

Scotland's rail industry challenged to work smarter together

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The Managing Director of Scotland's Railway has challenged the rest of the industry to help make sure the sector remains affordable and relevant post coronavirus.

Alex Hynes was speaking at the Work Winning Safety, Competence and Training session, hosted by the Rail Cluster project at Scottish Engineering.

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A key part of Alex's role is to ensure there is a focus on engaging SMEs in the supply chain and increasing their involvement in major projects across this large part of the network.

He said everyone needs to work together when it comes to the cost of projects. "No-one owes us a living we've got to make sure we respond to the environment we now find ourselves in," he said.

“We need to tackle the issue of the costs of projects to remain affordable and relevant in this post coronavirus world. The challenge is to make sure we’re all working together to try and meet the challenges.

“This doesn’t mean ScotRail and Network Rail beating up its suppliers and trying to squeeze the margins, it’s how can we work smarter together to deliver better outcomes for passenger and freight at lower cost.”

Alex spoke of the opportunities, particularly when it comes to the decarbonisation agenda, with a need for SMEs to develop and provide a well-trained and competent workforce to deliver safely and delivery well.

He said: “Innovation is going to be key and flexibility. We are committed to increasing the amount of spend on small and medium enterprise and we need to learn from you – we don’t know what we don’t know.

“So, if you’re doing fantastic stuff for clients south of the border or abroad, of you think there is a much better way for tackling a task then let us know.

“This is a two-way street. For me relationships between suppliers and customers shouldn’t be a transactional backwards looking relationship – it should be a strategic forward-looking one. It is one reason why our door is always open.”

The rail industry employs more than 13,000 people in Scotland, working with more than 160 Scottish suppliers.

Attendees also heard that a robust competence and training strategy and effective processes will be essential, with part of the session focussing on safety, training and competence. This included Sopra Steria demonstrating its Competency Training Marketplace (CTM) – a competency management solution integrated with a training marketplace.

Also speaking during the session was SWGR Group Managing Director Raj Sinha, who gave details on the company’s efforts in keeping its people safe and delivering a high-quality service.

Raj also spoke about the importance of digitalising processes within rail in order to improve communication and ensure colleagues are fully informed. SWGR has built in digital processes in order to better communicate with all its frontline colleagues, supply chain partners and clients, while introducing mobile health, safety and wellbeing units on site to further improve access to health checks and mental health support for frontline colleagues.

More than 160 people attended this Rail Cluster Builder session.

Editor’s note: Events like this Rail Cluster Builder session greatly improves knowledge and insight for businesses of all sizes across the rail industry. It also gives an opportunity to see better ways of working, such as Competency Training Marketplace, developed by Sopra Steria – which will further improve competency management for businesses. It was a great event put together by Paul, Shona and the team – well done and we look forward to the next one.

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