that as well because a lot of the time guys are usually giving you the excuse that they don't have anyone to give them a break, so If I can have spare staff moving from one station to another to give a guy a cup of tea or go to the shop for half an hour, I'm trying to hit the flexibility thing as well it would cover our attendance

Pat: yea that you would be able to give more guys time off and at the same time the booking office doesn't have to suffer but tell me do you think they are going to buy into that at the moment I am working in Sutton I don't have to go anywhere do I?

SM: if you are appointed to Sutton, anyone that is recruited after the five over seven does have to

Pat: can you can put them into Kilbarrack or whatever

SM: but the older people don't, ye know I'm trying to get them to do it for meal breaks initially

Pat: and is it even the older crowd is it?

SM: yea

Pat: they are kind of ?? all day so they feel they don't have to do it? What's your feedback on it?

SM: depends on, they are probably fighting back, they don't like me cause I'm chasing them on not being in Booking Offices as well, I am just trying to show them the benefits.

Pat: Just in terms of, do your halts see Punctuality as something they could do anything about?

SM: No

Pat: why do you think that?

SM: they basically see themselves as booking clerks, they're in the office and that's it

Pat: so the trains come trains go

SM: that's it that would be what they see out there, and id say virtually all the halts in the network are like that.

Pat: so I'm kind of thinking in relation to Howth you know where the trains ?? driver changes ends and is back out and all the rest of it, these guys never like if the train was sitting on the platform for 5 minutes longer than it should be these guys wouldn't go out and see why

SM: there is only one individual that would

Pat: and the other two would just sit there and if it never went it never wen't and that's because they don't see it as their role.

SM: now is saying that if they were asked to help on something they would help, there not totally, but they won't go out and see if there was something wrong, if there was a problem on the trains a mechanical problem or a problem with people they would help as best they could.

**Q 9: Do you think Station Managers see themselves as legitimate Managers?**

SM: No were are more Supervisors Pat than really Managers

Pat: why would you say that now?

SM: em its we can't really manage were not able to for example hire and fire people if you like we have no control over who we have working for us we've very little control over budgets and things like that what we could spend our money on what we can't spend our money on, station improvements, like the gate in Kilbarrack, this is going to cost so much money so we can't do anything with it ye know then it's a huge safety issue and a revenue issue

Pat: that's a good point,

SM: not saying that we should have free rein at everything

Pat: oh yea understandable, just talking about yourself now not even the rest of them, how would you like to see yourself acting role like a manager, what sort of stuff would you like to be doing that you'd feel well now I'm Station Manager not Supervisor, what sort of stuff

SM: planning would be one thing,

Pat: so like did you sit in on any of the DART Upgrade meetings?

SM: no I was in Bray.

Pat: you were in Bray at the time ah right okay, but even we'll say they still haven't gone northside now so have you seen any plans or anything

SM: I've see plans yes, at this stage and at an advanced stage, I suppose one of the areas when I was in Dun Laoghaire when I was acting Station Manager in Dun Laoghaire and the stations out there and no staff were consulted about that ye know I know this isn't exactly planning but the Station Manager would I don't know maybe at the time the individual there wasn't really that interested enough in planning of stations, planning of what we are going to do planning of how we are going to spend our money this year,

Pat: so that's the kind of stuff you would feel more like a Manager if you were involved in planning things from the start, a bit of an input on the budgets and the revenue and the staffing levels as well, cause what way is it happening at the minute you're just told you are getting this guy into the halt, I thought you interview them

SM: we do interview Pat but you know we are at the stage now where we are supposed to have five depotmen we have three we are supposed to have five part time people on 20 hour contracts we don't have any of those so we are that short of staff and its unlikely that we are going to get them before the DART Upgrade work is finished.

Pat: I'd say that must be what's holding it up

SM: I can see a certain amount of it but we are really struggling to cover stations for annual leave, illness

Pat: even with the DART Upgrade

SM: the DART Upgrade hasn't really kicked in on the northside as such even though the Howth branch is closed

Pat: so you kind of saying you would feel more of a Manager if you felt more involved

SM: yea

**Q 10: What stops Station Managers from achieving the desired culture for their halts what barriers are there?**

SM: I suppose the actual culture of certain staff members as well trying to get one over and whatever

Pat: the attitude of the staff

SM: again that is something you have just have to keep working at and its very very slow you have to get the right staff into the right position

Pat: well your nearly talking a step backwards that almost by the time you get them it could be too late you're getting the wrong guy or girl and your left to try work around this attitude whereas if it took a step backward from the recruitment is it? So well say has any of the recruitment has the HR here is Suburban every put a survey out to Station Manager's as to what type of staff they need in the halt

SM: well we did we were in Inchicore and we did a couple of days with the HR manager and the SM Maynooth and a few people from Personnel & HR and we put together a package of and people from InterCity as well of there ideal kind of basic depot person coming into the job and the requirements as the skills that this person should have coming in

Pat: and do you think have you filled any people after that date

SM: I have interviewed one person and I'm waiting to hear it she rang to speak to Elaine this morning to see what the situation is with this person

Pat: since that meeting have you filled any jobs?

SM: no no not under this this hasn't been finalised

Pat: has any of the others do you know?

SM: No as far as I know.

Pat: that's something that we should be pushing shouldn't we

SM: its something that the HR manager said a while ago and I be inclined to agree with him that maybe because we haven't got a low or we have a low turnover of staff its not necessarily a good thing, we don't up to 25% type thing but if you had a kind of a constant, ye know when somebody leaves a position the position is left vacant rather than trying to ye know if you had kind of constant where you had people coming through and good people coming through that would always come to the top anyway, but its something that I would have to agree with him on that

Pat: yea but I suppose what's happening us now is we have so low turnover but okay we are getting a bit stale and people are just getting into a rut isn't that it?

SM: and then certainly some of the

Pat: and you're trying to manage the rut then aren't you

SM: yea and your left with the people who aren't willing to work really, the good guys will progress and then move on and that's great

Pat: oh yea so you want to see a guy getting on

SM: yea but the guys who are there are left in the rut and they don't really want to progress themselves

**Q 11: Do the DM and I espouse the values of DART through the right channels to our Station Manager's so in particular looking for three things that we might do rather than three things that we don't do right, in your view wide open here now there is no wrong answer here**

**SM:** I can't actually give you three reasons eh

**Pat:** do you get any values from the senior guys in DART?

**SM:** yea by and large I do yea

**Pat:** well what kind of stuff do you get or what kind of message are you getting?

**SM:** well I suppose I'll hit the negative ones first, em and this is maybe its something that I as I mentioned earlier we get so many different things thrown at us that we kind of Jesus Christ. At the Station Manager's meeting what's the priority here were trying to say is it going to be the revenue end of it is it going to be customer is it going to be the operations or is it the punctuality or is it something else ye know and a little bit of direction here on this now

**Pat:** so your not getting the direction you need

**SM:** ye know you might be working on a revenue thing and then something happened your punctuality and you get what happened here, ye know were working on something else

**Pat:** yea I see it yea so your busy putting together something that you think is important and next thing the questions start flying about something else

**SM:** as if you may have taken your eye off the ball once or twice ye know not intentionally but your kind of I'd say that's probably the main kind of thing like where are we going like what's the direction here

**Pat:** it changes too frequently does it?

**SM:** yea yea I know at the moment there is a big push on from the revenue, revenue control unit and that's lift and you deal with certain things that have happen but we need to kind of have them put into it as well ye know things where they introduce the deadline for the end of period because which is fine we weren't told about it and we were all the worst in the world then for not producing it

**Pat:** Okay that's good what about the actual channels I mean what's the main way you get your message from the senior guys in the DART about what's important is it phonecalls is it e-mails or is it a meeting?

**SM:** it would be a mixture of

**Pat:** what's the biggest one where you come away with most of your knowledge

**SM:** I suppose from phonecalls really

Pat: the phonecalls is it? You get calls that are not important as such? From the accountant or the HR manager or whatever

SM: I suppose phonecalls, I get phonecalls that could be a little bit more blunt that you would be in an email or a formal meeting

Pat: right okay so do you think that is good enough or

SM: not really no

Pat: what way would you like to see it I mean if you were sitting there looking at the DM and myself you'd say if I was sitting in his seat now I would do it this way

SM: well our monthly meetings we take them now they are beneficial and everyone has there, but you are talking about the same issues really every month okay maybe one month we focus on something okay and say okay lads next month lets have a go at this, next month we'll try something else not forgetting the other stuff the safety arrangements and we'd say for the next month we will try and focus on this ye know

Pat: yea it's a good idea so just narrow it down a little bit

SM: there is so much information flying around the place and we need to do this and we need to do that and you will be with the best in the world you can't do everything

Pat: no

SM: and if your going to so something you should maybe just say okay this month we are going to focus on this, whether its safety inspection, I don't know something to do with revenue

Pat: staff attendance

SM: staff attendance, uniforms

Pat: there is an element creeping into the Station Manager's meeting that and I noticed it right that id be sitting there and we'd be talking away about as what you say 50 issues and then one thing I noticed was that when the accountant would start to speak, everyone glazed now nothing about the accountant himself it was the subject he was talking on and its which everyone thought and nobody seems to care so at the last meeting the DM & I introduced that each Station Manager gives a little spiel on his revenue for the period, was there any follow up on that

SM: briefly it was done briefly, a lot of it was kind of tied into this DASH and DART Upgrade and revenue was down basically in most places

Pat: but are you coming to tomorrows meeting now we'll say with a spiel on revenue for the Northside halts

SM: No

Pat: were you given a template that you were to do it off?

SM: no definitely not

Pat: so that's were

SM: but even it was something like that were say okay listen we are going to hit revenue this month okay em now maybe the revenue or the budgets can be a bit of a daunting task

Pat: No its not sexy is it?

SM: no its not ye know we can talk about staffing levels and discipline and the revenue and the budgets and that are kind of oh no here we go again but again maybe if this was something that people had more hands on to it ye know

Pat: but this is the way I was thinking that if I come along and if I had to come along to the Station Manager's meetings and talk about my revenue and my halts wouldn't that be would that get me interested wouldn't in?

SM: it would and it wouldn't yea it probably would to a certain extent but again your primarily you going to get into a bitching things that you know I'm down here because I'm five staff short you don't really want to get into a bitching type thing I think that's what could happen it could generate into that ye know kind of a personal dig at our HR Manager

**Q 12: In terms of the competitive environment do you think we have one?**

SM: eh no

Pat: yea ok so we are operating in a kind of DART monopoly.

SM: yea yea

Pat: what about the off peak are they always bitching that are trains are not full at the off peak how do you do it, sure we be looking at trains that or is it just the fact that we run half empty trains

SM: its something I suggest when I think I was in Malahide years ago we could maybe look at it lower cost fares outside of peak just to get bums on the seats

Pat: do you think that will work do you?

SM: em not hugely different but slightly cheaper you could also maybe after 10 o'clock in the morning you could maybe look at alleviating some of our overcrowding problems there as well, I don't know whether the company would be interested it that but?

Pat: yea well the DM is looking at various things hes trying to get more, he's tried all this before and he's looking at it again now to see if he can stimulate something or get on to the hospitals and encourage the student types to travel off peak this kind of stuff you know what I mean?

SM: there is a slight discount for people who travel off peak ye know it may suit some people

Q 12a: **What do you think our strategy either is or should be for the next 5 or 10 years what do you think if you were put in charge of DART and they said right produce a 5 year plan what sort of things would you look at that would be the most important?**

SM: well the DART Upgrade we have lost a lot of business with it and I think we should go after that business aggressively to get it back and be pretty ?? about it, I think that should be our main goal for the next five years to get that business back that we've lost

Pat: do you think it would take five years to get it

SM: probably would yea, have to convince people to come back after, negative stuff sticking to people more that positive ye know, people can go to work every day for a month and be on time and the one day they are 20 minutes late is the day that they'll remember.

Pat: alright so that would be one element of the strategy we'd say going after the crowd we lost right, what about fares increases or something could we be better at communicating with the customers do you think?

SM: well I don't think fare increases is as such but I think we should protect what we have and we are probably not aggressive enough at doing that either, I was at a seminar in Belgium and in Holland they have a fares increase every year in line with the projected inflation for that year and the fares increase are in line with the projection on the 1<sup>st</sup> January every year, and inflation is going to be 4 %, 4 % increase on fares

Pat: do you think we should ever like just in terms of strategy now again, do you think we should ever think in terms of trying to make a profit?

SM: Yes, but some passengers don't see a need to pay and we'll find it hard to make a profit when this goes on.

Pat: what do you mean?

SM: some of the people out there think they have right to walk into stations and bully people and intimidate them and we are loosing business as well because of that we're getting an undesirable element there as well

Pat: so some of our customers we really don't want

SM: and we are loosing other customers that we really do want

Pat: cause this crowd are intimidating the good people off the trains, so again do you feel that when your in charge of Sutton now do you fell powerless in that respect or do you feel is there something you can do at your level about that.

SM: I'm pretty powerless Pat really ye know I can maybe ring Harry and organise the Darts a bit differently but I wouldn't have ye know , we need another few guys and we need another few checkers

Pat: so you could be overruled in that

SM: this maybe coming back to the Management thing we say yea ok well we'll hire a ticket checker on a 6 month contract ye know

Pat: just purely for the northside

SM: yea as a ticket checker nothing else.

Pat: not a depotman

SM: no you couldn't

Pat: under your control, the ticket checker under your control on the northside

SM: for 6 months

Pat: not a bad idea

SM: lets hit the problem, that's cause ye know which okay lets get 3 guys on a contract, you could use them, every other business has hired people on contract, budget contracts get 6 months out of them.

Pat: or I don't know what the IR issues would it be an idea would you say you know the current ticket checker teams that we have to give you control of one of the teams for a couple of months, something like that, that's and idea.

**Q 13: if Irish Rail was not a Semi State Company what do you think would be different about it**

SM: well the IR issues would probably be slightly different but ye know looking at some of the things that are happening in other companies at the moment, the things should be happening there too ye know

Pat: when you say IR do you think that the staff are very strong for a union is it? Do you think our unions are very strong.

SM: I don't think the unions are necessarily as strong as the staff think they are, but they would be used as a stick to beat us with at the time and changes we want to make, legitimate changes

Pat: Do they frustrate your efforts do they?

SM: ye know I understand that they are necessary evil you need to stop people from being bullied going over ?? I understand that they have to be there but, at times they can be frustrating

Pat: and what else would be different that the IR right, that's the IR part of it what else would be different do you think

SM: well a lot of it probably would be around the IR and the Human Resources end of it Pat ye know how we treat our staff,

Pat: do you think if we were a private company would treat them better?

SM: I don't necessary think we'd treat them, I think we'd treat them probably a little it better but I think they would probably react a lot better as well, in the knowledge that they are not quite so much in a bomb proof bunker and they can't be touched by somebody ye know

Pat: so maybe if we were semi state maybe as Managers we might have a little bit more power because the staff might be a bit more nervous about they're jobs isn't that is basically that's what it is

SM: yea yea not even nervous but you know somebody who is not doing what they are supposed to be doing ???? or a decent pension at least

Pat: whereas today they see it....

SM: as a slap on the wrist at the most

Pat: yea and that doesn't really frighten them at all does it, so that's in terms of the staff right, again if weren't semi state do you think we treat our customer any differently?

SM: yea we would yea, we'd be, the customers are seen really as a value by the staff ye know, they're seem as okay money coming in but these guys are really paying our wages ye know

Pat: and what how do you think they would be different?

SM: again it would come back to IR it would come back to the people we have put in those positions, ye know you wouldn't be putting, some of the people we have at the moment would be suitable ye know we are stuck with them really and we have to make the best out of it

Pat: so we probably have more power in IR the staff would probably be better treated like we could have stuff like em gain sharing or profit sharing if we were a private company

SM: and people will take ownership of us then and will want to buy into that

Pat: they feel that more money they take in at the booking office the higher value the company, their gain sharing will go up in value and all that, do you think that will work?

