

Building Accessibility into Every Definition of Done

Summary

Brightline is redefining modern rail travel with a clear promise: a brighter, more seamless experience for every rider. Delivering on that promise requires more than premium trains and accessible stations. It demands a fully connected journey where digital and physical experiences work together without barriers.

With accessibility a core element of its brand promise and already embedded into its physical infrastructure, Brightline partnered with Allyant to elevate its digital ecosystem to the same standard. The result is a unified approach where accessibility is no longer a checkpoint, but a core part of how products are built and delivered, now included in the team's 'definition of done.'

“Accessibility at Brightline is about an end-to-end inclusive experience, ensuring every guest can independently discover, book, navigate, and complete their journey.”

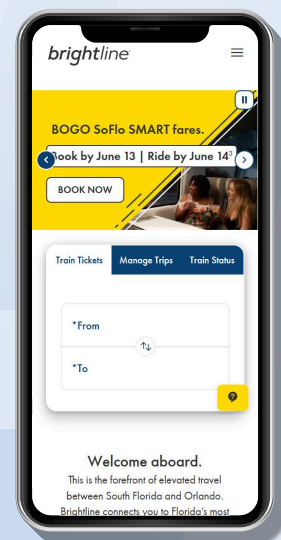
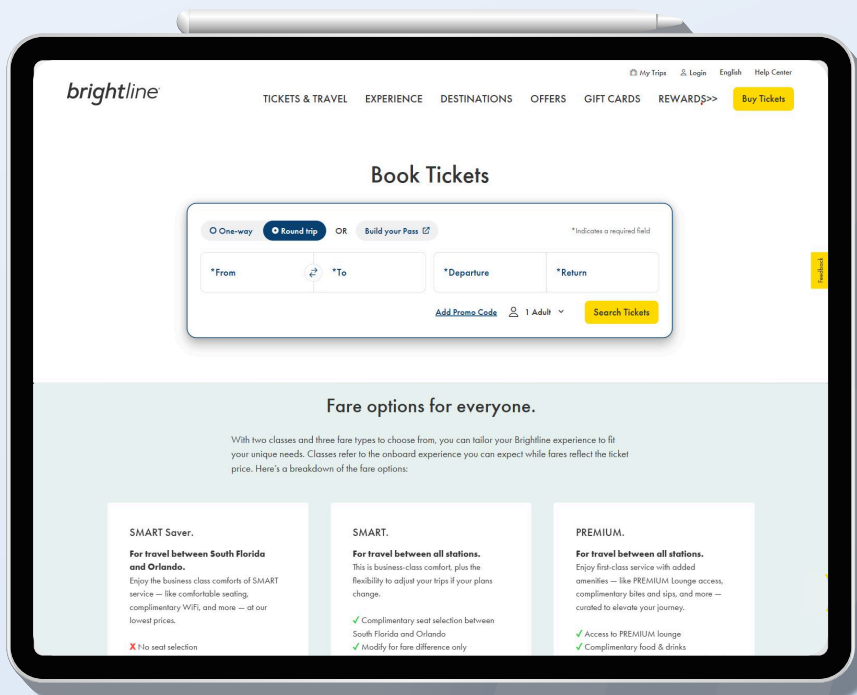


Jennifer Rogers

VP, Digital Product and User Experience, Brightline

Key Highlights

- 1 Accessibility is embedded in Brightline's definition of done, making it a requirement for every digital release, not a post-launch fix.
- 2 Cross-functional ownership ensures accessibility is shared across Product, Design, Engineering, Legal, and Operations.
- 3 Integrated into design systems and QA workflows, accessibility is addressed during development, reducing rework and accelerating releases.
- 4 A unified approach connects digital and physical accessibility, creating a seamless, end-to-end rider journey.



Objective

Brightline's investment in physical accessibility has long been an organizational priority, from station design to boarding experiences. In 2023, when the company re-built its digital channels, they recognized an internal skills gap: knowing how to build websites and apps that were accessible for riders with disabilities.

“With evolving ADA and WCAG expectations, we knew we needed to put accessibility at the forefront of our digital transformation, and we needed an expert partner for support,” says Brightline's VP of Digital Product and User Experience, Jennifer Rogers.

But the challenge extended beyond one-time validation that its experiences met the accessibility standards of the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Brightline needed to ensure accessibility scaled alongside rapid product innovation, and that every touchpoint—digital or physical—felt like part of a single, cohesive experience.

From the company's Product Manager Durim Dermaku, “Our customer journey involves both digital and physical touchpoints—from discovery to booking to arrival at the station and beyond. A breakdown anywhere creates friction everywhere.”

