



PAUL COOMBER **MANAGING DIRECTOR OF** **CAPEL C.S LTD**

Paul Coomber is the Managing Director at Capel C.S Ltd, where he oversees all facets of client projects and business units across the railway, commercial, and residential sectors. With over 25 years of industry experience, Paul brings a wealth of expertise in procurement, supply chain management and quantity surveying to the most high-profile projects. Paul's leadership has been instrumental in Capel C.S delivering contracts that have contributed to iconic British projects such as the new Elizabeth line with TfL and MTR, station projects with Greater Anglia and other UK-leading TOCs, as well as the meticulous refurbishment of Grade II listed buildings in various sectors. Paul's extensive experience ensures that every project is executed to the highest standards of quality and efficiency.

What is your role within Capel C.S?

As the Managing Director at Capel C.S Ltd, I oversee all aspects of the day-to-day operations of the company along with Business Development and recruitment.

What success have you experienced in the last twelve months and how do you measure success?

Over the past twelve months, Capel C.S Ltd has achieved notable success, underscored by the completion of numerous projects and the recent attainment of PC MSA approval from Network Rail. However, we view success through multiple KPIs, with customer satisfaction and high standards of project delivery being paramount. The fact that many of our clients are repeat businesses, engaged in a variety of projects over the years, reflects our commitment to exceptional customer service and our ability to deliver projects on-time and on-budget.

Additionally, our low employee turnover and the high satisfaction levels within our team further signify our success, demonstrating our dedication to providing a fulfilling and stable work environment while engaging in significant and impactful projects.

Tell us about Capel C.S.

Capel C.S Ltd has been established for more than 30 years during which time we have developed long-term relationships with

our key Clients. We are proud to work on projects that ultimately benefit society and our communities. Our dedication to enhancing the rail network is driven by our commitment to improving stations for passengers, enhancing accessibility in stations and employee facilities, improving travel time traffic and passenger safety and comfort, and more.

The British rail network is renowned for its excellence, and we are dedicated to partnering with companies that continuously seek to elevate its standards while considering the needs of employees, customers, and the environment. Capel is also contracted for refurbishment and building projects beyond railway, having the opportunity to work with Grade II listed buildings refurbishments, residential and commercial projects, and having had many experiences working on projects that require working closely with British Heritage bodies to help preserve important aspects of our history.

How have the products and services you offer developed over the years?

Over the years, our ethos is the same, no matter how small or big a project is, we treat each project as a blank canvas and put the customer at the centre of it.

From residential and commercial buildings, to railway stations and more, we transform and strengthen buildings, as well as help them build from the ground up and more. Clients' expectations have evolved over the years and

we now look to deliver a full construction service including Value Engineering, programme time savings and alternative construction methods as part of our project deliverables. These added value items help develop better relationships with our clients, resulting in repeat business and the establishment of longer working partnerships.

Naturally, we are also constantly improving our H&S and accreditations to help support the labour we provide and our workers knowledge.

What are some standout projects you've been involved in over the years?

Capel C.S has been fortunate enough to partake in many great projects in and outside of railway, including the MTR Elizabeth line, having worked on refurbishing some key stations on the network prior to its opening including Langley, Taplow, Southall and more. We have also worked with Greater Anglia on some great Projects, including the re-opening of their Norwich HQ offices after covid to welcome back a lot of their employees. We have lined up a couple of projects with HS2 and also the GTR PBF project we worked on a while back- delivering passenger enhancement works across the Thameslink network.

When a client comes to you with a particular problem, what's your process for coming up with a solution, and how closely do you work with clients throughout the projects?

When a client comes to us with a problem, especially within the complex environment of the UK railway sector, our ethos is the same – both methodical and collaborative. We start with a thorough consultation to understand their needs, challenges and objectives. We then leverage our industry expertise to evaluate potential solutions, ensuring that our strategies are not only meeting their expectations but also compliant with all safety and regulatory standards.

Throughout the process, we maintain an open line of communication with the client throughout the project. Regular updates, site visits, and meetings ensure that the client

is fully aware of progress and any potential adjustments that may be required. By working closely with our clients from the initial consultation through to project completion, we ensure that the solutions we deliver are not only effective but also precisely tailored to meet the unique challenges of railway sector projects. This collaborative approach is key to achieving successful outcomes and long-term client satisfaction.

What's next for you?

We're eagerly anticipating involvement in HS2 projects. With our recently awarded PC MSA status by Network Rail, we're now positioned to take on an even broader range of significant British projects. Additionally, we're focused on nurturing and expanding our strong partnerships with various TOCs, while also actively seeking to forge new relationships in different areas of the rail network.

How do you work with the supply chain within this sector?

As with our own staff, we actively seek to establish long-term working relationships with our key Supply Chain members. Over time we have developed a number of key suppliers with whom we work with on the majority of our projects. Developing these long-term relationships through mutual trust and co-operation has allowed by us and our supply chain to understand the requirements and aspirations of the other and work jointly to achieve them. At Capel we believe that good work relationships with all members of the project team is paramount in us being able to deliver high-class projects time and time again.

With the coming launch of Great British Railways, how do you anticipate your place within the supply chain changing?

With the launch of Great British Railways (GBR), we anticipate our role within the supply chain will become even more integral. The unified structure will likely lead to stronger partnerships, increased demand for our specialised expertise, and a greater



emphasis on innovation and sustainability. We see this as an opportunity to align closely with GBR's goals, delivering projects that contribute to a modern, reliable, and eco-friendly railway network, while enhancing our visibility and accountability within the industry.



What are some of the biggest challenges this sector currently faces?

The UK railway sector faces significant challenges, including aging infrastructure that requires upgrades to meet growing capacity demands and passenger expectations. Securing consistent funding for these improvements, while balancing the need for environmental sustainability, adds complexity to the sector's financial planning. Additionally, there is a pressing skills shortage, particularly in engineering and technical roles, which hampers the sector's ability to implement necessary upgrades and maintain high service standards. As passenger expectations for punctuality, cleanliness, and convenience continue to rise, the industry must innovate and invest strategically to modernise the network, reduce carbon emissions, and attract new talent, ensuring the long-term viability of the UK rail system.

If you were in charge of the UK rail industry, where would you target investment or look for improvement?

If I were leading the UK rail industry, I would continue to prioritise investment in modernising and expanding infrastructure to address capacity constraints and improve

reliability, particularly in high-demand urban and commuter areas. Simultaneously, I would invest in workforce development to address the skills shortage, ensuring we have the talent needed to maintain and advance the network motivating apprentices and students to consider a career within the sector. Additionally, enhancing the overall passenger experience would be key, focusing on improving safety, reliability, cleanliness, accessibility, comfort and convenience at stations.

How do you make your business a good place to work?

Capel C.S Ltd recognise that our workforce is our main asset. The majority of our key staff and workers have been with us for many years, in some cases since we were established. In order to engender loyalty from our staff it is vital that each person is treated with respect and compassion regardless of their role within the organisation. Constant dialogue between all members of the team is paramount in developing good working relationships at all levels. Additionally, employing individuals best suited to each specific task helps motivate our workforce and reduce worker dissatisfaction. We treat all of our staff fairly and equally. **RP**



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Capel C.S Ltd, established over 30 years ago, specialises in rail network enhancement and diverse construction projects. Its focus is on improving passenger experience, accessibility, and safety.

Want to know more about Capel C.S?

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PC MSA awarded by Network Rail