

# THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN RAIL

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IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE TO  
ENTICE PASSENGERS BACK TO RAIL

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# 1. WHAT IS EPF?



- Founded in 2002 by 14 associations and bodies for public transport users
- Many member associations have 30 or more years of experience
- Now has 34 member associations in 19 European countries
- Enjoys dialogue with transport professionals and political decision-makers

## 2. ADVANTAGES OF RAIL



- We know them
- You know them
- Do all prospective customers know them?
- “A train is a train is a train” irrespective of who is running it?

# 3. CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS



- It should be convenient
- It should be reliable
- It must give good value for money
- There must be robust contingency plans if things go wrong

## 4. CONVENIENT RAIL or "Easy Rail"



- Easy access - to and from the station and the train
- An easy link in a seamless journey
- Easy to find out about services and tickets, for example via a journey planner
- Suitable rolling stock to make the journey as easy as possible

# 5. RELIABLE RAIL



- The train does what is promised
- Connections are held or reasonable alternatives offered
- Engineering work is sometimes inevitable, but how is it handled? For the benefit of the operator or the passenger?
- Passengers are kept informed

## 6. GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY



- One size may not fit all. Commuters, business travellers or leisure customers?
- A suitable price for the journey
- Role of zonal and flexible tickets, e.g. Interrail
- Rail as part of a package, e.g. hotel, car hire, theatre/sports event

# 7. THINGS MAY GO WRONG



- What are the contingency plans? (e.g. Railteam, "hop on the next train")
- What if there is no "next train" that day?
- Customer care - role of staff
- Passenger rights must be enforced



## 8. WHAT MUST BE DONE - INFORMATION AND DISTRIBUTION

- User-friendly websites
- Use of social media
- Paper-based publicity
- Ticketing and fares system - a balance between simplicity and flexibility
- Rail can learn from the airlines - but is a train more than "a plane on wheels"?
- To what extent can or should ticketing be multimodal?
- Role of European Rail Agency and TAP-TSI

## 9. WHAT MUST BE DONE - STAFF



- Staff must be well-trained, well-equipped and well-motivated
- There must be clear lines of responsibility
- There is still a role for agencies - but they must also be reliable and knowledgeable

# 10. CONCLUSION



- If your customers have a good experience, they will come back; tell their friends, family and work colleagues
- Sometimes things may go wrong - and not just on the railways - but the better the problems are handled, the more likely the passengers are to return and the less negative the message they will spread