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### About Rail Europe

- [www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com)  
[www.raileurope.ca](http://www.raileurope.ca)  
[www.raileurope.com.mx](http://www.raileurope.com.mx)  
[agent.raileurope.com](http://agent.raileurope.com)
- Headquartered in White Plains, NY
- Booking service for European rail, offering online resource with maps, schedules and fares for over 50 different train companies across Europe

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### Goals

- Manage tags across portfolio of up to 20 sites
- Expose custom data to multiple 3rd party systems with minimum IT effort
- Reduce tag deployment times
- Quickly make changes to deployed tags to meet new business requirements
- Access timely, relevant data to drive optimizations
- Alleviate demands on IT staff

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### Approach

- Implemented Google Tag Manager
- Use Google Tag Manager dataLayer to capture custom data and make it available to all tags
- Introduced one snippet of code to site pages
- Migrated all tags to single interface

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### Results

- Eliminated unnecessary code to enhance page load speed by 20%
- Slashed wait for tag deployment from months to minutes
- Established consistent tagging throughout all sites
- Streamlined tag management, leaving IT free to focus on core development

# Rail Europe enhances page load speed by 20%, eliminates inconsistencies and saves effort

Rail Europe is the largest distributor of European rail products in North America. Combining maps, schedules and fares of over 50 train companies, it's a one-stop shop for travelers booking European rail travel.

## Excess baggage

Rail Europe operates several B2C and B2B websites geared towards US, Canadian and Latin American markets. To serve the variety of languages, currencies and countries of its customers, up to 20 domains make up the portfolio. The company works with a wide range of marketing partners and technologies, each of which require their own set of tags.

Implementing and maintaining these tags was a complex process because of the significant amount of custom data that needed to be exposed. Web developers were spending valuable time on redundant tagging tasks, diverting resources away from functional enhancement of the Rail Europe websites. And as vendors and technology partners changed over time, tags that had already been deployed would often linger forgotten on sites. Not only would these stray tags burden page load times, but they also potentially exposed proprietary performance data to third parties.

The online marketing team depended entirely on available IT staff for all tag management needs. Whenever a tag-related request came in, it was added to the site maintenance backlog queue and prioritized alongside other bug fixing and enhancement requests. It could take weeks or months for new tags to be implemented, and to make the process easier new tags were deployed with minimum customization.

Because Rail Europe's marketers weren't able to quickly deploy new tags and leverage advanced tag customization options to track events and data points, they lacked valuable insights. Sometimes new campaigns would launch without a specific conversion tag implemented, making it impossible to measure click-through and view-through conversions.

## Full steam ahead

With so many tags and domains to manage, Rail Europe needed a streamlined process for organizing the tags of the brand's many websites at once. As a long-time user of Google Analytics, Director of Online

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*“With Google Tag Manager, we can literally deploy a tag in minutes and provide marketing partners with all the custom data they might need. Now, we’re better equipped to optimize our digital campaigns than ever.”*

**-- Lothaire Ruellan, Director of Online Marketing, Rail Europe**

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Marketing Lothaire Ruellan discovered that Google Tag Manager could meet all requirements without putting a dent in the budget – something no other solution could offer.

Instead of hardcoding several vendor-specific tags to capture the same custom data on the same pages across the site, Rail Europe simply passed the required data once to Google Tag Manager via the dataLayer object. Data then became available for use in any third party tags, making it extremely easy to provide the same level of detailed information to all third party marketing platforms. Google Tag Manager’s straightforward web interface facilitated the migration of all Google and non-Google measurement and marketing tags. Thanks to the flexibility offered by the custom HTML tag, Rail Europe was able to deploy tags from six vendors.

Migrating to a single interface provided the perfect opportunity to clean up the code base too. Unused tags were swiftly removed, so the Google Tag Manager container now holds 80 tags, 35 rules and 34 macros. Rail Europe also upgraded to the new Adwords remarketing tag supported by Google Tag Manager, allowing implementation of a wide range of remarketing campaigns that leverage the rich custom data the company now captures. This contributes to its AdWords strategy so audiences can be managed and targeted more effectively and dynamically.

## Back on track

According to Lothaire, the implementation has put the control of tagging and data back into the hands of the marketing department, leaving the IT team free to focus on new functionalities for the Rail Europe website. Google Tag Manager has made it vastly easier to coordinate tags across all the domains. Because there’s no longer a danger of forgetting to tag certain sites or deploying tags inconsistently, data is much more accurate and actionable. Google Tag Manager offers assurance that every tag is being fired correctly and as it should.

Another huge benefit is that all tags now load asynchronously, so they don’t slow down the sites or get in each other’s way. Each tag fires immediately, calling to Google Tag Manager, while the page simply keeps loading. This has had a direct impact on page load speed – site pages load 20% faster today than they did before implementation.

The process of deriving data is much faster too, making timely, data-driven optimization decisions possible. Because it is so easy to pass data through, the team can better track and target site visitors using more specific parameters than in the past. Meanwhile, Rail Europe is able to pass on many of the benefits of Google Tag Manager to partners and vendors. Using the dataLayer object, it can pass specific variables through to its multiple analytics solutions packages automatically, removing redundancy and improving the accuracy of shared site data.

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## About Google Tag Manager

Google Tag Manager is a free tool that makes it easy for marketers to add and update website tags—including conversion tracking, site analytics, remarketing, and more—with just a few clicks, and without bugging the IT folks. It gives marketers greater flexibility, and it lets webmasters relax and focus on other important tasks. To learn more, visit [google.com/tagmanager](https://google.com/tagmanager)