SM: it won't work with everyone

Pat: do you still think that we have no matter what

SM: Dublin Bus did something that they had a kind of points system, you can maybe have it say that guys who an I think it was based on attendance the guy who comes into work gains so many points till the end of the year for the golf clubs or whatever but it turned out the first six months were great and after that the guys who were always going sick would say I'm not getting anything else and the guys who were always coming still kept coming in yet Dublin Bus were paying for their set of golf clubs or their micro wave oven or whatever they were getting

Q 14: **how good is DART at achieving its goals do you think? As a business unit of Irish Rail? do you think DART is good at achieving its goals?**

SM: No I'd have to say Pat we set ourselves targets and ye know its coming back to the Station Manager's meeting we are setting ourselves too many targets, whereas punctuality again revenue, were setting broad targets, it inst up to safety ye know we take out the safety plan and there must be 15-20 different targets in that, very hard to achieve all those targets, like if we cut down on our options even to the safety that we say okay this year were are going to target SPAD's and not just talk about SPAD's this thing comes up all the time and ?? take somebody on for ?? or whatever and lets do a really in depth study on SPAD's take some time at it ye know rather than just talking about it

Pat: I know what you are saying that's its kind of limited to one but what do you as you said then a while ago as well is that we pick out the one thing we are going to deal with this box here right but there's still all this other stuff hold back ye know what I mean so where's the balance

SM: it's a very delicate balance cause you like okay now we are going to target this but we still have to work on everything else but we want to focus on this particular issue like whether it was the SPAD's or whatever ye know, it a balance but it's a hard one to

Pat: Do you think Station Manager's get enough training in people management skills, communication skills, time managements, do you think station managers get enough training?

SM: not really a lot of it comes down to the individual Pat

Pat: so should courses be provided say put the 5 or 6 station managers up together for 2 days a week

SM: the best course I was on Pat was the IMI and the only person whom I refereed on was I was with people from Coco Cola, Intel, Compaq everything and that was the best course because you have people from different backgrounds and couple of banks as well but they're all having the same problems we are having IR issues, ye know Coco Cola one of the major companies in the world, they have the same IR problems we have ye know

Pat: were they solving them any differently?

SM: they probably have more money to throw at them, but they weren't necessarily solving them by throwing money at them, one particular guy I was friendly with

he was from Sligo, he was the distribution manager down in Ballina and he was dealing with truckers and that every day and like our drivers, they have their own union and their own way of doing things, I found that was much better to get outside the work environment in Inchicore

Pat: so to get away from there

SM: get a bigger picture of what's happening in the real world

**Q 14a: How good do you think we are at putting resources in place to meet our goals?**

SM: we don't, we need to look at all these targets again

Pat: back to your argument that we have too many of them so the resources are being applied either not at all or

SM: most places not at all, SPAD's thing is the main thing, it's a huge issue we have never actually put any resources out have a serious look at this we looked the signals 3 SPAD's and 2 at another but we've never actually said oh but why and then if that signal is situated in a bad position lets move it and this how I got into the argument with the maintenance

Pat: okay so even when we know what to do we are very slow at doing it, right okay

**Q 14b: in terms of our internal processors and operations what do you think is the DART good at communicating to its staff?**

SM: no no again it's a no, being very negative again a lot of them would come down to Station Manager's being Managers rather than supervisors and getting our time freed up so that we can go out and talk to our staff, like the staff ?? a greater deal and very hard to actually do in real terms because you just don't have the time to sit down with people, the monthly unions meetings are relatively easy to have because you have two reps and you can get them together on their own but to get around to nine different stations is very very hard and to get everything you want to get

**Q 14c: Do you think In DART the Station Managers aren't we'll say the most senior managers are we good at picking out new challenges or do you think we wait until somebody issues a challenge to us?**

SM: probably yes and no most of the time I'd say we react to things rather than being proactive now we do plan for major things like football and that at Lansdowne Road the fire works display Friday night, but a lot of business things if you like we react rather than we see somebody else doing it and say well why didn't we think of that ye know, again maybe this is something we put our resources, we don't put resources into planning

Pat: seems to be very stronger, but really not focused

SM: no

Pat: trying to cover all the angles all the same time, we end up

SM: missing things, we've had conversation about me missing things in Bray with the drivers ye know and that's all that happens cause we are trying to do so many different things

Q 15: **Any other comments?**

SM: not really Pat I think I have kind of covered most things in the area ye know

Pat: okay so just if you can I suppose my own self now, just summarise so the Station Manager's culture to me so in a couple of words

SM: we are probably supervisors rather than managers in the terms of managing our business we are supervising staff more than managers, there probably is a slight sub culture that we share information and I'd say 99% positive information of how to do our jobs better but again we are all coming back to the fact that we're supervisors more than managers very frustrating that we can't get our staffing levels right.

Pat: Do you think that all the Station Manager's are working together towards overall DART goals or DART?

SM: no I think we are working together to keep our head above water

Pat: okay so your working together to survive rather than actually improve the business, cause you don't have time to improve the business you're too busy fire fighting.

SM: Yes fire fighting.

Pat: alright thanks for that.

SM: alright no problem

**END OF TAPE**

**INTERVIEW WITH STATION MANAGER FIVE**

**MONDAY 26th APRIL**

Pat: Culture has been described in the various texts right as the way we do things around here okay, or a system of shared meaning between people okay so

**Q 1 What do you understand from the term culture?**

SM: Something very similar to that, our culture is the way we operate, the way we get things done, the way we want people to do things for us, you know you say that you devour the railway you know, think that you are the customer on the other hand, would you like that, would you like to be informed or not be informed, that's our culture that what we try to work with when it comes to work in the railway in DART Suburban keep the passengers informed ye know keep them informed because the simple fact is they are gonna give you a hell of a lot of grief once they know what's happening.

Pat: I think you said it already when you said basically we run trains from A to B, that's the core of what we are doing.

SM: Yeah well no matter what else we do, we have to get from A to B, we have to get from Maynooth to Pearse or Bray to Dun Laoghaire, and we are here to make that happen and everything else after that is secondary.

Pat: Okay alright so, we have a culture about operating trains and all about the railway right okay so

**Q 2 What word to you would be the dominant culture in the DART would you think?**

SM: It would have to be the **safety** aspect of it, we have been beaten with a stick for the last ten years, we have been beaten so much with it comes second nature, you do it and you don't even know that you are doing it anymore, everything is on safety, everything, even when you are going out to do the points, you look at a schedule and see if there is a 20 minute or a 30 minute gap here I could get out and do those points and the Signaller can swing them for me with out upsetting the signal and then when I go to the far end I can do the same. Everything has to be revolved around the safety aspect of things.

**Q 3: What do you think of the values of DART are?**

SM: Values

Pat: Yeah, do we value the customer?

SM: Sometimes I don't think we do, we sometime do things to them which you might say oh my god how did we do that you know and if you look at closing down

Connolly Station every weekend for 11 months starting in July you know its one of the biggest stations in Dublin and busiest and everything converges there and we just going to close it for 11 months rather than say we are going to close the loop for 6 months and then we are going to close the mainline 6 months but then at least we will have something open to get trains in and out of Connolly.

Pat: So you are saying that the Engineers are making the decisions?

SM: Yeah I think yeah, sometime the Engineers say look this is what we have to do but they don't look at it from going back to the thing of a core business a core business is to get people from A to B and for over 11 months we are not going to be able to that. You know you look at the Southside DART I'd say its after losing a huge amount of money and some of that money will never come back

**Q 3: What values do we aspire to? Do we inspire the customer?**

SM: We aspire to customer service, we aspire to public punctuality, we aspire to a perfect safety record and we aspire to polite and pleasant staff who are smiley, clean and friendly, we aspire to keeping within our budget and going beneath them and making savings and revenue protection trying to get the money in and increasing our services. A lot of them we actually achieve, we achieve the revenue, we achieve the cost and we achieve to a certain extent the staff thing but the customer end of things, the customers are so wide you have you internal customer and you external customer and I don't think sometimes taking the Engineers for example they know what an internal customer is.

Pat: Right we spoke about the dominant culture right, there is also a thing I don't know if you have ever heard of it sub culture right so its were a section of people in like a building like this right lets say with the accounts office down there and there is an engineering office next to it right so they work for Irish Rail there both in Pearse but ones an accounting office and ones an engineering office but you could walk in and get two completely different atmospheres, two completely different perceptions.

SM: I honestly at this stage still believe that we have a sub culture in Iarnrod Eireann like that between DART and Intercity

Pat: Yeah well that's the biggest culture

SM: Yeah something like Intercity don't know that DART exists like we're the little brother who wines at them you know that we want this train and that train there.

Pat: Yeah well that was part of the problem, part of the change scheme that was brought in and all that its Iarnrod Eireann.

SM: Yeah absolutely.

**Q 4: Do you think that the station managers operate their own little culture like that do you think they have one.**

SM: Yeah in a way you would do, you'd try not to but sometimes you sit back and say to yourself yeah I do think different staff grades in a different way. I'd treat

signalpersons differently than I'd treat Booking Offices. I think it goes back to what I said earlier that running trains from A to B I have to have a signalman tough shit if I don't have a booking office open okay I'll get a bollocking for the revenue not coming in but at least I can run the train, you know so I appease them a lot more and dishate a lot more signalpersons than I would the booking office, that could be considered somewhat

Pat: Yeah just let me pull you back to the actually Station Managers themselves right, a sub culture do you think like if you were having a big party for in this office right now right and we were inviting the engineers and we were inviting the crowd down stairs and we invited all the station managers and we invited you know what I mean right. Do you think that when all the Station Managers all came through the door they would all congregate together in one place?

SM: Yeah definitely because they don't know the rest of them.

Pat: Right okay but is it more than they don't know the rest of them or

SM: Well its familiarity

Pat: Yeah so you are operating in your own little group so right we are saying there is a sub culture in the Station Managers that you associate just with yourselves.

SM: Oh yeah we know what we live with and we know what problems

**Q 5: What do think is wrong with the sub culture do you think your problems are the same.**

SM: All our problems are the same, we all give out about the same things, we all talk to much, so we all know each others problems regarding work, a lot the time we even know each others problems regarding stuff even outside work. We socialise a fair bit together like Friday night there I was out with four other Suburban Station Managers you know we all talk we all get on well and it a genuine environment like this naturally we are going to talk to each other we congregate together.

Pat: And so you socialise together outside work which is what they say that is one of the cement blocks of sub culture that the people not only operate in work but they operate as group outside of work.

SM: ah yeah we do we do that regular.

Pat: so you mean to say if there is any????????????????

SM: well a lot of time the DART turns into a bitching session but come away actually with some ideas and some answers some of the times and you know you don't go there for that idea you know you would end up talking

**Q 5a: Seen as you have you own culture what do you think could be better about it?? You think it operates well or could it operate a wee bit better?**

- SM: I think actually sometimes, it probably could operate a bit better you know if we were put into a formal situation of communicating with each other cause the only time that we officially meet is at a monthly Station Managers meeting and then there is an agenda and the agenda is gone through at the end of it or if we go out and have a few drinks outside of work sometimes you don't want to talk about work there but you could maybe get into a situation where you had a day every two months we you could go around and say you're here to discuss you problems willing to turn around and ask question and you had a question there last week on signalling and pointing well does anybody here know the answer or anything like that, you can communicate then.
- Pat: Something like that, an informal one, like you wouldn't want it chaired by the District Manager now cause that would make it formal
- SM: I would say like sit people in a room for a morning or an afternoon something like that.
- Pat: But chaired by a Station Manager maybe on a rotation basis
- SM: On a rotation basis where in February it would be SM Maynooth, July it would be SM Pearse in September it would be another the next time you know and this is a problem that I have come up with over the last three months since we have met last. What do you think about the move am I doing it right or can anybody give me guidance you know things like that
- Pat: so the one thing just listening to you there so we are saying it's the area of communication can be influenced
- SM: oh yea very much so
- Pat: ok it seems to be coming across to me that the areas of sharing information and the areas of supporting each other are fairly strong
- SM: they are
- Pat: right
- SM: there strong in a non official manner
- Pat: yea but you know if you turn to SM Malahide or SM Sutton the chances are you will trust what they say to you and you know that they won't
- SM: oh yea I'm getting TDM's in sometime in the near future I haven't a clue about TDMs so I rang SM Malahide and I said what's the story he says forget about the course you get in Oriel Street it's a waste send them to me in the morning and I'll show them exactly what they need to know and show you how its done that's all you need to know so don't worry about the course in Oriel street cause they'll only confuse you.
- Pat: yea?

SM: now that's with me ringing Malahide to ask him what the story is that's not coming from anywhere else that's because of the relationship between us

Pat: right and you knew more than likely that the reaction you would get from him it would all be helpful and supportive okay so the communication is there but maybe the phone is not good enough for maybe what you need sometimes

SM: sometimes yea

Q 6: **if you have a magic wand whatever you could change certain aspects of the staff what would it be?**

SM: of the staff now?

Pat: yea the culture of the area that you control now so again that's the attitude, the behaviour

SM: the attitude of the lowest grade I have the gatekeepers, their attitudes are horrendous and you'll never change it, they ? lowest paid, they have got a new deal coming in now sometime with €11 and hour, but they don't see the impact of them wandering off the gate or not turning into work ye know, the impact for me is that I get dragged out of my bed or whatever, the impact for the train is that we loose a train, get delayed and then we mess up the city centre and then ye know they don't see the snowball effect, eh

Pat: so one thing you'd replace them so you probably get rid of those people

SM: oh yea

Pat: you feel that you couldn't no matter what you do you couldn't get through to them

SM: yea basically its also not a great job so you have to look at it from that point of view as well, your sitting there for 8 hours on your own they don't have any communication with anybody ye know they are in and out operating gates and then when they do move the gates they get nothing but jip off the motorists who have been stopped there for 6 or 7 minutes

Pat: What other sort of changes would you make out there?

SM: em an lot of them would be infrastructure wise, get stuff done that have been taking forever to get done ye know, automate the gates, get the gates automated in the same way as they are automated on the DART, Mickey Mouse system on the Maynooth line, 2 people operated, get the ECP's in out, Emergency Control Panels which they are operated 24 hrs a day ye know something, id like to actually close a lot of the booking offices on the weekends and things like that and on Bank Holidays cause I don't see the revenue inst there for it, eh but like that's a case were you are banging you head totally off a brick wall, because you are going to have the unions on our staff aren't going to loose their rosters not going to loose there money, shit paid you name it, you look at em, we close them on a Sunday and there is still no need for them to be opened on a Sunday, em Leixlip Confey and places like that they might take in €10 after 6 or 7 o' clock at

night on a Saturday night, and they are open till midnight, ye know but then the problem is that I lock after Coolmine, locked after Clonsilla and its been decided that they were going to be replacements to 3 if not 2, so now they just do 6-1 and 1-8 Monday – Friday, Saturday is overtime and closed on Sunday but, but on closed hours and 6 or 7 o clock on a Saturday evening we actually could do with someone there at 6 or 7 o clock on a Saturday, but I've no one to put there

Pat: so you are open when you closed and you're closed really when you should be open

SM: I talk to the staff, talked to the union reps and none of them are appointed to there and that's all going back to the time that's changed cause anybody appointed now is appointed to a route, their appointed to the Maynooth line but basically your appointed to Pearse Station or your appointed to Leixlip Confey or something like that?

Pat: one other, just give me one more change, I don't know would you like to see a change in attitude generally in the staff on the Maynooth line.

SM: no I think the attitude is very good

Pat: right ok so what would you like, what else would you like to change, so we have established that the gatekeepers you would like to see gone cause they are more trouble that they are worth maybe

SM: yea absolutely

Pat: that the booking office staffs aren't kind of deployed properly right so some are getting away but they should be staying and some are staying and they should be.

SM: I would say they are not deployed properly I would just say I could do with more

Pat: right alright ok

SM: you know I'm 2 short now I need to have the stations open even though they are not taking in a lot of revenue, I need to have the stations open cause there is passengers travelling.

