



STAFFER
EUROPEAN RAIL SKILLS ALLIANCE



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Making the Rail Sector a great Place to work

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1 INTRODUCTION

One of the major challenges facing the rail sector is the perceived lack of attractiveness of the sector as a whole, caused by misperception of the working conditions, a lack of knowledge about possible careers and the overall image. This lack of attractiveness proves to be a continuing challenge in attracting future talents as well as professionals into the sector. With a growing demand for sustainable transport in the EU and emission reduction targets in the transport sector, it is expected that the number of necessary employees for the suppliers and operators in the rail sectors will continue to increase in the near future. Additionally, the sector is experiencing new challenges such as the continued adoption of digital technologies, which require experts in fields such as cyber security, communication systems and Data collection and analysis methods.

In WP 7.2 of STAFFER, the goal is to create a specific strategy to promote the attractiveness of the railway sector in order to make the rail sector a great place to work¹. This strategy should take into account different actions, such as the events Kontaktmesse Verkehr, UNILIVE and Girls Day, which could be used for promotions of the railway sector. As a task in WP7, it is a part of the larger strategy as a whole, as shown in Figure 1. This report describes the approach of creating such a strategy, which was divided on the basis of communication channels, namely online, social media and real-life events (live events). The goal of this was to go beyond the regularly scheduled events of partners and pure informational events such as the ones presented in the WP 7.2 project description. Lastly, the description of the attractiveness strategy in the working package description implied significant overlap with a marketing strategy for the rail sector and therefore the possibilities of different methods in the personnel marketing and recruitment fields were explicitly taken into account.

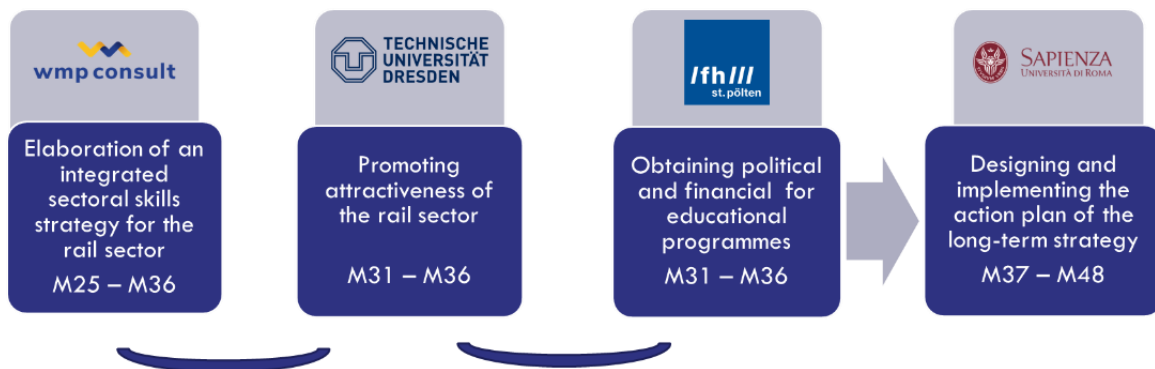


FIGURE 1: OVERVIEW OF STAFFER WP 7 WITH TASKS 7.1-7.4

¹ This should not be mistaken for the initiative Great Place to Work Certification Programme

The basis of this strategy are previous projects and their reports, a questionnaire posed to partners in the beginning of the working package as well as interviews with relevant persons in and outside STAFFER. This was complemented with desk research to discover marketing tools and methods that are currently being employed by the partners and which ones of these may prove to be best practices. Furthermore, this desk research also included research into some of the fundamental steps of potential candidates choosing a career to better assess the underlying problems that the rail sector is currently facing and see which steps must be taken to better promote the sector, but also understand which limitations such a strategy might have. The reports of previous projects had already identified the main challenges when addressing the attractiveness of the railway sector, which meant it was possible to further identify chances and challenges when addressing this in a strategy. Based on this research it was possible to formulate two explicit goals for the strategy, on the one hand to improve the visibility of careers in the rail sector and secondly to improve the image of the rail sector as a whole.

The main efforts of the desk research and the interviews were to identify which target groups and job profiles are most relevant for a strategy and to understand how modern techniques in marketing and recruiting could be used to attract these people to the railway sector. This also meant understanding attractiveness factors of careers in general, therefore research was also conducted in order to better understand the most relevant factors and identify related trends. These attractiveness factors then formed the basis of possible messages for potential candidates of education programmes or careers.

