



Rise of the “rail warriors”: supporting low-carbon business travel gives businesses an advantage in the talent war

Thursday 22 June: UK businesses that fail to offer and encourage low-carbon business travel risk losing out on top candidates, according to new data from [Trainline Partner Solutions](#) (TPS). A survey of UK business travellers highlighted the importance of factoring sustainability into business travel policies, with over half (53%) of respondents stating they'd prioritise a firm that supported low-carbon travel over a competitor that did not. Almost half (44%) also fear failing to offer lower carbon travel options will negatively impact their current company's ability to hire and retain staff in a competitive talent market.

This reflects the fact that 91% now consider sustainability a priority when booking travel - for almost three quarters (72%), their interest in finding lower carbon ways to travel has grown compared to pre-pandemic. Despite this, just over half (51%) said their company currently either doesn't have a specific policy to support lower carbon modes of travel or support is limited to non-existent. As many as 62% said they have taken short-haul flights or car journeys for work when they would have preferred lower carbon alternatives such as rail.

The most common obstacle that would stop those surveyed from requesting lower carbon transport modes is the anticipation of a negative reaction from management, either due to cost (26%) or longer journey duration (24%). To remedy the situation, over half (52%) believe employers should encourage lower carbon travel where possible. Many respondents were also supportive of companies allowing extra time to travel using greener methods (45%).

The data indicates a growing breed of self-identified “rail warriors”, for whom low-carbon travel has become a workplace priority. Respondents indicated this is a priority even over journey length, with seven out of ten respondents (70%) willing to travel by train even if it took significantly longer than by plane. Over half of surveyed business travellers (53%) ultimately believe stronger support for more sustainable business travel would reflect well on the business.

There are already organisations across the UK that are leading by example and have made support for lower carbon travel options an organisational priority.

Russ Avery, CEO and co-founder of Avery & Brown, a sustainable marketing agency, said: “Our organisational commitment to sustainability is the main reason that many of our employees are with us, so we travel for business with purpose and conscience. Domestically, we're a no-fly company, and with international trips, we always scrutinize the environmental impact. My co-founder and I championed this commitment in November 2022 when we took a return train journey from London to Berlin instead of flying – reducing our carbon emissions by 75% compared to if we had flown. We do our best to constantly challenge ourselves and our employees to redefine the typical approach to business journeys.”

Becky Slack, Co-Director of Agenda, an international communications agency, said: “We believe in taking action to minimise our environmental footprint wherever possible. I travel frequently, particularly between Belgium and the UK, so it's important that I set a good example and make it clear it's okay to prioritise sustainability when travelling for business. Rail is my preferred mode of transport for several reasons: it enables me to be more efficient

with my time as I can work while travelling, which is hard to do when flying; the train is more cost-effective due to being able to work while en route; and, ultimately, it's better for the environment."

Liz Emmott, Director of Global Distribution at Trainline Partner Solutions, said: "Our data demonstrates the desire for lower carbon travel is a cross-generational trend and business travellers of all ages identify sustainability as a priority - this is not just confined to Gen Z. Unfortunately, the data also shows many UK businesses still lag behind the curve in promoting and providing the low-carbon travel that their employees crave. As we enter a new era for ESG reporting, the time for action is now: through technology we can support businesses to implement simple and seamless greener travel programmes."

ENDS

About Trainline Partner Solutions

Trainline Partner Solutions – the B2B arm of Trainline – provides innovative rail technology solutions to travel companies of all sizes and rail carriers. Trainline Partner Solutions enables travelers to search, book and manage their trips seamlessly. Our goal is to simplify the complex world of business travel and train ticket sales, so that more companies opt for a greener means of transport. Trainline is a one-stop shop for rail and bus travel that brings together millions of routes, fares and travel times from 270 rail and bus carriers in 45 countries.

About the survey

The research of 1,002 UK employees who plan to travel for work in the next 12 months (not commuting) was conducted among companies with 250+ employees by independent research company Censuswide in April 2023.