Pat: right okay

SM: you know you've got wheelchair passengers, take one of my halts there is a fella that comes in there 09.30 every evening in his wheelchair, he can't get in and out of the station unless there is someone there ye know

Pat: and if you say you can't travel your in the height of trouble

SM: oh yea your discriminating against

**Q 7 What do you see as a priority for Station Managers?**

SM: gatekeepers, signal cabins, there the only 2, I've only got 2

Pat: you've got 2 priorities that you would like to see changes out there, and gatekeepers there attitude seems to be bringing down the whole place, and the signalmen just what their...

SM: well the signalmen I think its pointless having them there, its pointless having them there, the system should be up and running and this stage, like you have in one of my halts an ECP that you wouldn't swing a cat in, and you've got someone in there 24hrs a day,

Pat: that's right

SM: you know, its up to the queens silver for getting expensive, not give out about it, its horrendous

Pat: yea yea it's small

SM: yea ye know if they got the finger out and they ye know I know its due to happen in 2005 and might happen in 2006 or 2007 it should happen before

Pat: all sorts of...it wasn't thought out was it? Em right just in general terms then right we'll say looking at 2004 on the Maynooth right, I think you have identified one thing, something to do with the staff, ye right that's one, what else would you tackle do you know think broader now than try and create....

**Q 8 what would be your three main goals if you were asked to achieve three things this year what would it be?**

SM: the service we operate, in the peak hour and in particularly in the morning time, you know its probably my own sub culture I don't really worry about the evening times coming home, because by the time they get home they are going to be calmed down by the following morning, but getting them into town in the morning time, any delay at all your just knackered and like they don't understand that problems happen, ye know its black and white ye know I'm here, the train should be here, get me to town, so I would try increase the service, em would be a huge

Pat: that's something you would like to see happen anyway, yea okay

SM: and em keep the rail ??? brief going in the same direction its going, keep building it

Pat: Increase your trains and increase your frequency

SM: likes its great for me sometimes to look at the old system ye know 400% increase in the last couple of years like

Pat: yea yea it's huge, and funny do you think just your view now, do you think that those three goals would fit in or tie in with the General Manager DART goals?

SM: well I think the revenue would, em the gatekeepers definitely would because where it's a pain for me I'm sure it's a pain for the General Manager DART as well, em and then the Signalman but of course they would all tie in with the

General Manager ye know they are things that should be there, there things which you shouldn't have to worry about, when your not worrying about staff you can put your attention into something else.

Pat: I'd agree, I mean what your basically saying there if I understand you right is that you would address the staffing issues, and you would take two things there, if you got rid of ?? ??? which is a big deal for Irish Rail, ?? you would get ?? in terms of ??? I mean looking to up the number of trains it has to be doing it forward, and ?? looking to uping the trains all time especially during the peak, and eh what was the final one you said ????

SM: well the revenue, once you have you trains increased a bit more people are going to travel on them so you're...and them sometimes you look at it, like I've tried to look at it there last year to how much money it actually cost me to have a gatekeeper and I needed nine gatekeepers, take in an average of nearly 25,000 each your talking maybe over 200,000 a year, and I think its going ?? to be another 17% on top of that the company ?? so your talking maybe rounded figures maybe 300,000 a year, and over a five year basis its 1½ million, but how much does it cost to automate a gate? Ye know if the engineers looked at the cost base of ?? how much well we don't have a million to get rid of Reilly's, but if you's got rid of Reilly's and got rid of ? in five years time you would make your money back plus some.

Pat: yea yea

SM: but sometimes I think that is not looked at

**Q 9: Do you think the Station Managers see themselves as legitimate Managers?**

SM: no definitely not, were, they only word you could describe, and its probably not the right, but its dogsbodies with a good title and a good grade, were there to do everything, ye know if, you always going to end up doing it, if you cant get someone else to do it your doing it, you can't just say ????? ye know people ????? you can't manage what you are doing, if I end up on the gates for 7 or 8 hours or 10 hours there is nothing I can do to ? that gate so everything is being left behind, em and I can't help that I have to get the trains moving, and em I would say we are legitimate managers for what you're saying cause we end up ye know from my point of view now I end up out there doing every other job, if I was actually passed out as a signalman I would be in dong Signalman as well.

Pat: What do you think needs to happen to make the Station Managers feel more like Managers?

SM: well firstly I think that I know I have my views of what I said previously but to try and actively change it, it is a difficult one, ye know cause you've got the cost space of having staff around? ????? If you had a station controller or something like that someone who could actually deal with those issues, even if it comes to ?? ?? cleaning if you take the cleaning, we spend whatever amount of hundreds of thousands with ISS on the DART line, and Maynooth line doesn't have anything, its just up to the staff themselves, now they do a good job I have to admit they do a good job.

Pat: ah they do yea

SM: but you sometimes say well what's different about out here are the people that travel on the Maynooth line or the perception of the Maynooth line less than the public perception of the northside or southside DARTS, we have to actually pay outside people to come in and clean this station, but we'll get are own staff to clean that station

Pat: so some of the decisions aren't what's the word the decisions are inconsistent

SM: not across the board

Q 10: **What barriers exist for you to achieve your culture?**

SM: the barriers that block me from doing what I want to do? Money

Pat: yea Money?

SM: yea money is one, resources would be one, resources of both financial resources and Human Resources, you can't get up and drop ??? ye know you are dealing with an institution which is so unionised that if you scratch something wrong

Pat: there is a certain barrier so ??

SM: yea that if you scratch someone, that if they scratch wrong you know they have walked out, em you can't do anything without them jumping on your back

Pat: so you feel that you wouldn't be supporting them

SM: no no I would be supporting them I think I know from my management the likes of yourself and the DM that used to support me the whole way, and if my recommendation was fair that you would back me up to the hilt, but when it goes further than yourselves ye know its easier to win the lotto than to sack someone, you just can't do it, like I looked at the fella I had out last year If id actually slapped him the first day instead of suspending him and paid him the maximum amount your allowed in an unfair dismissal I would have actually made money compared to what I paid him over the nine months being out on full pay, it would have cost me less to sack him and pay the unfair dismissal claim, and then to be allowed back ye know what I mean

Pat: to be allowed back I couldn't believe that.

SM: well that's it but you can't the unions are all powerful

Pat: right so you have resources you have trade unions and what about anything else what about the Senior Managers in here could they be better to you, answer honestly now

SM: answering honestly not really, being honest not really I don't hear from ye and I don't wanna hear from ye, em when I started here first I used to only hear from Senior Management when something wen't wrong, that's wrong I shouldn't only hear from them when something's gone wrong, I should hear from them when

something's gone right as well, but then again after I was in the job for a couple of years why? You know they don't need to talk to me but they know I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing, ye know you don't need to be handheld you don't need to be ? well done or whatever, okay I know sometimes you did a good job there or whatever but you don't need on a day to day basis to be hand held I don't want that on a day to day basis, cause id want to be left entirely left to do the way I want to do it now okay if I'm doing it wrong come down on me and it changes from there, but no I don't have a problem with the way the information goes to and fro between myself and my manager.

Pat: okay any other aspects that you feel would be blocking it again I have to like think now in terms of ? you know your free you've a magic wand, you want to make changes up there but at the same time in the real world ????? worse that trade unions, small bit of senior managers maybe could give a small bit of support maybe okay.

SM: em I think my time is wasted on a lot of menial things which I could be out doing better things, em

Pat: like what?

SM: like timesheets just to use an example I go through all the timesheets I have to check everything against all the rosters and that what down is correct, you know they are not claiming more and of course the timesheets are a heap of shite as well so you have to actually manipulate them every week and you can't the majority of times you get your staff to ? a certain amount and you fill in the other amount

Pat: to make the 48 hrs a week

SM: to make the 48 hrs work and that was supposed to have changed years ago or last year anyway, still not working and then ye know you get an e-mail from your District Manager saying why are they on X amount of hours and you send back and you say well it's a flat one! Its over a two-week period they worked more that one week less than average but they only get paid the 48

Pat: yea

SM: ye know sometimes things like that it just takes up so much time, now sometimes I get the Chief Clerk to do them, ye know so he does them but sometimes hes up to his eyes trying to figure out something with money like that's the one thing were aiming about is that the money is correct ye know and he and myself we both have and understanding that I come to him with money problem, its 10 o' clock at night or 2 o'clock in the morning by the time we are walking out, were there until we find the problem.

Pat: are Maynooth's performance better in terms of returns?

SM: we've had a couple of hic ups but that was our own problems that we didn't send in stuff and we didn't know we had to send it in ye know then again no send it in and then the information was supplied to us that we needed to now and were grand

**Q 11: Do the Senior Managers in the DART to you think I use the word espouse, the values through the right channels to the Station Managers?**

**SM:** yes, yes and no, yes that you do let us know, being at meetings here with you Pat and you've roared and shouted at us ye know get the money right get the crouzet right, get the stuff in, get them to sign it, ye know I'm going over I'm getting bollocked out of it that your money wrong that your returns aren't right, ye know its simple do it, ye know brilliant and then no one ?? that ye know you have to wait for the monthly meetings for this to happen or then you get an e-mail from Sean ye know or something like that ye know I got an email from Sean this morning eh your wrong your wrong your wrong the rest of you's are right something along those lines, ye know and what are you doing to rectify this, I don't think that is the way to talk to anybody even by an e-mail, what are you doing to rectify this? Ye know its ....

**Pat:** right so even though we are broadcasting what's important you don't have an issue with that you think kinda what Sean is saying or whoever is saying it, what they are saying is right but its more the challenge is it? What do you think will work better

**SM:** the accountant showing yea hes the one that has to tell you ok yea its his baby the money but ye know to turn around to someone and put there goat up which to me it would do to go "your crouzet is €877 out what are you going to do about this" that's not ye know like you have to realise we look at our crouzet we look at cash every week we know its €877 out if it is ye know, Sean should know that we are working on it cause we don't ah fuck it its 877 quid out, ye know of course you are going to be working on it, course you are going to be looking up every thing bank lodgements cash, crouzet, interrupted sales, you're going to be checking everything, ye know.

**Pat:** what I'm trying to get at so is if, is the monthly meeting a good way kind of lay it out on the table, kind of what's important

**SM:** I think it is, I think its very important to run through certain things, I think a lot of the stuff makes no difference to us, like we talk about like the SPAD, if the SPAD happened in my area I know all about it, or if a SPAD happened in one of the others area they we know all about it and we know what caused it and what can stop it because we've already been in meetings and hearings and all about it, so why waste 20 minutes or half and hour discussing running through the 20 something SPADs that happened in the last period, down in Portarlinton or Limerick or somewhere which is nothing to do with us

**Pat:** its not relevant to us

**SM:** its not relevant to us and its not relevant to

**Pat:** but do you think we should discuss the ones we say that happened on our patch?

**SM:** oh yes absolutely because it affects all of us, but if the Driver ran a red signal down in

Portarlington, through whatever reason a driver runs a red signal and ?? his complacency or his effectiveness to go green on an amber but then its down to a human error, human error is for Bray & Dun Laoghaire okay fine okay it will ? because there is a problem with the signal and XY & Z happened okay then we all need to know about it

Pat: okay okay right yea okay so eh a mistake that a signalmen might make, that our signalmen might make

SM: exactly like the thing I spoke to you earlier on about, the ??? I got , the authority station code is 124, and an 8 day child rambler ticket code is 124, what happened me is one of the guys typed in a ticket code instead of the destination and gave a customer a ticket, and charged a customer €2.60 for a ticket that was €88 and we only found that out when we got the printout back, but the anomaly were it shouldn't have happened where revenue control told me no that shouldn't have happened, that can't be done you don't have those ticket stocks, so you lying to me is what they said more or less, I proved it to them cause I was told by Fergus that they are right that you can't do it but the DART single line crouzet tickets were printed they are not the right stock but they will print that ticket and that ticket could go for you ticket 124 for each single into Tara Street so I had to print off two of these tickets personally on my own pin no. and send them off to ?? and saying I've proven it to you it can be done, now I want the money back, 85.40 back I want it back, ye know it was an error the first time I've ever seen it, now they are all aware of it that Oh shit ye know

Pat: better watch themselves

SM: but they said it couldn't be done I didn't know it could be done but see I'm 15 years in operating its only 2 weeks ago I found this out

Pat: so it just proves that you learn something new every day

SM: oh absolutely we couldn't believe it and then Revenue Control who are saying that they know that the ticketing system ??? and not that can't be done you need to have the proper ticket stock no you don't there you go

Pat: alright just to put a summary on this question so do you think first of all yes or no that the Senior Team in the DART does actually reiterate or make know what's important ???

SM: yea you let us know what we need to know

Pat: right ok but we could improve in how we do it

SM: yea a lot of the stuff we sometimes get is a waste em ??? absolutely ??? the DASH closures em Caroline downstairs is sorting out envelopes to every single member of DART commuter staff with this closure that closure this is the timetable that is the timetable okay why would a gatekeeper need to know what's on the Maynooth line no reason nothing to do with them, but they get them every week, it's a waste, it's a total waste of my time getting it out to them Carolines time printing it off and putting it into an envelope and putting a label for staff or

something like that , DART nothing to do with me, it goes back to money then again as well, envelopes cost money, paper costs money, labels cost money

Pat: so yea they are just blanketing

SM: ok so ?? everybody on the DART

Pat: Caroline should be.... then you would need to know, booking offices would need to know...

SM: you send one to booking office Drumcondra, Ashtown, Castleknock, Coolmine, Clonsilla, Maynooth

Pat: so Caroline should be before she sends out this mail ?? she should give a quick think to I suppose the Station Master Maynooth

SM: ok this is happening who needs to know about it, so if it's the DART closure Dun Laoghaire – Bray who needs to know about it, the booking office that's all, the gatekeepers the signalmen in Maynooth they don't need to know

**Q 12: Do you think we have a competitive environment?**

SM: no, no not where I'm from not my route, cause your not going to sit on a bus for 2 hours or you not gonna sit in a car for an hour and 45 minutes or whatever em I think It will become competitive its gonna happen like em but at the moment no, you either drive you get the bus or you get the train and if you don't have a car and you don't want to sit on a bus for 2 hours you get the train and you just live with it, if there is a problem ah well ye know

Pat: at the peak anyway so as we don't want anymore do we? Can we take anymore?

SM: we can't take anymore but I'd still take it

Pat: rather than turn them away I know what you mean

SM: you know I wouldn't turn anyone away em but I don't think we are in a competitive market I don't think it ever will be competitive

Pat: what about your off peak DART train are they all full leaving you ?