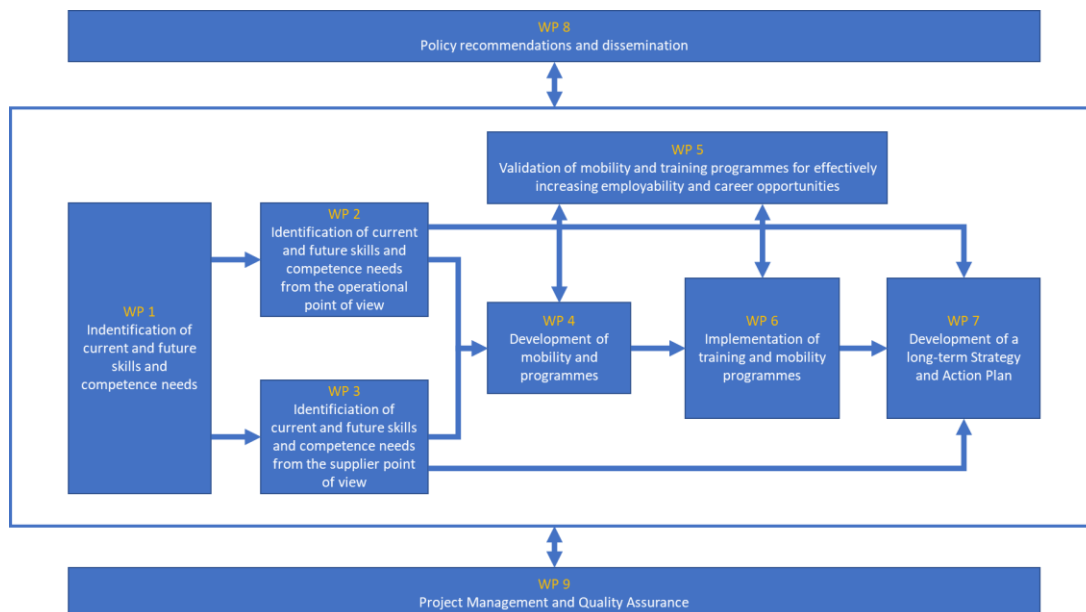


FIGURE 2: STAFFER PRINCIPAL PROJECT STRUCTURE

As shown in Figure 2 shows, WP 7 draws from the results of the WPs 2 (Skill needs from the operational point of view), 3 (skill needs from the supplier point of view) and 6 (implementation of training and mobility programmes). WP 2 and 3 highlighted the importance of the development of future skill needs for both the operator and supplier side as well as the need to increase the attractiveness of the sector as a whole, especially in the light of the future skills demands from different occupational profiles. These included especially Engineers, IT and Technicians. In addition to this, the WP 2 survey found that by far most important challenge from an HR perspective is to increase the attractiveness of railway jobs, with 31% survey respondents placing this particular challenge first and more than 50% of the respondents including it in the 5 most important challenges. Further research on possible messages and relevant information for candidates was conducted through questionnaires, interviews and desk research.

By defining goals, target groups, relevant channels of communication and messages for the target groups, the fundamental building blocks of the marketing strategy were gathered and formulated into a strategy for the rail sector as a whole.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Necessary Steps

The first step of any strategy is to determine what issues partners are currently facing and what issues need to be addressed. It also needs to determine the current state of marketing and analyze their target groups and their messages. This enables more targeted research regarding potential groups, what means they currently have to attract target groups and what messages they currently use.

Following this, the next step is to reflect the answers of partners with current best practices in terms of personal marketing, talent pooling and acquisition and recruiting practices. This includes the current situation regarding human resources at the company, best practices regarding marketing and what recommendations they have in general about this marketing

This information will be collected through a combination of desk research, a questionnaire and interviews with partners. Desk research should enable a basis of understanding of the current problems facing the sector, what efforts have already been made, similar strategies for other sectors.

2.2 Questionnaire

In order to determine the current state of marketing at the partners' institutions, partners were given a questionnaire that should answer some of the basic questions regarding a marketing strategy. This included questions on the following topics:

- **General Information regarding marketing at the institutions**
- **Information on a marketing strategy at the institution**
- **Information on marketing actions and target groups**
- **Questions on Analysis and Controlling**
- **Information on Best Practices and Challenges**

Through the questionnaires, a base line in understanding the partners' individual situation could be assessed and compared to one another. It was also able to determine current marketing mechanisms at the partners and if these could be integrated into a strategy.