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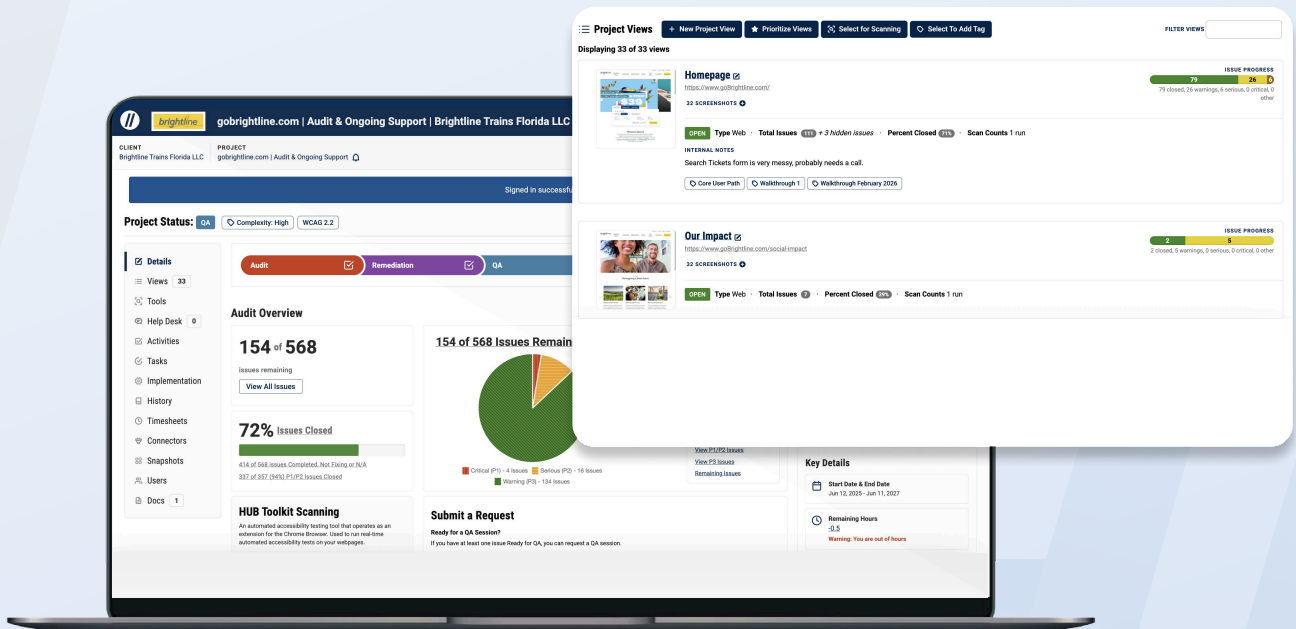
Solution

Brightline partnered with digital accessibility solution provider Allyant.

“From our first meeting with Allyant, we were impressed with the team’s commitment to the end-user experience and its deep specialization in digital accessibility. And Allyant’s solutions scale across both website and mobile app environments,” Rogers adds.

Allyant’s team provides ongoing auditing, code-level validation, internal training, and support for Brightline’s developers, helping close knowledge gaps and accelerate progress. The accessibility management platform reveals audit findings, prioritized by issue, enables on-demand scanning of digital environments, and provides code-level guidance for recommended fixes.

Plus, with Allyant’s commitment to user testing—blind engineers using their native assistive technologies to validate real-world usability—Brightline has confidence its digital touchpoints don’t just meet compliance requirements, but they actually work for riders with disabilities.



Results

With Allyant's expertise, Brightline's team now embeds accessibility directly into every phase of a product's development lifecycle. Teams are no longer retrofitting fixes after launch.

"Accessibility is now part of Brightline's definition of done, a non-negotiable requirement for every digital release," Dermaku says.

Design systems are built with accessible, repeatable components, and accessibility checks are integrated into both automated and manual QA processes. This ensures that accessibility issues are identified and resolved during development, not after deployment. Brightline has reduced rework, enabling faster, more confident releases.

Rodgers adds, "Also important to our success, accessibility is not centralized to just one team. Our Digital Product and UX teams are responsible for accessible design and delivery. Engineering is responsible for implementation. Legal and Compliance monitor risk and ensure alignment with laws like the ADA. Operations monitors the accessibility of our physical experience, and governance is maintained through shared standards, design systems, and our partnership with Allyant."

The most impactful outcome is a more seamless journey for its end-users. Customers can move from digital interactions—searching schedules, booking tickets, receiving updates—to physical travel without encountering barriers or inconsistencies.



Accessibility isn't something we bolt on. It's part of how we build.



Durim Dermaku

Product Manager, Brightline