SM: no they are not

Pat: so ?? could be done there to fill them

SM: oh I said to the DM before even this morning we were talking about it the my line is commuter business and commuter business only its getting a large amount of people into town in the morning and a large amount of people home from town in the evening you don't have it on a Saturday you definitely on a Sunday and you get piddly bits during the day. The reason you don't have it on the weekend is because you have the two busy shopping centres in Ireland on the route, Liffey Valley & Blanchardstown. People all have cars so they are not gonna get a train on the weekend they want to actually get some use the little car they paid a load

of money for, during the day we are only getting dossers travelling okay you get the odd students who are skipping classes or the classes are late or a few minutes early but basically during the day you get the odd woman with a buggy or something like that but not much

Pat: if we were Branson so if we were Virgin Railways would it be should we not cease trains

SM: but if that's what I've, my signaller asked me what would happen if this line is privatised and I said you'd be on a split day I said you'd come in at 6 in the morning there would be ten trains between six in the morning and ten you'd be told to get home then cause there is no trains until four and then you will be operating from 4 until 7 ?? getting them out and we wouldn't run services at the off peak I said that's what would happen if we were privatised, the ? I can't see ? taking over something like the Maynooth line because hes gonna say ok you want 100 million there's 100 million I now gonna charge you a fiver single and a tenner return and you going oh no you cannot do that government tells you how much the fare is and hes not gonna accept that, the government didn't only ? him charging what he wants because they are losing 150 thousand folks out in west Dublin so hence they won't be in town, so it's a vicious little circle but I can't see it happening but if it ever was privatised you wouldn't have off peak trains

**Q 12a: What do you think so should be the strategy for DART Suburban for the next 5-10 years what should be our strategy, do you think?**

SM: well for the DART line I see now all you trains are full, all time it doesn't seem to be its just a different level of crowding your cramped in the mornings but your standing in the middle of the morning mid afternoon, there is no such thing as an off peak time, em from my, ok your 5-10 years on okay you're extending platforms, but 2 extra carriages on your getting more railcars you're getting more E.M.U. sets so you're gonna increase the capacity your gonna increase the frequency, your looking at doing the signalling in town to complete the 14 or 12 you have spots per hour, your looking at running more trains down into say North Wall so as they won't have to go into the City Centre, you looking at maybe another loop line over to Pearse, across by North Wall so you can skip out to Howth and Connolly...spencer dock yea so like the plans are there and we are looking at that and we are going the right way because everything cannot be confined in the space of 12 or 14 or 15 trains and hour allowed into one section, so we are looking at that we are looking at increasing the capacity, changing the signalling, that's for in town, for myself out my way you know we looking at

Pat: look at Spencer Dock you would have a ? it wouldn't be conflicting with any DART Train

SM: Exactly but I'm also looking at my platform spur, Mullingar being extended meaning that I can have 8 pieces coming up in Longford instead of 6 pieces, I'm looking at eventually the gates going which means we would have better timetabling of the trains, which are not?? Putting an extra 2 or 3 minutes in for a fella who walked out of a hut that walked across the road with a gate you're looking at, the plans are there for the electrification of the Maynooth line, plans are there for integrating ticketing, the plans are there for maybe a spur off from Ashtown to the airport, the plans are there for the Metro, the plans are there for

the ?? which is just passed Clonsilla, plans for Dunboyne and Navan branch on the other side of Clonsilla

Pat: so we are working strategically

SM: physically we are looking at the right thing

Pat: and its actually an awful lot of strategic stuff focusing on your line, I know what you are saying yea, so that would mean big changes for the route down the road.

SM: oh yea absolutely like you are going to have to do something in town though as well because if you run trains in from Navan through Dunboyne into Clonsilla, they still have to come into Dublin, ye know how many you run out of Longford or Mullingar they still have to come to Dublin, if you're going to do ??? with Metro ?? you gonna get people getting off in Tallaght or Ballymun or somewhere like that getting on to the trains they're gonna come into Dublin, you've got Pelletstown now, Blanchardstown something like 6000 houses there now I know Dublin Bus has ?? the market there, I was at a meeting 2 weeks ago with Dublin Bus and they are after putting in a brand new service starting with a depot in Pelletstown every 10 minutes in the rush hour buses from Pelletstown directly into O'Connell Street

Pat: that's strategic thinking so they are already in there

SM: there already, they wen't in with the builders

Pat: alright there you have it now ??????????

SM: ah yea absolutely and the District Manager for Cunningham Road who I was talking to, every 10 minutes in the rush hour morning and evening, 20 minute service during the day, starting in Pelletstown and working its way down the Navan Road in through Cabra and then its?

**Q 13: If Irish Rail was not a Semi State Company what do you think would be different?**

SM: I think if would be brilliant being honest with you we wouldn't have the trains we have doing what we want to do, ????? looking a new timetable, are we doing a timetable to what the customers want, are we looking to suit a timetable to the drivers links, one of the first questions asked and now its ?? before we can actually do anything with the timetable we are going to go to the drivers and say this is what we are thinking of doing what do you think, you work for the company you're on a 5/7 on a 48 hr week, do within reason now nothing stupid within reason this is what we want you to do, without breaking any rules, any laws regarding rest times or breaks or working the exact hours but this is what we want you to do and if you are not willing to do that there is no job here for you, so if we are privatised we could do that, not a Semi State Bodie if you know what I mean, we also wouldn't have different restraints put on by the government, a lot of the stuff we could actually do ourselves and could do at times very very well but we are not allowed, we allowed look for the LUAS, were CIE we operate it all the transport in Ireland if there is new transport coming into Ireland and we are not even allowed tender for it, the people that they have actually gave it to have

been thrown out of the UK and then they're allowed operate on different rules that we are where's the planning for it where they're depot is and there first level crossing at Sandyford is a traffic light level crossing they don't have lights and bells which we have to do, they don't have barriers which we have to do, its merely a traffic light on a red signal like you have in the middle of o' Connell street that traffic light is red don't go across it if you do you are going to get hit with a tram, were not allowed to do that, so think we are being discriminated against that way that

Pat: even bring it down a bit now to your own patch right and as a Station Manager right if you were a Station Manager in a private company what do you think would be different for you

SM: for me I would probably get more money, id probably get some performance related benefits, I have a lot more input into the budgetary and the ? money coming in, like this is your revenue this is your budget one works with the other, I don't think that works with them all I don't think revenue or budget have anything to do with one another at the moment, I could be wrong but I don't think they do, I never seem them, if It was privatised you would have a dam good case for ?? no were not running off peak trains but we couldn't do that at the moment, if it was privatised you could have ??? a thing to say no were not taking free passes in the rush hour, Dublin bus don't have to take them in the rush hour we have to take them if you come to my station any morning maybe 20% of the tickets you sell in the rush hour are free for pass holders, now these people are travelling for free and they are taking up space for someone willing to give you €20.60 a week it doesn't make sense you should be saying ok the government gonna pay us X hundred thousand a year but your only allowed travel between the hours of 10 and 4 the same as the buses.

Pat: you'd nearly if that's the case taking whatever the government pay the company at the moment?? To give up the chance to say no you can't we want we want the same, it a good concept Shane ye know

SM: you would have a lot more economy as well you wouldn't have to

Pat: ???

SM: I think they would be the same but the would be more realistic they wouldn't I think at the moment its all kind of run back to the government, the government wont let this happen if we stick to our guns, the government won't let the DART drivers go on strike so we just keep saying no and eventually the company will eventually back down, in the private sector your ??? they are not going to stand for it they say right ??? go out on strike when you are willing to talk come back to me, now a lot of people now they might be able to afford to take 2 or 3 weeks off on strike and ? I need the money I have to come back to work

Pat: but it would take at least 2 or 3 solid weeks anyway

SM: yea it would stayed out for 10 weeks in the middle of the summer if your back in time for Christmas, the strike that was due to happen In February ye know that didn't happen till people had just paid for Christmas

**Q 14: How good do you think the DART is as a team now I'm talking about the senior team and I'm talking about Station Managers as a team how good is DART at achieving its goals, if we agreed something around this table, would we normally do something about it?**

SM: yes if we agreed to it and ? a clear understand of how its going to be done yes we always do, I can't remember myself anytime where we didn't

**Q 14a: Do you think DART is good at putting resources in place to meet goals generally ?,**

SM: sometimes not all time, ye know I think we did I think we were able to previously when we had actually people like ??? Cork an all that when we had ye know your project managers but an idea could be thought up of where you could actually say ok John Cummins good worker see what he can do but now when an idea is thought up of your nearly sometimes afraid to say it because you know you are going to get lumbered to do it on top of your own work.

Pat: So it's an attitude?

SM: it is and it's the attitude like you say why would I say this like that's great Shane that's a brilliant idea come back to me next week with a plan of action, God sake I walked myself into that one didn't I

Pat: which is a pity

SM: it is a pity

Pat: cause there is a good idea there but its not coming forward

SM: no but previously you be able to say yourself John talk to SM Maynooth there later on see what his ideas are get some information on it for next week and that was Johns job

Pat: yea john ??? tend to say I'll get stuck with that if I say anything yea yea, in terms of our internal processors and operations how do you think we ?? at internal processors and operations right we've touched some all ready communicating with each other right disciplinary, special events stuff like that how do you think

SM: ??? but what should be easy we always seem to mess up on like special arrangements information and something is happening on a Monday we know about it for a month in advance but the posters aren't put up till Saturday

Pat: very last minute

SM: very late minute an that they should be up two weeks before that ye know special events same again if we know about it in advance why can't we tell everybody about it in advance, and these are stupid mistakes

Pat: and as you say there simple things

SM: there simple things we seem to get wrong and when it comes to organising 50,000 people transporting in and out of Lansdowne Road we can do it perfectly, not a bat easily but when it comes to actually telling people that you have a fare increase from Monday the posters with the prices done don't actually come in until the Tuesday and half the time the fare structures file isn't loaded up on the machine on the Monday morning so you have to sell tickets at the old price, its simple little things we mess up on

Q 14b: **Do you think we are good at picking up new challenges the DART I'm talking about the DART team right so the most Senior Managers and the Station Managers yea are we good as a team of picking up new challenges do we challenge ourselves or do we all wait around until the COO issues an instruction?**

SM: I think we would challenge ourselves if you've time do it but I think basically at the moment everything is ? ye know you've so many problems as it is and you don't have time to actually look at other ones ye know you want for an outsider it's the simple things that are a big problems the simple things is getting the drivers into work to drive his bloody train, the simple thing is getting a driver to agreed that this a time we want him to come to work, to an outsider how can you spend all you life dealing with those two little things sure its simple to us like, maybe I'm being pathetic it spends most of your time ?? we understand why but they don't so a lot of the time we can't actually get involved in other things

Q 15: **Any other comments?**

SM: generally we operate well together I think like in suburban 6 -7 years ye know we all get on with everybody there's no real animosity or hatred or anything like that and I think I know that If you have a problem with me you'd say it to me and I think that if I have a problem with you I say it to you as well, I don't really think anyone is afraid to talk to each other about anything

Pat: but that's good

SM: its very good, its good that you can turn around and say that's wrong it will never work.

Pat: Thankyou.

**END OF TAPE**

**Appendix 2**

**Senior Manager Interview Transcripts.**

**INTERVIEW WITH DISTRICT MANAGER DART****THURSDAY 29<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2004**

**Q 1: What do you understand by the term organisational culture?**

**DM:** Well culture to me Pat is a very broad word, I think the best explanation or way I ever came across was kind of the one that said it's the way we do things in a place and to me that is always kind of the way at looking at culture, simple the way things are done, the way work is carried out.

**Q 2: Could you give me a brief description of what you think the culture is in DART presently?**

**DM:** Presently I think Pat you kind of maybe for me the best things is to go back a little bit in time I think originally when I came here and DART was part of the overall Iarnrod Eireann thing it was very much then part of the overall culture in the company which I believed at the time was very operationally focussed, work with a great, huge emphasis on operational, huge emphasis on engineering as well but definitely over time in the DART when it became a type of strategic business unit it didn't become a full one that the culture slowly began to revolve and I would say at the moment the culture is very much a huge part of the culture as it is in all of Irish Rail. I think there is definitely a culture of the Timetable and of delivering the timetable in fairness, in the DART I think that is very evident. I also think that there is a customer services culture there now and indeed it was slow to evolve but I think it did evolve in the DART because of the business it was clearly defined when it became a separate business unit. I think much is evolving where we are.

**Q 2: What do you think the main values of DART are ?**

**DM:** The main values of DART, I think safety is a huge one Pat, I think again the focus on the timetable, the timekeeping, we have grown and its good to see that and has I say again the customer service element is not where I would like to see that or where any of us would but I do think it has taken root in the DART and the value is there but not to the same level as safety and timetable but its there.

**Pat:** Would you like to see it more customer focussed like would you like to see the dominant value customer maybe safety second or third or something like that?

**DM:** Well I have to I suppose as a railway person that safety has to be there, ye know however from then marketing time, time I have spent in marketing definitely the customer to me is a huge issue right but having said that I think what the customer wants is essentially what the business needs to deliver anyway and what the business needs to get on so I think that link is there and I would like to see it more customer driven but I don't think more customer driven but I don't think more customer driver means less operational driven.

Pat: yea less safety I suppose its like my view of it would be that we should deliver the product and in delivering the product successfully to the customer safety is an element of that isn't that it? But at the moment we are kind of pushing safety, engineering, operations and the customer is coming at a poor ?? all of that kind of think

DM: Agreed, I would agree with you on that you put the customer up there but the others don't fall off the line and its part of what the customer wants anyway if he can take safety as a given, yea

**Q 3: Do you consider it to be legitimate management concern or would you think it's just another form of employee control?**

DM: I would consider it Pat definitely to be a legitimate management concern very much what I feel about culture you know when you look at companies outside even though I have worked in very few but still you are always aware so called successful companies I think culture can be a very unifying force in an organisation and if we could get to that level to use culture as a unifying force we would really be going somewhere you know.

**Q 4: Do you think that the Station Managers have a sub culture of their own ?**

DM: As I say Pat I think back over time again, going back over the years when we came into the job and that I think definitely the company was a kind of sub culture there with the Station Managers, I think it was there I think it has evolved with it and I think the culture of the company is evolving that which is important Pat and I think the Station Managers now in fairness try their heart at the overall culture that we are all emerged in. I don't think that they have any unique culture you know.

**Q 6: Do you think they see themselves as legitimate Managers?**

DM: I think that there is an awful amount of work to be done there, I think that Station Managers are the key to hole successful operation of the company, I mean that is hugely evident to me in the time that I have spent now back again in the operational particularly in the role and I think that they begin effective Managers is hugely important to the companies perceiving how they perform.

**Q 6: What sort of improvements do you think that the Station Managers need?**

DM: I think Pat that a performed culture would how I would term it, I think that we all really need to move over to the performing culture. I think we have done a lot, certainly since you have arrived and that I think we have put a focus on performances and I would say Pat definitely performance culture has to be management driven and I mean senior management for the better term as opposed to Station Manager level there going to be lead by the likes of you and I and I think we have to drive the perform in culture in fairness to them.

Pat: we have to spare it we have to say what the targets are, and then we've got to back them up

DM: I think it proves the point in the way we drove the whole revenue control, the whole revenue procurement issue that when we came in here it was a huge issue for us and we drove it as part of the performance and now we have brought in the little checks and vans and its high in there minds and I think its perfect example of how you could drive the whole thing towards performance once you have very clear goals.

**Q 7: Do you think that culture itself is something that we can manage and change in the DART or do you think we just have to live with it?**

DM: I would like to think Pat that culture can be changed however I would say that culture is something that you are going to change quite slowly I don't think it is going to change over night, I think its to do with the way things are done and the way things are done changes slowly anyway but I certainly convinced you can change it and I think if you build all the other things around it like structure and the strategy and the kind of stuff we have talked about there that you can definitely then influence the cultures part and parcel of all of that.

Pat: **Do you think it is important to change the attitudes, to change the behaviour or to change the behaviour, to change the attitudes, which would you change first?**

DM: I think Pat that in that area all you can hope to change as a Manager is how people behave. I think peoples attitude and I kind of call it their personality I don't think you and I as a Manager Pat could ever hope to change a persons personality I think its deeply built into it or what I do think is we can hugely change is their behaviour and if we pick up on what we consider to be in appropriate behaviour and we mark that clearly and we clearly make it visible that that behaviour isn't acceptable or maybe a new form of behaviour, cause that is how we change attitudes all the time.

Pat: So your attitude would be concentrate on the behaviour and you might get the attitude change long term.

DM: Yeah that is my personal

Pat: Yeah I absolutely agree with that because I think we could spend for ever trying to change an attitude and get nothing out of it, where change the behaviour straight away and they actually start to believe that is the right way of doing it now

DM: Yeah and an example I would give of that is, I would think that you would agree Pat that you know certainly in the railway there has been kind of a culture of maybe not communicating properly certainly amongst certain grades of staff and there's one or two things that I have said quietly to a number of our supervisors that type of behaviour, you can't go on like that in front of other people and think slowly its not easy change but I think you can only hope to point it out in the hope that there personalities or attitudes will be influenced over time.

**Q 8 What organisational culture changes do you see as priority doe Station Managers?**

DM: Well Pat I certainly feel that the focus on the Customer, I know we are all kind of tired of it driven by the customer but as you and I said earlier what the customer want is what we need to deliver and if we can express that very thing, the customer wants safety, the customer wants punctuality, the customers doesn't want anything that's really kind of weird or different so we shouldn't get too worked up about it, its just a matter of saying it is what the customer wants and spelling out what they want.

