



## Trenitalia c2c

Efficiently managing over £1m of customer refunds during COVID-19 lock-down

### ON TRACK FOR CHEQUE REFUNDS

Trenitalia c2c (c2c) is a long-term customer using PTX for managing Bacs payments. The solution is integrated with c2c's core finance system, and considered a robust, secure and efficient way of making payments with multi-level approvals and authorisation workflows.

Lockdown during the pandemic led many customers to apply for a season ticket refund. Tickets purchased by cheque or cash have to be refunded by cheque. This involved sending a cheque run to c2c's dedicated office-based printer that uses special cheque paper. Each cheque required a signature from the Finance Director and Head of Finance.

### A SMART REPLACEMENT FOR PRINTING CHEQUES

Due to the lockdown, existing processes for creating, signing and fulfilling cheques would have been a logistical nightmare with increased risk and complexity. Fortunately, Dave Markwell, c2c's Finance Systems Administrator, was already looking at how the company could modernise its cheque payments.

He explains, "Whilst researching potential alternatives to printing cheques, I found the PTX Payout solution. It ticked every box in terms of the features that we needed. As we were using PTX for Bacs, we had the utmost confidence in Bottomline. PTX is linked to our bank accounts which means we could leverage existing approval and authorisation workflows. This was a real timesaver and accelerated change without compromising on security."



Trenitalia c2c is the award-winning train operator running services between Fenchurch Street and Shoeburyness, serving 26 stations in East London and South Essex. It is one of the UK's most punctual and most popular train operators and was named "Rail Operator of the Year" at the 2018 National Transport Awards.

### BENEFITS



Issued more than £1m of refund payments



Overcame COVID-19 lockdown restrictions with a cloud-based solution



Improved the customer refund experience



Automated workflow and eliminated manual processes



Minimised risk of error and financial crime

## VERIFYING REFUND CLAIMS

c2c calculate the value of any cheque refund due to be paid as well reconcile each refund against a list of valid tickets. The refund amount is sent to each customer via email along with a unique reference number and a link to a branded online data capture form.

The customer enters details into the form, including their bank account and sort code. PTX uses the account name of the payee along with the bank details submitted by the customer to verify ownership of the bank account. Dave comments, "We are using the highest security settings in PTX for data validation. This gives us confidence that we are sending the right refund to the right customer whilst minimising the risk of error or financial crime, causing problems when cheques are cashed."

Any claims that are rejected by PTX are reviewed by the customer relations team who may ask for further information before manually adding these to PTX. This ensures that data errors are picked up and highlights any potential attempts to bypass validation checks.

## CREATING THE BATCH PAYMENT

EastWest Bank can now send and receive MX messages over the PhilPaSS Plus network, achieved using Bottomline's ISO 20022 transformation and enrichment solution. Moreover, ISO 20022 provides granular data with each transaction, enabling other benefits such as enhanced analytics, sanctions checking, improved fraud detection and prevention measures and less manual intervention. EastWest Bank will reap these benefits, all whilst delivering an improved experience for end customers. PTX creates a daily batch payment file from the verified claims. Dave adds, "The payment file flows through the same automated, secure authorisation and approvals that we use for a regular Bacs payment. Using these PTX workflows was a huge timesaver as we didn't need to reinvent the wheel."

From start to finish, the project took around a month. This included web form design work, testing and verifying the bank could process the payments. "Pre-COVID this project would probably have taken 2-3 months. We really appreciate going live in less than half that time as it meant that we could start processing the growing volume of claims that we were facing during the lockdown. The quicker we went live, the faster we could relieve the pressure on the customer relations team too," says Dave.

## IMPROVING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

c2c usually processes around 10-20 refunds per week. Since going live with the PTX Payout solution, it has processed over 1,400 claims. "With volumes growing 700% in the first 30 days, we simply could not have coped without it. In the last month alone, we processed over £1m of refunds. This shows how vital it was that we had something that worked accurately and efficiently," adds Dave.

There are advantages for the customer, as Dave states, "We are delivering a better customer experience as PTX enables the money to be paid directly into their bank account, rather than asking customers to wait for a cheque to arrive and then take it to the bank. It is more cost-effective for us too, and our investment in this solution represents value for money. We also don't need to worry about reissuing lost cheques or those that haven't been cashed for 6 months."

As a cloud-based solution, PTX enables c2c to work remotely and securely. "It has cut a lot of manual effort out of the refund process without sacrificing governance, security and fraud prevention controls. PTX frees us up from planning cheque runs to coincide with when signatories are in the office, and it gives us a huge amount of flexibility and agility," adds Dave.

## NEVER GOING BACK

c2c has received a consistently high level of service, as Dave explains, "The Bottomline team guided us throughout the entire process. They were always available even though they too, were working from home. Without the PTX Payout solution, our customer relations team would have been under huge pressure to cope with the peaks of claims processing. I can't see how we could do without it now."

c2c plans to work with Bottomline to evolve the refund process, to provide greater online self-service capabilities. Dave concludes, "PTX Payouts was definitely the right choice. We plan to migrate other cheque payments onto the same platform, which will bring further benefits. I would recommend PTX to any company looking for a scalable, cloud-based alternative to printing cheques."

*To learn more about PTX Payments and Business Solutions Suite, contact us today.*

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**Corporate Headquarters**  
100 International Drive, Suite 200  
Portsmouth, NH 03801  
United States of America

Phone: +1 603-436-0700  
Toll-free: +1 800-243-2528  
[info@bottomline.com](mailto:info@bottomline.com)

REV US040824LM