

# Rail Sees Popularity Boost as Business Travellers Seek to Avoid “Travel Dead Time”

September 28, 2022



New research from [Trainline Partner Solutions \(TPS\)](#) shows rail travel is seeing a boost in popularity among business travellers, as hybrid working patterns become the norm and employees seek to avoid “travel dead time” at all costs.

More than eight in ten (82%) of business travellers in the UK reported that maintaining productivity is a major consideration, with 44% saying that the ability to stay productive in-transit has become more important since the pandemic and widespread introduction of hybrid, more flexible work patterns.

As a result, 50% of respondents say rail travel makes it easier to stay productive than air or road travel. Among the same group of respondents, 80% agree that rail travel will become a more attractive proposition for business travel over the next 12 months. The survey revealed the top advantages of rail travel over air or road are more reliable access to WiFi and mobile connectivity (chosen by 51% of respondents), a more comfortable physical environment for work (50%), a quieter and calmer experience (48%) and less waiting around (46%).

However, there is a disconnect between what employees want and what their employers offer. While as many as 79% of business travellers believe employers should promote alternative travel options to short-haul air travel and private road travel, 45% reported that their companies could do more to promote rail options.

And businesses agree. Despite virtually all travel decision makers (87%) saying supporting employees to stay productive in transit is an increasingly important consideration for their business, and nearly two-thirds (65%) saying it's more important to make more rail travel options available to employees over the next 12 months, a huge 68% think their company could do more to support corporate rail travel.

Major barriers to delivering rail travel cited by businesses include current travel providers not providing extensive rail options (30%) and the company not deeming it a business priority (21%). Compounding this finding is previous research showing seven in ten employees (71%) said they think businesses that do not offer sustainable business travel set a bad example for future generations.

There is, however, strong support from travel policy decision makers to support the modal shift to rail. While the main factors for providing more rail options were related to environmental factors (61%) and sustainability reporting (51%), productivity compared to air and road travel was the third most significant factor, chosen by 49% of respondents. So much so that almost three in five (57%) said that, within reason, supporting employees to travel in ways that helps them stay productive is more important than the duration of the journey.

Champa Magesh, President, Trainline Partner Solutions, said: "The pandemic has irreversibly changed approaches to work, with people increasingly prioritising staying productive wherever they are and wherever they need to go. While sustainability factors will always be central to the growing shift to rail, the push to eliminate "travel dead time" is clearly impacting transport choices too.

"Not only does rail help business travellers stay connected and better able to manage their work-life balance, it also encourages more sustainable, greener travel choices. It's now up to employers – and their travel partners – to cater for this demand and support their staff to travel how they want to."

Research also shows that rail is not only regarded as an option for domestic business travel – as many as 64% said they would now consider rail for international travel. One-third have already travelled to mainland Europe by rail in the last 12 months for business, almost doubling to 59% for employees aged 18-24 years – showing business rail is especially popular with a younger demographic.

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