Pat: So big focus on the Customer

DM: Big focus and on the Customers wants and not just talking about the Customers but what they want Pat

Pat: Yea ok hat other areas?

DM: Other areas Pat I would definitely see would be performance; performance culture to me is terribly important. I think that the whole area of performance is an area we have huge work to do in. I think were really mentally clear goals are set by ourselves we know what they are, we're reason clear what they are maybe we haven't evolved that down along too clearly but I think we have started the process.

Pat: Taking you're situation into account like yea yea I understand

DM: The other then to me which would be a really important area would be professional management. I think that you and I kind of come through the ?? certain amount of professional manager and I do think at the end of the day that it is important and I think in a company where we are prepared to pay enough attention to it. I think that the whole professionalisation of Managers ?????????????????? but I think that we need to professionalize the middle and top line before we criticise the ground staff. Needs a lot of work.

**Q 9 What's your role in achieving the priorities with the Station Managers?**

DM: Pat for me its kind of an unusual question in that adapting to District Manager for the last six or seven months I would see my role or my responsibility as huge for changing that. I think the role of District Manager is just so major there and also exciting cause it will give you the chance maybe your one time has come to change it, it's a great opportunity and I know its not easy and we well know that but it is a great opportunity to change it. I think that as District Manager you want to be clear vision about everything and I know you and I spoke earlier just off the record about vision and its something that maybe you and I weren't able to focus on cause were very much operationally driven would be in for a very short enough time but I think both of us would agree that the vision thing is important and I don't mean areas there again, I would mean you and I having a clear vision and what drops down from that vision sending it out to the lads who report to us and then I think the job of the District Manager is kind of aligning the system and structure to make that better, but I think the vision has been expressed as deliverance, not as a ??? as a spiritual thing

**Q 10: Can you give me specific examples of how you think you influence the culture operating among the Station Manager's themselves?**

DM: I think Pat again as District Manager, as Acting District Manager I think influencing the culture and culture reinforcing that the kind of performance culture and all of that its kind of walking the talk as the District Manager you really are the person they look to now if you are not going to behave in the way we spoke about earlier your not a professional Manager there is no hope of them becoming professional Managers. I think unless you have a structure in place and again we spoke of kind of cash control and all of that and other areas like timekeeping and punctuality unless you have very clear structure in place you and I again spoke at the last Station Managers meeting where we going to have a kind revenue reporting and we expected the Station Manager's to do yet you know we weren't ready to role at the last Station Managers meeting but that's all about having a system a structure that they must know what they have to report on. As District Manager you have a huge role to play there you know.

Pat: So you seem to be saying that it's a real issue of leadership?

DM: Its one of leadership but leadership clearly spells out structure and systems they have got to be put in place, you kind walk the talk and feel the way and also the expectations as District Manager you know you got to have the high expectations of the people, I think people can deliver you know if you have got high expectations of them and you set them up and expect them to deliver.

**Q 11: Do you think that the goals of our Station Managers are in line with the overall DART goals?**

DM: I think pat again and ye know I go back over time a bit on that one aswell, back over time and strategies they weren't clearly spelt out at all for people, people seem to operate on a day to day basis, I think again over time that changed, I think in fairness again I've only had experience with the Suburban as you know not with the InterCity, in the Suburban over time in think over time when it became a separate business unit and Michael was here I think those kind of goals and ? were being more clearly defined, the strategic would certainly be a lot of Michaels time wen't into that, that was developing nicely ye know as to weather that got down to the Station Managers clearly as their goals and objectives I think we are kind of caught in the middle of that phase at the moment where maybe at the senior level the goals and the strategies are clear but I think they haven't maybe clearly ? down there?

Pat: there is a communication problem

DM: I think Pat a communication problem and also maybe clearly spelling out those ?? I suppose at Senior Level the talk has real strategic terms but I think it needs to be put into everyday language like all they really are you must have, the trains must be on time, you must present yourself well, your staff must give the Customer a nice experience when they meet them, and you need to stand them out for them no need to keep reiterating.

**Q 12: What barriers are in place for the Station Managers to achieve the performance culture that we want them to have, what are they up against?**

DM: Again I think Pat probably the first thing you up against is that as we said in the last issue that the basic goals aren't as clearly spelt out to them as we might think that's a huge barrier because they can't even get beyond the other hurdle if they don't know what they are supposed to be doing, I think that we don't have a kind of traditional performance or appraisal management I think it could help in this area I think the goals would be clearly spelt out for them and then they could work towards ye know, I think then the whole issue involvement of involving them maybe more in what we are doing here I know it is not easy and I think it would maybe free up a barrier for them ye know, even though I don't think its anything like it used to be I still think we could probably break it down a little bit. You have to then say that training is an issue in barriers and we spoke there about professionalizing managers

Pat: Do you think by interest, if we gave them some sort of formal training, noW I'm talking about a day or two in Inchicore about Time Management I'm talking about sending them on and IMI thing for 12 months, do you think they would agree to that?

DM: I think Pat it probably easy for me to say that training is a great thing to say but in fairness I'd agree with you, I think maybe chances of them willing to do that are pretty slim in some cases and I think you have to come down again to the whole area of suitability for the job of Station Manger I think in fairness I think it was a job people were put into without much training or coaching or whatever maybe a lot of people were put into it who maybe wouldn't see themselves or who wouldn't want to develop in a professional way ye know I think that we have got to change that over time that the theory set out that these are just so important and the ? Managers are just critical.

Pat: But they are critical,

DM: They are critical we've got to be very careful who we put in those positions

Pat: but that's the whole thing in terms for us succession planning developing down the road and we don't do that

DM: Well we don't do a lot of it

Pat: We tend to react when the vacancy comes up, that's important, tell me do you think that you and I espouse the values of DART through the Station Manager's and if we do, do we do it the right way?

DM: Yea I think if fairness to ourselves Pat that we have to say we do I mean I would in theory say that both of us are very focused on Safety Punctuality on all of the issues, maybe we haven't got down through the list of the ?? of the top of the ? we've got to deliver on the Punctuality....

Pat: So that's the top management making things important to us isn't it?

DM: very much so pat and we are driven by that, maybe we could do a better job on ? the values of customer services of ye know being very customer focused of maybe more king of communications, but I suppose like everything else we are

driven by time constraints and you and I very much focus on that high level or top level objectives for the Company

Pat: Punctuality, Cleanliness

DM: I think Pat given the opportunity over time we would really develop that

**Q 14: Do you measure Station Managers performance in any shape or form, the current performance today?**

DM: Yea again Pat, I think the isn't as I said earlier a strict performance measurement tool in place and I think it's a vital area for you and I for going forward that we will have to bring that in in some format however I suppose we have to be conscious if that's going to be a HR kind of driven for me ??? for you and me to introduce it to our Station Managers without having kind of it cleared at HR level it would be difficult but I don't think we can opt out either I think Pat definitely that we are and we have to at some stage ?? to measure performance i.e again cash control, tangible things like meeting your returns have you accounts to clear up there perfect examples performance, I think punctuality we keep on top of that, I think maybe we need to write them down and inspect them more clearly but I certainly think they are there

Pat: Cause I believe our Station Managers don't see Punctuality as any part of their responsibility and even the feedback from the other interviews I've done they look and they say how can I influence punctuality, how can my halt be Blackrock, it's as one station. Manager said to me it's the punctuality comes back with the period and you've major targets hes says well you've been lucky and I asked him to expand on that I said what you mean I'm lucky and hes says you didn't lose any points trouble or any OHLE hes says all the stuff that blocks and delayed the trains which is outside your control, so he sees it as outside our control so its definitely outside his control so I had to bring him back and say, if there is another points failures if it is another OHLE problems should they do ?? where you are they should be ?? to the engineers down below saying unacceptable, blank you could hear the lightbulb coming on but up to that point we have to keep bringing it back to what we can do alright we don't control it all but we have to bring it back to what we can do and that's the message isn't it, we can do something

DM: I think maybe there too Pat maybe involvement is a road out timekeeping that you and I have heard we need to involve all of them in that now and get them to move forward on that area, but I'm sure you right I don't think it is a top priority

**Q 15: Do you think that we operate in a competitive environment ?**

DM: I think Pat that more so now I mean we have to accept that we are a state semi organisation semi state organisation we have and monopoly but I think more and more in latter years as investment has grown in the company what's becoming ? is the need for us to satisfy certain political criteria and there very much lead to perform and how public perception of it is so id say that's the kind of the way the competitive environment has been created for us and its very much there, I think its not like being in a private company, I think in one way though it can be nearly

be worse because the expectations can often be a bit unreal and not clearly spelt out whereas in private companies there ??

Pat: You're allowed to be competitive yea

DM: I think things are changing there certainly with the three wise men report that those requirements be clearly set out for us as a company and I think that's the way we are going to prepare

**Q 15a: What do you think are strategy is going forward what would you like to see the strategy of DART in the next five years?**

DM: Well I think the kind of higher level strategy is probably reasonably clear to us all to develop the capacity increase the capacity on the Signalling cause Dublin is usually short of capacity at peak times and all of the money that's being poured into that area and I think our strategy also then has to be ?? or even ?? to deliver on performance and customer service and reliability it has to kick in with that investment, I think that has to be the overall high level strategy for DART, I think in coming from that we've got to break that down into key aspects for all of the certain individuals and where we fit into that

**Q 16: If DART was not a semi state company what do you think would be different?**

DM: I think Pat again going back to the last issue we discussed there I think that it would be more clear our deliverance would be clearer if we weren't a semi state company but if we were not a semi state company I not be so sure we would have access to the huge financial resources that we very much need at present, it's a very difficult area I think were unlikely to be other than that in the immediate future because of those investments, I don't think any private company could come up with the capital that we use

Pat: Tell me how would we be different in terms of people how we treat them?

DM: If we were a private company Pat? Ye I feel that em

**Q 17: How good do you think that we are at achieving our goals in DART?**

DM: I think to date pat we have achieved a number of our goals as I said earlier I think that No.1 we haven't clearly set out our goals and we haven't really measured them in any concrete way but I certainly feel as regards punctuality we have certainly achieved our goal, I mean we set a clear goal at 83% of trains within 5 mins within the past no of weeks we have clearly met that at peak times on all of our 3 ???? and that is are most clearly defined goal we certainly also met our safety commitments as far as I am aware, I think we have another safety audit this year and as I said yesterday we haven't set out clearly out customer service goals so we really have no ?? to measure them again, and we've have clearly met our goals again on cash control area in the past number of weeks

**Q 17a: Do you think when we decide on a goal in DART do you think we are good at putting resources behind it and committing it**

DM: Well I think in fairness Pat in the goals that we have clearly set out like the punctuality goals and our safety goals yes we have put the resources as far as possible behind meetings certainly the area of punctuality there is a lot of external factors in that but we clearly resourced it as best we can to meet the target levels that we set.

**Q 17b: How good do you think we are at our internal processors in operations?**

DM: I think that our internal processor in operations as regards to safety in the safety element of operations that our internal processors are very good I mean safety is very clearly spelt out as our guidelines and standards if you look at these as processors and systems I think they are very good and I think that by and large we meet them and fulfil their requirements in that maybe we haven't as clearly spelt out the processors we need in terms of our areas I think in the operations end we have a lot of very clearly applied systems for working in that and I think by and large we meet those, I think we probably need to develop standards and processors like we have the cash controllers and now we need to develop them in other areas possibly the performance and customer service

**Q 17c: Do you think we are good at setting ourselves new challenges or do you think we wait as a business unit for challenges to be issued to us?**

DM: I think that back over time again we have kind of waited for those goals and challenges to be set for us but I think in latter times we are developing in ?? setting our own goals I think that's an involvement process as well, we are getting much better at it

Pat: Can you give me an example of where we set our own goals or

DM: Well I would clearly well latter years going back over time we didn't have any clear goal on punctuality It was something there but we didn't clearly set a goal I think then as suburban evolved and the business unit set up we did start to set targets for punctuality which has clearly evolved now to 83% within 5 minutes

Pat: Was that a business unit target or was it set from there?

DM: I think it was clarified and kind of solidified when the charter came in but I think prior to that suburban had a goal there I think it was slightly different within the 5 minutes prior to that anyway ye know I think the ?? setting goals but something that we are getting better at

**Q 18: Any other comments?**

DM: I would certainly like to see the safety culture very much staying there that we have at present and getting better all the time and I would also like to see very much a customer service culture focusing on punctuality, reliability, information, communication and all the areas that a customer needs, I would also like to see very much again a culture of very clear goals and guidelines for all Managers in the business and I would also like to see then after that a clear performance culture that they are measured on those goals that they are held accountable for them and that they are rewarded for achieving them I think the problem we have in the business is that something the whole company has is very difficult to

reward the high performers different than it is to reward the high performers different than it is the average performers and I think certainly personally I think that's not something that we need to work on we need to be very clear and be clear who are the people who achieve and rewarding them in a special way I would also like to see then the whole area of professionalizing the whole Management structure in the business

Pat: So that's you're education

DM: Education, new blood to the whole area of developing people who want to be developed in their capability

Pat: Yea okay any other comments?

DM: eh no im happy with that

Pat: Thank you.

**END OF TAPE**



**INTERVIEW WITH SUBURBAN ACCOUNTANT (SA)**

**WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2004**

**Q 1 What does the term 'Organisational culture' mean to you? Describe our culture?**

SA: its would be the philosophy of the individuals working in a company and how they perceive what they are doing and why they are doing it in the company

Pat: and could you describe what your view of our culture in DART is at the moment?

SA: I suppose there really is mixture of two cultures prior to your appointment here the previous manager had a very strong culture and ethos here and he had a definite vision and a definite way of going forward and he had he was a man with a plan and he wanted to do things, then there was a sort of a second culture more blind management stage where people worked together to do the job and the reason that they did what they did was to make sure that everybody got what the needed done done so there was more sort of working for friends sort of supportive network like when I first arrived my opinion of IE with them in the first two months was that it was like a Chinese feudal network and that it was a lot of sort of rolled hands and stuff and they are all protecting their own patch and they are all squabbling and fighting and stuff and this would be at a higher level say district by district by district and it really was people remembering scores from 10-15 years ago that needed to be settled and there was favours being called and very much sort of a feudal system almost the way. I saw the culture, now that I have been in it for about 3 or 4 years I don't see as much of that anymore that's probably cause I am more in tune I've changed myself into the culture

Pat: rather than the culture changing in the company

SA: well the culture has sort of changed me into the way I sort of semi operate and my motivation would come from ensuring that no one would be caught and ensure that everyone have the right information in from of them and they knew what had to be done and there is sort of almost a ?? us and them whereas up to then ?? centre ?? the business unit down to the line Managers, I don't think the up and down bridges are as big as they were four years ago, I think my ? of the Hr manager coming so that its brought a bit more commercialisation to the whole organisation and atmosphere and people now understand and people now get the message we must be profitable its not about running a tight railway that we almost must make some money in it, I'm sure then on the basis ???? I'm fine I've a private pension you don't so were protecting your pension in the future and that's why we have to make money, so culture I think there has been a slight change but still predominately people working for each other to get through what needs to be done on a day to day basis

**Q 2 Can you list the values of DART?**

SA: the values of DART would be a clean punctual, reliable service that would be our principal values.

**Q 3 Do you consider the concept of culture a legitimate management concern or another form of employee control?**

SA: it is the principal culture to be used positively as a way of making sure that everything is working together to the same goal but what you'll find in large organisations is culture will be sort of the top and they will try and force it down, force their opinions, force their values, and like a clean reliable punctual service but speaking from the reliability is very important because if you have more reliability you have less customer complaints which will directly impact on the Line Managers you'll have to sort of train and help the staff and move on with all that sort of queries, cleanliness is also sort of another source of complaint, but its not a big issue and punctuality is sort of cause they like to have sort of operational part to think of yes they can turn that train in five minutes that it won't fail in their section because the signaller is gone absent or whatever so I suppose getting back to the original question, I suppose culture seems to be forced down but it might get implemented at the bottom for different reasons

Pat: so do you think it's the key for DART so do you think we need to change our culture, do you think the culture of DART fine as it is?

SA: we probably need to define our culture again and exercise was done yet again by the previous manager 4 years 5 years ago about a year before I arrived where he spent a lot of time working on his vision and the strategy, a lot of time was put into that but unfortunately after that was done and was sort of presented up sort of in Connolly ah that's fine that's nice and then dismissed almost practically so that in fact would be, deflates the individual

Pat: what kind of vision was he creating do you think? What was the message he was sending?

SA: he wants a clean, punctual, reliable trains on a commercial setting and that was what he was creating and that's what he wanted to get out there and he wanted the DART to be a separate unit and a unique unit as opposed to just the sort of halfway house, he wanted a distinction, a distinct business unit and we wanted that business unit to be focused on that

**Q 4 Do you think the station managers have a sub-culture of their own? What do you think it is?**

SA: they do its ?? to the beginning where they are working among friends and they are helping and supporting each other and that would be their primary goal. Yea and also there is and that sort of drops down from them on to the actual people on the ground operating the system, because they sort of the line between beating people and have to beg them a week after to come back in again because I need you to work that extra shift because 'John Joe' is ill or he can't make it in but John Joe might not be ill John Joe might be just not bothering to turn up so they will have to evict John Joe and then bring you over , but then two weeks from now you could be set up cause you have worked twelve days running you've probably done a couple of double shifts and you can't come in anymore, you

know they'll have to sort of thread the line where they sort of seeking favours and then hitting people, they can't be really checked thoroughly and they probably feel a bit powerless, they feel they don't have adequate control over their own sections

Pat: and this is down to the staffing issue, you feel primarily you feel is it because they are short of staff or something that they are having to negotiate everything?

SA: primarily sort of staff/resources short the other side is they are not used to having the resources there and a small examples not as often as I did last year because the big push on the budget, but this year it's not as much against us but they know where they are at now, and a guy would like to buy a bin €60-€70 but before he goes out and buy one they feel they need to get me to authorise that instead of saying instead of just almost looking for comfort behind every decision as well, it does go on.

### **Q 5 Does it fit the dominant culture or is it in conflict?**

SA: it's neither of those extremes they are not in conflict with it and they are not totally fit in but the two cultures it really does depend on the team working, certain individuals will say that Senior Management team working with the SM will get a lot more buy in, a lot more leverage and a lot more work done but certain individuals will just they won't get that support off them not it will actively go out another way from the Management it's just that's it simply you do it

Pat: because they don't like this guy is it?

SA: yea that could be part of it, yea it's mainly down to personality, back to my old thing of friends helping each other at the bottom to make sure every thing runs smoothly and to get all the daily tasks done, sort of partially out of respect for the different team players, they are sort of semi aware that our culture would be a clean, reliable, punctual service, and they probably on an operational level, the physical movement of trains they focus on that clean and tidy isn't really there section it's a sub contractors zone, clean and cleanliness sub contract with CME cleaning of stations the both of them are subcontracted out as well so they don't have to manage the cleaning, so they only have to worry about the reliability and punctuality and reliability is sort of solved in a way a lot of it beyond their control, you either have more than enough train sets and you also depend on the CME to do the return of the train as well

Pat: okay can I just ask you what do you think the dominant culture is in DART at the moment, what is the dominant culture?

SA: it's really 2 or 3 things it really is operations first off then there will be sort of focus on punctuality and then it would come down to money.

Pat: so your saying there is nearly 3 things ahead of the customer, operations, punctuality and money?

SA: and sort of keeping our money right

Pat: right okay and the revenue and then people would come in sort of 4<sup>th</sup>.

SA: it would come in 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> because that's more to do with what's evolved over the last 2-3 years, over the last 2-3 years we had three instances with three different Station Managers and first one firstly they weren't taking it, after the second they started to realise that this is a serious problem and they have to keep the money right, a lot of that has been spent in Suburban as well focusing people on their cash and a lot of changes happened as a result of what happened to those three Station Managers so sort of a self preservation as I had it described to me ???, two things his cash is out he could lose his job.

Pat: they're building their priorities and their goals on that basis.

SA: its about they're own needs and that's only then your down into the whole system of ??

**Q 6 How could the station manager's culture be improved? How can you help them?**

SA: off hand I don't think so because with the exception of the appointment of a new person is sort of broken that little click there for a second, because he's sort of came from outside the suburban family and it will take him a wee bit of time for him to sort of get recognised, I don't know if they will support him as I'd say the others for instance

Pat: right yea cause he is coming from outside

SA: he's coming in from outside and you need a little bit of suspicion as well as where he is going to move on. So there is also that ?? but I don't think we need to change that culture what we need to do is, the wrong word to use here but, utilise it, in that there is a strong bond, strong communication then so by changing one or two people we are overcoming some level of Sinicism, you can easily put that message among all six, so in order to change it you have to look at why you want to change it and we have to attract what are the goals that we need to get out of this culture, and staff come very low down in priority and that needs to be changed, cause we need to have the people feel valued, and once the people feel valued then we should be better and more motivated, there is a lot of sort of I was going to say hygiene issues

**Q 9 What's your role in the achieving the priorities with Station Managers?**

SA: I see two problems first of all I see myself helping and guiding what our philosophy should be, should we change what we have at the moment and the second role is to provide then the support so that when I provide them with the support they will provide support back with me so I sort of fall into that family like click and once were in there I think that's I can see an agent of change.

Pat: your kind of saying changing things by almost being part of their group

SA: part of their group and sort of getting them to ??? of Management within that structure that we have and then when we have that we should formulate our culture world again we should think do we need to change our culture or do we just simply need to find out what exactly we need to do to get where we want to be

**Q 8 What Organisational culture changes do you see as priority for Station Managers?**

SA: I suppose like the harder thing, especially we've got to give them a bit more autonomy a bit more control and that's something that we have failed to do over the last couple of years, a bit more autonomy a bit more control and get them thinking commercially not all of them think commercially, a lot of them would be safety focused and when I said operations earlier I meant operations/safety, a lot of them would be very much safety focused as well so you've just got to I suppose give them the tools to take a bit more control and action as opposed to trying to either take the easiest route out of any problems and also trying to ?? escalate problems without trying to settle our soldiers, we have the reverse coming out from another cultural point of view which would ?? to the Station Managers we get problems passed down from us from the ?? to ourselves, we have been on ? trying to work them out and then friendly pass the information back down, in my opinion from the business unit up into the centre as such there is no culture and support, there is not cultural help, probably ?? 15 10 -15 % of the time I would feel the other 85% who are just simply were seen as a tool for them to distance themselves from whatever has happened for whatever may be going on

Pat: but the Station Mangers use us?

SA: no this would be from Senior Management, the total Senior Management team in Iarnrod Eireann, down on to the business unit, the central ??? Finance, HR and those support plans coming down on to it, I don't see their involvement or willingness to get stuck into the day to day stuff

Pat: right okay so they don't see that as their job that's the Business Manager's job, they are all strategising

SA: not even strategising, they're just simply off doing whatever they feel is more important, which we only see what they present to us, but you don't get the sense of pride we have a problem, ??? what we want to do sort it out, ??? what's the problem I want you fix it, ???

Pat: well of course if there're getting, if the business unit is getting that from the Senior team that's, they're taking the same approach with the Station Managers maybe in saying well here's the problem, its in your halt fix it

SA: yea to some extent yea

Pat: rather than the senior team saying to us, here is an organisational problem right okay fix it but this what's available to you to fix and then in turn that's probably the way we would deal with and get the Station Managers in and say here's a problem with ticketing, were loosing revenue we have to fix it, here's how we are going to fix it, maybe what do you guys think and here's the help that you can give and that's probably the approach that's not being taken, which just calling on you and were saying fix it

SA: close those green gates

Pat: close those gates yea

SA: for some reason staff are refusing to close those gates because it makes their life easier and we can't seem to get the message from the Station Managers to the staff so it could be an unknown culture to us among staff, like the Station Manager to us, and us the centre

**Q 7 How do you think culture can be managed and changed?**

SA: yes, I would definitely believe that it can be managed and changed, its going to be hard to measure it, its going to be hard to, one other thing you'll know it when it happens, it will be hard to sort of describe and to sort ?? but it will take time and effort and I think it will be something more ?? I don't know how easy it would be to do but

**Q 10 How can you influence the culture operating among the Station Managers?**

SA: I think myself you have got to actually listen to them and let them talk to me and I would sort of always try to help them I would never sort of screen out their calls and just simply not deal with them and simply don't answer their e-mails or whatever but always try to work with them through you problem, cause I know I cant work the problem out by myself, I am not some sort of influencing now whether it works or not for them to change the whole ??? their culture of friendliness amongst themselves and support among themselves and a slightly cynical attitude led to be seen but I think as on a team and a support for the entire team to go into that route and sort of try and get there and sort of put yourself in ?? support and then when you're their support ask them to support you to move on to the next step

Pat: what about the terms of consequences, right we already said we had three guys have been taken down to they clearly see there is consequences

SA: its clear to say that even over that process as well I think it will seem ?? a bit it, the ?? here would have been especially from the District Manager and the Business Manager if you step out of line you are gone. The second thing is if you don't have a secure room which you can control access to you really can't stop someone from stealing from you, ?? you are going to loose money and in DART now we have to address the and spend a bit of time training them spend a bit of time educating them to understand what exactly has to be done, we have some procedures which outlines what needs to be done on a sort of daily weekly periodically ?? and clearly define everybody's role in this procedure so there is no area of ?? in it, so I think that has helped along with the fact that my ??? sanctioned waiting around the corner from me I think ??? has also helped changed ???

**Q 11 Do you think that the goals of our Station Managers are in line with the overall strategy of DART?**

SA: no, there goals are supporting each other and getting through day by day basis, some of that will feed into the greater goals a bit more punctual and reliable

service, with the fact of them together means that more of a coincidence than anything else

Pat: okay so its not planned its not deliberate

SA: no not planned its not deliberate, part of it would be a motivation on the individual getting pride maybe oh yea I have no trains failed on my section or drivers are just sit down because they are refusing to do X Y & Z, that would be part of it, part of it would be private motivating to make sure that we are turning in, like one of our better guys out in Maynooth would be fairly conscious of money and ??? and that kind of thing and it would pride yourself on having it spot on, but part of it ??? and you sort of took a more active role, active just stands for the individual and ?? influence of his partner and also his own personal ethos or like the other individuals just simply, ??? more keen and interest in making sure that the staff are happy and content and they have the staff in to work ?? as the ?? work better as needed and that they can run on that way than other individuals who have been very keen on, right we have 5 minutes to turn this train around here so going to make sure that it runs and would be actively out on the platform in doing that

Pat: yea okay so there is no uniformity between the Station Managers as to what goals they are achieving, no deliberate

SA: there was no deliberate plans

Pat: no deliberate, do you think that's partially down to the Senior Team in the DART?

SA: I think its more partly down partially to the Senior Team but partially cause we are going through a period of transition no one knows anything, waiting to see ah well it will all change against us, M had the same style and in fairness to yourself your also different style but you've been put in a care taking role and your really here to keep us going and try and as we move along to make sure that we were matching what's requested from us from that Senior Management, so there hasn't been a chance to examine culture or roles there isn't even an effort to change culture or goals and unfortunately work like culture or anything that feels like it almost like an American style will also be although its almost treated with a bit of ?? so I suppose what we've got to do once we go through this period of transition and we realign our goals with our Station Managers to start thinking of how we can't sort of move these goals along forward and then forget the Station Managers and the Depot Controllers end then you can start to hope to change the people on the ground

Pat: start to change their behaviours

SA: but like there is a few simple things take Portmarnock probably one of our worst examples of a location, its worked out of a 20 foot container the guy does not have a loo all well and good to talk about culture but you have to take care of basic needs first, we've a good salary, staff who are very well capable of what they are doing in my opinion, that's taken care of right, good working relationships in the whole amongst each other so the next thing is actually our stations are old our stations are quite dilapidated there is a painting programme in

place which takes care of the problem but the facilities within then isn't quite there

Pat: I take your message your saying its hard to spread the message of culture change and customer focus and commercial orientation when the guy sitting in Portmarnock says they can't even give me a loo.

SA: yea there is a felling of a personal needs break you have to go home

**Q 12: What do you think inhibits our Station Managers from achieving the desired culture for DART?**

SA: I suppose I don't know if they have a clear view of what our culture is or what our cultural goals are, I suppose second thing is they are very much day to day people, they don't see themselves having any sort of planning or strategic view or even they barely see themselves as having control over their own money and control over expenditure, for example one guy wanted to spend €844 on cleaning windows and the windows hadn't been cleaned in a year and a half but he went about it and he got prices, the prices got the lowest and he rang me and said can I do that and I said yea of course you can and off you go

Pat: so it's the basic stuff they feel that they have to get permission

SA: they don't mind spending two or three hundred quid if it's going to be more or something unusual and I suppose partially now comes down to me as I have never gone out there and I've said right lads this is a couple of months pervious years haven't done it all this year everything is just changed and were just listen this is what you have lets say every month to spend so much on Wages so much on the day to day stuff and off you go, generally when I'm doing my budgets I get as much feedback as I can off them like go through name by name on the payroll who does what and exactly what they need and that sort of stuff and then on the ?? side the ?? is right ?? X Y & Z like last year we got a good motivation one particular guy we managed to give him a reward by increasing his budget because we found 10 times the value of his reward, so that was important to him and he ?? to do with that and that also brought his ?? and respect off the staff as well

Pat: so probably one of the biggest barriers so to these guys achieving kind of long-term culture in their sections is that they don't look long term, they only look day to day

SA: they look day to day, they're very short sighted

Pat: short sighted yea, but that's probably, its partially down to us thought isn't it because we're not saying to them its okay to do X Y & Z

SA: perhaps cause they don't fell they have that level of control

Pat: okay yea, just looking at the DM and myself now I now you made the point that we are caretakers as a result caretakers aren't in the power to influence too much change they are basically the brief was to keep things ticking over till the GMs took up

**Q 13: Do you think the district manager & I espouse the values of DART to the Station Managers?**

SA: no I think actually operating as actually a day to day periodic basis as you know when you go to the Chief Operating Meetings its like, northern line your loosing punctuality on the outer suburban what's happening? You go off and you have all your facts and your figures and you say well this and this and this and then you have to go off and solve it and then you sort of work part functionally with the CME and you well this is what we need to do this is what we need to get going, ??? an extra set of 2900's or whatever and get so your working on a day to day environment and also its very hard for yourselves when you come in because your learning on your feet, there is no sort of shadowing period at all here and people are appointed in.

Pat: that was basically it yea

SA: and I know the previous manager would have given you a fair bit of support and you would have been in contact regularly but that's no substitute for sitting down for 3 or 4 hours talking without any time pressure or anything about the issues and what extent you need to watch and do

Pat: so what do you think is the result of that so, the values like, myself and the DM were I exposing some value or do you think were not exposing any values of DART ?

SA: a slight cultural change in that you both are much better communicators you are much better with dealing with people, The DM would be very very very softly softly and cautious and no disrespect or reflection on him, I always feel like he is thinking that he is constantly sitting in a witness box in court, and that's how he works and operated not the fact that ?? small ??? fares increase and there would be literally blood on the page after I put my fares increase on it and the DM would eventually ring me back.

Pat: so that's the kind of thing he does well so, he's methodical, he's accurate he thinks its

SA: you won't see him working at speed but he always achieves his goals and he is quite a hard worker and works at lot of long hours, he's brought in an air of communication and I feel it with yourself as well Pat you are a very good communicator you a very strong you are very good at buying people in I think, part of the reason that we've had a fair bit of response to the traffic light report, you went from a disastrous position I don' t know five months ago four months ago? ??? your own drive on it making it a key issue, explaining it to the SM's that it was key thing, and then course I was brought in on that side and what I would do is I would sort of create a bit of us and them against the center.

Pat: brings it tighter together

SA: ??? practically due to your own culture the way you operate and work with people

Pat: alright so that's some positive stuff, what do you think we don't do so well?

SA: I suppose you don't push the ? you put the ? into ? and its not necessarily given we have a lot, we've moved our focus as a business right we have moved it on to the punctuality side right taken it away from the cleanliness and we have taken it away from that and that's partially maybe because its working well in the background, but we don't ?? we used to audit and check and we brought in stuff and spend a lot of time and effort and then one day it sort of dropped

Pat: and that's only been in the last couple of months has it?

SA: no that's like that the last 6-9 months. So I think as a team what we fail to do I think we fail to resource ourselves properly and I think we fail to focus properly

Pat: this is because of the big cost reduction plan that there its just all take costs out take costs

SA: its all reduce reduce reduce

Pat: yea and this is part of

SA: and that's part of the culture coming down I suppose

Pat: from the top people

SA: the top team, and we both have a role to play on the top team both put our input on it but that's been the drive for the last two years and that will permeate all the way down, cutting costs cutting costs, cutting cost and ??? very very messy but I think now its when we achieve stability in our cost side we have then got to start to look at what are we going to do to ? make more money that after that we have got to sort of with that figure what exactly we need to do and we need to do well ?? so if its got ???

Pat: we have to start, punctuality we have to or even building a system where we put up three or four of our core values, customer service, punctuality, cleanliness, staff presentation right just take those four and almost throughout the year we are going to say there is going to be emphasis on the four of them

SA: I suppose you have got to rank them the chief is going to do it, friendliness to customers, but that will also be one of the hardest things cause you have got to get the guy on the ground brought in and believe that he must be friendly ye know its not like be friendly or else or type of thing, you have got to make him want to be friendly, and we have to sort out ye know the hygiene factors again ye know the facilities of the people at the other side, I suppose we would eventually have to make a decision and I think what we need to do now is actually build some support underneath that to make sure that, well take cleanliness I know cleanliness has slipped an awful lot maybe its working well but we have got to make sure that we have a responsible person and the support to make sure that works and ?? responsibility too

**Q 14: Do you measure Station Manager's performance?**

SA: This year is the year of destruction to the DART we are going to chastise them over their revenue we don't really know what's happening we have a good idea we know that we are loosing between 65-80 thousand a weekend at any time we close alright, but we don't know like ?? northside as opposed to the southside, it could be quite simple as someone's perception ye know the DART is closed I'm not going to go and maybe there is a lot more people travelling through the city centre than when we arrived in the beginning, going ? almost put a measure on the revenue and the cost sides of in keeping on eye on what there cost whereas more or less sort of listen what where you doing €15,000 there on maintenance was that absolutely necessary, ? yea it was ??? put out that little general message but I wouldn't score them I wouldn't, the only sort of it would be a personal measure it would be how quickly they respond to any of my needs or how I feel they are taking there, I could rank them now the most confident and the least confident ?? and like I'm happy to say one ??? would have put them at the bottom of the file and now its moved ??? purely because the interest he has shown in the financial matters and the ??

Pat: and that's the whole key issue for us, there's the senior guys in the DART they have to push that message to them right they have to take responsibility for it and I think what's happening out there in general terms is if the booking offices are closing early its because of the 5/7 right if the security on the northside is poor its because the ticket checkers wont go out there if the DARTs are running late its because of those bloody drivers plus the fact the guys who are maintaining the points and no good and the overhead wires are always falling down right any and here's our key values in DART that we've just been the last hour discussing is how the Station Managers can blame absolutely everybody else for it and not looking at one issue for themselves.

SA: and not even feel the need to look

Pat: feel the need to look in the mirror ye know and

SA: we have got to give them ownership

Pat: its yea and then you could have a few key things then with DART is that not only do you say here's the responsibility but here's the power right so simple things if you were to say to them you are now allowed to spend up to €500 without permission right now you must have X Y Z to back up the €500 so its got to be on something like this and its got to be proven to me but you kept saying that you don't e-mail me and say can you spend it so there will be small steps but small steps will grow bigger so that's a big thing.

**Q 15: Do you think we have a competitive environment do you think we operate in a competitive environment?**

SA: you are going to have to clarify that a wee bit now, competitive is I would say yes we do work in a competitive environment because we are buying in other forms of public transport ??? the Station Manager's do not work competitively against each other,

Pat: ah no that's not what I mean, I mean just a competitive environment as in other people who supply transport

SA: oh yea definitely work on a competitive environment and competition is going to get increased cause we now have a very similar form of transport, what with the LUAS coming in and are punctuality and our reliability is going to be compared to that ye know

Pat: which could be a good thing or a bad thing

SA: oh yea

**Q 15 a: What do you think our strategy should be over the next 5-10 years?**

SA: I suppose we really have got to figure out what we want to do at the bottom of it we should be ye know returning from sort of exchequer at some stage, I suppose what I see the company strategy as being to put everything on a commercial footing to get multi annual budgets, at the moment we get budgets year by year depending on the exchequer so we have to convince the department that yes its worth putting money into transport as opposed to help so we have got to manage that better and we have got to try and kill the ???? we have got to start doing what I suppose what define it in one word, ???? back to you basics do everything on the ground right, have the stations looking well have the staff turned out well being friendly to the people and have our booking offices opened and if we have all those things doing well then we are less vulnerable to criticism we are less vulnerable of being accused of being ?? and even though that we might be generating more revenue so we will need less money on the exchequer so the key strategy I suppose is do everything that we do on a day to day basis, do it well, do it efficiently, have a good reliable service, have it prompt, have our staff friendly and courteous, have our booking offices open till the time that we need them open, we do have to consider certain locations but its just not viable to open a booking office and then your so your is there such a need for someone to be in access the train and move yea and that social ? to me has a value, we also need really to convince the department of social welfare at some stage to pay us on a per ticket basis ye know that when we sell an old age pensioner ticket well you get us a euro,

Pat: what are they giving us at the moment? Do you know?

SA: €3000 a period

Pat: that all?

SA: that's all , so its not a lot

Pat: passenger or something, okay

SA: yea I think its about 40% of passenger loading

**Q 16: If the DART was not a semi state business unit in a semi state company what do you think would be different about it?**

SA: hard to know, if you take the train operating companies in England they still have the same problems they have a lot of the same problems, they've had issues with

drivers, rest day working and understaffing and that type of so it just by simple making it a private company it won't make a difference you could privatise us and in the morning and you will have to change the ??? you have to focus on.

Pat: but what about the argument that says if we were not a state company then the trade unions wouldn't have the grip they have right but management would be more empowered because I mean they could say well now Mr Driver if you don't drive that train your fired right

SA: see a couple of, I don't think that will actually happen because at the end of the day we have two key people that we absolutely must have to run the trains, Signalmen and Drivers, those people and unfortunately its not only training in here you can't walk down there in Galway and say approach 60 new signalmen so they have ?? pass the ?? without those people working behind it

Pat: but what about if you take it up in that we show that we as the senior team in DART came say to a Station Manager you are going to ?? trains out, you are going to hit these targets X Y & Z and if you fail you will be given a personal development plan and then you will be reassigned those targets and if you fail you will be

SA: demoted?

Pat: yes or you will be dismissed, and do you think that will improve the kind of Station Managers that we have or improve what they are doing?

SA: well it would only improve if it was seen as the targets were realistic and they have control to achieve the targets, if they have all those then it might improve slightly.

**Q 17: How good do you think we are at achieving our goals?**

SA: yes we are quite good at it, w have a punctual reliable service the trains are fairly clean the stations are reasonably clean, yes we are quite good at achieving

**Q 17a: Do you think we are good at putting resources in place to meet our goals, short term and long term?**

SA: no I think that's our key weakness, we don't resource enough we don't do it well enough we are very much a can do type of ? where we try and do the minimum, probably cash ? my fault and I'm always focusing on costs and I'm always looking at the cheaper option ???

Pat: so we are trying to do an awful lot with awful little

SA: yea

**Q 17 b: Do you think we are good at picking up challenges ourselves or do we wait for people to issue challenges to us?**

SA: so we stretch ourselves to our targets, no we tend not to because we are so under resourced a lot of people feel that ??? continues and we don't have the time to sit

back and let that settle, maybe not we have chopped 4 positions out of 34 so out of say the central team here in suburban that's a large chunk and we have lost project section and this project section should be a bit more forward thinking a bit more strategy and also try to implement a ??? and that's were we've knocked out???

Pat: what culture would you like to see operating in DART in the future?

SA: commercially focused culture.

**Q 18: Any other Comments?**

SA: No Pat I'm happy at that.

Pat: thanks

**END OF TAPE**

**Appendix 3**

**Station Manager Questionnaire.**

### Interview Questions for Station Managers

1. Culture can mean 'the way we do things around here' or a system of shared meanings? What do you understand from the term 'Culture'?
2. What is the dominant culture in DART?
3. Can you list the values of DART?
4. A sub-culture can be described as cultures distinct from the dominant culture. Do you think the Station Managers have a sub-culture of their own? If so what is it?
5. What could be better about the station manager's culture?
6. Can you change your culture in your area? What kinds of things would you do?
7. What do you see as priority for Station Managers?
8. What are your 3 main goals this year?
9. Do Station Managers see themselves as legitimate managers?
10. What inhibits station managers from achieving the desired culture for DART?
11. Do you think that the District Manager and the Manager Suburban communicate the values of DART to our station managers
12. Do you think about our competitive environment? What do you think our strategy is for the next 5-10 years?
13. If IE was not a semi state company, would it be different?
14. How good is DART at achieving its goals? How good is DART at putting resources in place to meet goals? How good are we in DART at our internal processes and operations? Are we good at picking up new challenges or waiting for new goals to be given to us?
15. Any other comments?

## **Appendix 4**

### **Senior Managers Questionnaire**

## **Questions to the Senior Managers**

- 1 What does the term 'Organisational culture' mean to you? Describe our culture
- 2 Can you list the values of DART?
- 3 Do you consider the concept of culture a legitimate management concern or another form of employee control?
- 4 Do you think the station managers have a sub-culture of their own? What do you think it is?
- 5 Does it fit the dominant culture or is it in conflict?
- 6 How could the station manager's culture be improved? How can you help them?
- 7 How do you think culture can be managed and changed?
- 8 What Organisational culture changes do you see as priority for Station Managers?
- 9 What's your role in the achieving the priorities with Station Managers?
- 10 How can you influence the culture operating among the Station Managers?
- 11 Do you think that the goals of our Station Managers are in line with the overall strategy of DART?
- 12 What inhibits Station Managers from achieving the desired culture for DART?
- 13 Do you think the District Manager & the Manager Suburban communicate the values of DART to our Station Managers?
- 14 How do you measure Station Manager performance? Do they know & understand what you're trying to measure?

15 Do we operate in a competitive environment, what is our strategy  
5-10yrs

16 If IE was not a semi state company, would it be different?

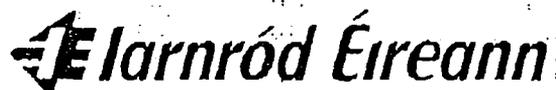
17 How good are we in achieving our goals? Putting resources in place  
to meet goals? How good are we at internal processes and operations. Are  
we good at picking up the challenge or waiting to be given new goals?

18 Any other comments?

**Appendix 5**

**Station Manager's Job Description.**

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## JOB DESCRIPTION – EXECUTIVE STATION MANAGERS

1. **POST** Executive Station Manager

2. **RESPONSIBLE TO** District Manager

3. **RESPONSIBLE FOR** Clerical Staff  
Location Supervisors  
Train Drivers  
Rail Operative Staff  
Gatckeepers

4. **SCOPE**

The management by control, supervision and co-ordination of all rail-operating activities in accordance with policy and plans laid down.

5. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

5.1 To ensure that the service provided is up to the standard required by the Business Development Managers/Passenger Services Managers.

5.2 To ensure that the safety standards are as required by statute and by the Manager Safety.

5.3 To support the District Manager in the development of rail operating rules and regulations.

5.4 To ensure the cost effectiveness of the services provided is controlled and constantly reviewed and improved.

5.5 To ensure that all rail operations under his control are carried out in a safe manner.

5.6 To ensure that staff are recruited who are physically and psychologically suited to railway working.

5.7 To ensure that staff are properly trained and instructed in accordance with statutory and company requirements.

5.8 To ensure that staff are given refresher courses and annual examinations in accordance with agreed standards so that their training and certifications is current and satisfactory.

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- 5.9 To ensure that staff are in a fit condition when reporting for duty.
- 5.10 To ensure that staff are fully uniformed and neat in appearance when on duty.
- 5.11 To ensure that staff report for duty on time.
- 5.12 To ensure that staff take their annual leave currently.
- 5.13 Is responsible for fire and evacuation procedures in stations and buildings under his control.

## 6. SAFETY

To ensure that a safe working environment is provided taking into account the following responsibilities under the provision of the International Safety Rating System and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act.

- (i) **Safety Policy:**  
To endorse the Safety Policy and ensure its permanent display in the workplace.
- (ii) **Safety Statement:**  
To endorse the Managers Safety Statement and develop his/her own Safety Statement for local conditions.
- (iii) **Management Meeting:**  
To hold meetings every two months with subordinate Inspectors/Supervisors and Safety and Health matters to be a significant part of the agenda.
- (iv) **Annual Objectives:**  
To assist in the achievement of Annual Objectives as directed by District Managers.
- (v) **Safety Libraries:**  
To ensure the reading and circulation of Safety Magazines and to ensure the availability of same to Safety Representatives.
- (vi) **Planned General Inspections:**  
To carry out planned general inspections and prioritise the implementation of remedial action.
- (vii) **Preventative Maintenance:**  
To monitor the preventative maintenance of mobile equipment under their control. To monitor the pre-use checking of mobile equipment under their control.
- (viii) **Quarterly Bulletin:**  
To arrange distribution of quarterly bulletin to all employees.

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- (ix) **Reporting of Hazardous Conditions by Employees:**  
To monitor the reporting of substandard hazardous conditions and practises by employees and prioritise the implementation of remedial action.
- (x) **Accident/Incident Investigation:**  
To ensure that accidents/incidents are reported as per instruction. To ensure further investigation into serious and high potential accidents.
- (xi) **Organisational Rules:**  
To ensure that General Safety Rules are distributed and communicated to employees and posted in locations where they will be seen. To ensure that Specialised Work Rules are communicated as necessary to employees.
- (xii) **Personal Protective Equipment (P.P.E.):**  
To ensure that P.P.E. is available to employees as required. To monitor and enforce the use of P.P.E.
- (xiii) **Current Chemicals in Use:**  
Compile a list of chemical substances in use in your area. Update every six months and send a copy to Audit Unit Co-ordinator.

## 7. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 To ensure a proactive approach to accident prevention.
- 7.2 To ensure that staff development is monitored so that the most suitable people can be promoted always.
- 7.3 To ensure that security for passengers, freight and staff is provided as required.
- 7.4 To ensure that the security service hired is monitored and reviewed as required.
- 7.5 To ensure that staff are encouraged to be security conscious in so far as trespass, vandalism and thefts occur.
- 7.6 To ensure liaison with local Gardai and community groups for security purposes.
- 7.7 To ensure ongoing contact with local business and community groupings.
- 7.8 To ensure that service improvement suggestions are encouraged and channelled to the District Operating Manager.
- 7.9 To ensure that premises and facilities under his/her control are secured and maintained in a condition and in a manner, which is safe, and without risk to health.

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- 7.10 To ensure that track, signalling and building development plans are examined before implementation and appropriate comments made.
- 7.11 To ensure that station and depot premises are maintained.
- 7.12 To ensure that premises are clean, tidy and suitably adorned.
- 7.13 To ensure that engineering departments clean up after all work jobs are complete.
- 7.14 To ensure that fencing, gates and statutory notices are in good condition and in position.
- 7.15 To ensure that the permanent way is regularly cleaned of refuse.
- 7.16 To ensure that rates of pay and conditions are applied and monitored.
- 7.17 To ensure that Industrial Relations and Human Resources policies are implemented.
- 7.18 To ensure that good industrial relations are maintained through regular contact with staff and Trade Union officials.
- 7.19 To hold regular meetings with Station Supervisors and staff representatives and to maintain regular contact with Regional Traffic and Locomotive Inspectors.
- 7.20 To ensure full negotiations and agreement where possible, to cover all changes affecting staff.
- 7.21 To ensure that the Board's revenue collection systems are protected.
- 7.22 To encourage payment of wages by credit transfer and to ensure all new employees are paid by credit transfer.
- 7.23 To report and have investigated all rail, staff and third party accidents and occurrences of unsafe working in accordance with statutory and company requirements.
- 7.24 To ensure regular appraisal of the performance of all staff and to take remedial action where necessary.
- 7.25 To ensure that all supervisors and other staff members know what their job requirements are.
- 7.26 To ensure that rosters for train crews, signalmen and other station staff are in the best interest of safety and efficiency and that 'out of hours' visits are planned and carried out.

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**8. KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED**

8.1 Company Rules and Regulations

8.2 Statutory Instruments and Acts covering:

- Employment and Safety
- Rail Operating
- International Safety Rating System
- Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act

8.3 Budgetary Controls

8.4 Duties of Staff

**9 SKILLS**

9.1 Staff Appraisal

9.2 Budgetary

9.3 Negotiating

9.4 Interpersonal Relationships

9.5 Problem Solving

9.6 Rules Improvement

9.7 Motivation

9.8 Track Signalling and Building Assessment

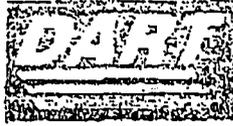
**10 RELATIONSHIPS**

10.1 To be directly responsible to the District Manager

- 10.2 Personnel Manager
- Accounts Personnel
- Local Divisional Engineer's Staff
- Local Manager, Signal, Electrical and Telecomms Staff
- Local Operations Engineer's Staff
- Other Station Managers
- Manager, Resource Scheduling & Control
- Safety Executive
- Audit Unit Co-Ordinator (I.S.R.S.)

**Appendix 6**

**Suburban Accountant Job Description.**



Suburban Rail

Suburban Rail  
Business Unit

## Job Description

1. **Position** Accountant Suburban Rail
2. **Reporting To:** Manager Suburban Rail
3. **Scope:** The Suburban Accountant will be a key member of the Suburban Rail Department and will report to the Manager Suburban. The Suburban Accountant will have a functional responsibility to the Manager Finance & Accounting. The Suburban Accountant will drive the development and maintenance of the Suburban Rail Accounts. The Accountant will be responsible for Revenue and Expenditure Analysis, Budgets, Financial Contracts and Profit & Loss and Balance sheets.
4. **Area - DART and Outer Suburban from:**
  - Howth to Bray
  - Balbriggan to Pearse
  - Enfield to Connolly
  - Bray to Greystones
5. **Responsibilities**
  - o Development and management of the Suburban Rail Accountancy Function
  - o Preparation of period/ year end accounts; such as Profit & Loss Account, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow
  - o Prepare annual budgets for Suburban Functions; Traffic, Running, Facilities, Marketing, Revenue and Suburban Central Office
  - o Promote effective financial management through budgetary control
  - o Preparation of route profitability analysis

- Preparation of expenditure analysis for all costs to include; invoices, salaries/pay, contracts with internal/ external suppliers
- Development and assessment of expenditure for projects, new works, procurement
- Development and maintenance of financial contracts to include; interdepartmental contracts, public service contracts, payments to suppliers, new supplier contracts
- Management of payment and processing of all invoices and requisitions for Suburban Rail
- Development and audit of Booking Office and Cash Office accounting policies and procedures
- Prepare business cases for capital expenditure

#### **6. Qualifications, Experience and Key Competencies Required**

- Recognised professional accountancy qualification
- Post graduate experience in an accountancy role
- An ability to identify key financial accounting processes and the capability of designing, implementing and monitoring internal controls
- Possess excellent interpersonal skills including the capacity to relate effectively with personnel in all departments
- Good knowledge of a wide spectrum of computer based accounting and technology systems & knowledge of SAP would be of benefit
- Ability to analyse and explain complex inter-related issues relating to financial accounting
- Detailed knowledge and understanding of budgetary controls
- Ability to lead, manage, develop and train staff

## 7. Principal Conditions of Service

### Permanent

The Suburban Accountant is a permanent position with a six months probationary period if the appointee was not previously employed in a finance position in the CIE Group of Companies

### Salary

Negotiable

### Annual Leave

24 working days per year. This leave is on the basis of a 5 day week and is exclusive of the usual Public Holidays

### Sick Leave

Staff are afforded seven self certified sick days per annum. Two consecutive self certified days may be taken together, after which a doctor's certificate is required.

The Welfare Scheme provides for up to 26 weeks certified illness. The rate of sickness benefit payable is such as is necessary to ensure that, with any benefit payable under the Social Welfare Code added, you will receive;

- a) 100% of basic weekly wage for the first four weeks of sickness
- b) 70% of basic weekly wage for the next eight weeks of sickness
- c) 60% of basic weekly wage for the next fourteen weeks of sickness

**Appendix 7**

**District Manager Job Description.**

## Job Description

1. **POST:** District Manager

**Responsible to** General Managers  
**Responsible for** Station Managers  
District Traffic Executives  
District Traction Executives  
Depot Controllers  
Station Controllers  
Clerical Staff  
Operating Staff

2. **SCOPE:**

The management by control, supervision and co-ordination of all rail operating activities in accordance with policy and plans laid down.

3. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 To ensure that the service provided is up to the standard required by the General Manager
- 3.2 To ensure that the safety standards are as required by statute and by the Manager, Safety and the Operations Safety Manager.
- 3.3 To support General Manager in the development of rail operating rules and regulations
- 3.4 To ensure that the cost effectiveness of the services provided is controlled and constantly reviewed and improved.
- 3.5 To ensure that all rail operations under his control are carried out in a safe manner
- 3.6 To ensure that staff are recruited who are physically and psychologically suited to railway working
- 3.7 To ensure that staff are properly trained and instructed in accordance with statutory and company requirements.
- 3.8 To ensure that staff are given refresher courses and annual examinations in accordance with agreed standards so that their training and certification is current and satisfactory
- 3.9 To ensure that staff are in a fit condition when reporting for duty

- 3.10** To ensure that staff are fully uniformed and neat in appearance when on duty.
- 3.11** To ensure that staff report for duty in time.
- 3.12** To ensure that staff take their annual leave currently.
- 3.13** Is responsible for fire and evacuation precautions in stations and buildings under his control.
- 3.14** To ensure that a safe working environment is provided, taking into account the following responsibilities under the provisions of International Safety Rating System and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act.
- (a). Safety Policy:**
- To endorse the Safety Policy and ensure its permanent display in the workplace.
- (b). Safety Statement:**
- To endorse the Manager, Intercity, Safety Statement and develop his own Safety Statement to cater for local conditions.
- (c). Safety Tours:**
- To conduct quarterly safety tours, using a checklist, displaying Management's support and commitment to the Safety and Loss Control Programme.
- (d). Management Meetings:**
- To hold meetings every two months with subordinate Managers/Station Masters. Safety and Health matters to be a significant part of the agenda.
- (e). Safety Library:**
- To set up small Safety Libraries and ensure the circulation's of Safety Magazines.
- (f). General Safety Inspections:**
- To monitor the carrying-out of Safety Inspections and prioritise the implementation of remedial action.
- (g). Preventive Maintenance:**

To regularly review the preventive maintenance of mobile equipment under their control. To monitor the pre-use checking of mobile equipment under their control.

**(h). Reporting of Hazardous Conditions by Employees.**

To monitor the reporting of Substandard/Hazardous Conditions by employees and prioritise the implementation of remedial action.

**(i). Accident/Incident Investigation:**

To monitor the Accident/Incident Reporting Procedure. To ensure further investigation as appropriate into serious and high potential accidents. To ensure that Manager, Intercity, Passenger Services Managers and District Managers are informed within 24 hours of the basic information surrounding serious accident/incidents.

**(j). Organisational Rules:**

To ensure that General Safety Rules are distributed and communicated to all employees and posted in locations where they will be seen. To ensure that Specialised Work Rules are communicated as necessary to employees.

**(k). Personal Protective Equipment (P. P. E.):**

To ensure that Personal Protective Equipment is available to staff as required. Monitor and enforce the use of P. P. E.

**(L). SAFETY OBJECTIVES**

To assist in the achievement of annual objectives.

- 3.15 To ensure a proactive approach to accident prevention.
- 3.16 To ensure that staff development is monitored so that the most suitable people can be promoted always.
- 3.17 To ensure that security for passengers, freight and staff is provided as required.
- 3.18 To ensure that the security service hired is monitored and reviewed as required.
- 3.19 To ensure that staff are encouraged to be security conscious in so far as trespass, vandalism and thefts occur.

- 3.20** To ensure liaison with local Gardai and community Groups for security purposes.
- 3.21** To ensure ongoing contact through Station Masters, with local business and community groupings.
- 3.22** To ensure that service improvement suggestions are encouraged and channelled to Business Development Sections.
- 3.23** To ensure that premises and facilities under his control are secured and maintained in a condition and in a manner which is safe and without risk to health.
- 3.24** To ensure that track signalling and building developments are examined thoroughly and approved before implementation.
- 3.25** To ensure that station and depot premises are maintained.
- 3.26** To ensure that premises are clean, tidy and suitably adorned.
- 3.27** To ensure that engineering departments clean up after all work jobs are complete.
- 3.28** To ensure that fencing, gates signs and statutory notices are in good condition and in position.
- 3.29** To ensure that the permanent way is regularly cleaned of refuse.
- 3.30** To ensure that rates of pay and conditions are applied and monitored.
- 3.31** To ensure that Industrial Relations and Human Resources policies are implemented.
- 3.32** To ensure that good industrial relations are maintained through regular contact with staff and Trade Union Officials.
- 3.33** To ensure regular meetings with Station Masters, Supervisors and staff representatives.
- 3.34** To ensure full negotiations and agreement where possible, to cover all changes affecting staff.
- 3.35** To ensure that the Board's revenue collection systems are protected.
- 3.36** To encourage payment of wages by credit transfer and to ensure that all new employees are paid by credit transfer.



- 3.37 To report and have investigated all rail, staff and third party accidents and occurrences of unsafe working in accordance with Statutory and Company requirements.
- 3.38 To ensure regular appraisal of the performance of all staff and to take remedial action where necessary.
- 3.39 To ensure that Station Masters and supervisors know what their job requirements are.
- 3.40 To ensure that rosters for Station Masters and Supervisors are in the best interest of safety and efficiency and that out of hours visit standards are set and achieved.
- 3.41 Maintain a close working relationship with the Freight Manager/Personnel in regard to Freight requirements and activities.

#### 4. KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- 4.1 Company Rules and Regulations.
- 4.2 Statutory Instruments and Acts covering:
  - Employment and Safety
  - Rail Operating
  - International Safety Rating System (I. S. R. S.)
  - Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 1989.
- 4.3 Budgetary Controls.
- 4.4 Duties of Staff.

#### 5. SKILLS

- 5.1 Staff appraisal.
- 5.2 Budgetary.
- 5.3 Negotiating.
- 5.4 Interpersonal Relationships.
- 5.5 Problem solving.
- 5.6 Rules Improvement.
- 5.7 Motivation.
- 5.8 Track, Signalling and Building Assessment.

## **Appendix 8**

### **Station Managers Person Specification.**

## Person Specification

Job Title Station Manager, Suburban Rail

ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<p><b>EDUCATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signalling Certificate</li> <li>• Satisfactory performance in Rules Test</li> <li>• Current personal Track Safety Certificate</li> <li>• Knowledge of relevant statutory instruments and Acts covering:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Employment and safety</li> <li>○ Rail Operating</li> <li>○ International Safety Rating System</li> <li>○ Health, Safety and Welfare at work</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaving Certificate, or equivalent.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WORK EXPERIENCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 5 years relevant experience in clerical or operative stream within Iarnrod Eireann or comparable external experience</li> <li>• Experience in customer-facing role.</li> <li>• Cash-handling / budgeting experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of managing others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ABILITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasonable level of numerical ability (tests may be used as part of selection process).</li> <li>• Good verbal and written communication skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keyboard skills.</li> <li>• Current driving licence.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MOTIVATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willing to take responsibility for the smooth operational running of the area under his/her control.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to Personal Development</li> <li>• Strong focus on continuous improvement</li> </ul>

<p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Safety of all operations, customers and staff.</li> <li>○ Punctuality of trains.</li> <li>○ Managing budgets.</li> <li>○ Maximising revenue.</li> <li>○ Customer service.</li> <li>○ Recruitment.</li> <li>○ Staff scheduling and payment.</li> <li>○ Staff motivation and discipline.</li> <li>○ Staff appraisal, training and development.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>PERSONALITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Willing to take the lead and act assertively and fairly.</li> <li>● Good personal organisation and planning skills.</li> <li>● Balanced approach to decision making.</li> <li>● Track record of positive relationship building and interpersonal skills.</li> <li>● Works well under pressure.</li> <li>● Committed to organisational objectives.</li> <li>● Demonstrable concern for safety.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>HEALTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Good level of general health.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>CIRCUMSTANCES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Flexibility will be required in order to ensure availability in cases of unexpected emergency / crisis.</li> </ul>	

## **Appendix 9**

### **Competency Model for Station Managers in Iarnrod Éireann.**

**COMPETENCY MODEL FOR STATION MANAGERS IN IARNROD  
EIREANN**

<b>Knowledge of Procedures / Concern for Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates a wide and in-depth knowledge of safety processes, systems, and rules.</li> <li>• Actively promotes best safety practices by personal examination, communication, and regular inspection and monitoring.</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial Appreciation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sees the links between our role and overall organisational goals and is aware of business content.</li> <li>• Understands the commercial impact of the role.</li> <li>• Takes responsibility for protecting and maximising revenue.</li> <li>• Proactively manages budgets and controls costs.</li> </ul>
<b>Customer Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively identifies, addresses and introduces new ways of working.</li> <li>• Challenges current approaches to deliver better customer understanding.</li> <li>• Ensures that all staff build and develop customer understanding.</li> <li>• Maintains a visible presence, and being the first point of contact for customer issues and complaints.</li> <li>• Ensures punctuality of service within their area of control.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning and Implementing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans all activities and operations within their area of responsibility, including staff working hours and payment.</li> <li>• Ensures that work is effectively monitored and checked.</li> <li>• Manages and organises own time effectively, and ensures priorities are addressed.</li> <li>• Delegates and uses available resources effectively.</li> </ul>
<b>Decision Making and Judgement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses logic and accesses relevant information when solving problems.</li> <li>• Able to see critical factors and make balanced judgements when dealing with uncertainty.</li> <li>• Able and willing to make a decision when feasible, rather than referring most decisions upwards.</li> <li>• Consults others when appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes a strong personal impact on others.</li> <li>• Deals with issues, including disciplinary issues, assertively and fairly.</li> <li>• Gives a clear consistent message of high standards.</li> <li>• Sets and maintains clear standards for self and others.</li> <li>• Encourages and facilitates staff development.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds and maintains positive working relationships with colleagues, customers, unions and external third parties.</li> <li>• Is approachable, and shows a personal interest in staff welfare.</li> <li>• Shows respect for others.</li> <li>• Builds teamwork and collaboration, based on shared objectives.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates effectively, and with impact, at a number of different levels.</li> <li>• Conducts regular staff briefings.</li> <li>• Writes concise, succinct reports, memos etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can work consistently under pressure, and deal calmly with unexpected emergencies or crises.</li> <li>• Maintains emotional control and composure in difficult situations.</li> <li>• Acts to calm others in emotionally charged situations.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility and Commitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows strong personal commitment to achieving business objectives.</li> <li>• Shows flexibility by responding to calls as the need arises.</li> <li>• Acts as a role model for others in this regard.</li> </ul>