In this survey, partners were asked a total of 16 questions, which aimed to determine the initial state of marketing at the partners' institutions. The partners which responded to the survey can be summarized according to the following profiles:

- **10 educational institutions**

- **8 higher education institution**
- **1 professional education institution**
- **1 higher and professional education institution**
- **4 Operators**
 - **3 Railway operators**
 - **1 Infrastructure Manager**
- **3 Suppliers**

2.3 Interviews

Furthermore, interviews were conducted with selected partners, based on the availability of literature and the responses given in the questionnaires. The interviews focus mainly on recruitment of potential candidates, with a goal of clarifying information from the questionnaires and gain more insights into the current recruitment issues for the specific stakeholder, the type of project partner and the recruitment situation as a whole. It should also show which efforts have yielded results and therefore which practices can be determined as best practice.

Interviewees were asked about the following subjects:

- What would be the best description for the recruiting situation at your institution at the moment? What job profiles are being sufficiently filled and which ones do you have trouble finding people for?
- What modern recruitment and communication practices are best practice? What should modern recruitment look like for rail companies? Do you feel that these have been implemented in a significant share of companies?
- Do you think that educational institutions could learn from these modern practices?
- What needs do target groups have and how has this changed recruitment practices? What about target groups in general and more specifically about women and EU and non-EU countries. Are there strategies in place for them?
- Could you talk about a general recruiting strategy at your institution? Does such a strategy exist and could you highlight some points?

The interviewees came from the partners institutions and were from the Recruitment or Employer branding departments of the individual institutions.

2.4 Determining events

One of the deliverables of the strategy was to determine a list of events that could be targeted by marketing actions. Due to the variety of partners within the sector itself, it was chosen that the most fundamental types of events would be supplied on a questionnaire and partners would be asked to supply more differentiated answers through an option in the questionnaire that allowed for this. For the most fundamental events the following three options were determined.

- **Open Days at an institution**
- **Information Days at an institution**
- **Participation in or hosting job fairs**

Open Days at an institution are typically an informational event that allows to look at the inner workings of an educational institution or company. The goal of an open day often goes beyond pure dissemination of information in trying to display the culture of an institution and the people who work at a company.

An Information Day is a general information event in an educational institution or company. The goal of such an information event is to portray a detailed look into a potential educational program or career.

A job or career fair is an event where different employers have the possibility to directly market open jobs or training programmes at their institution. These could be large sponsored events with a large number of companies presenting or a career fair organized at an educational institution more specialized in the field the company works in.

These are some very general marketing events, which capture a large array of different methods or ways in which partners may market themselves. One of the tasks will be to determine a more concrete set of specific events which can be targeted.

3 JOB ATTRACTIVENESS IN THE RAILWAY SECTOR

3.1 Introduction to the Chapter

When analysing the attractiveness of the rail sector, the central question to answer is why the railway sector may not be an attractive sector to work in. This can be separated into two separate research questions: 1. What makes a job attractive or unattractive to work in and which of these factors are currently present in the rail sector? and 2. What issues besides the attractiveness of careers is the rail sector currently facing?

3.2 Job Attractiveness

Job attractiveness is the subject of both market and scientific research and can therefore be answered based on the literature available at the time of this research package. Here again, it is necessary to view this question from two separate points of view.

For one, it is necessary to answer what factors contribute to or hinder a person choosing a career and then compare these to the factors in the rail sector. The available literature is largely attributed to the work by Matthes (Matthes, 2019) where the process of finding of a career has been described in detail. Here, the author aims to answer the central research question “Why are specific jobs not being chosen?”. The central theory here is that the model of the two-factor theory of Herzberg with motivation and hygiene factors is being adapted to attraction and aversion factors of a job. The choice of a career is then analysed taking into account the interaction between different aversion and attraction factors to better understand the choice for a certain career.

Currently, there are several different approaches to explain why candidates choose a certain career. One of these sees this choice as a matter of individual choices and social allocation, which aims to take into account social factors such as family and the social environment. Social allocation can occur through processes such as career related information or experiences within the candidate’s social environment, provision of career related norms and values or stereotyping and role models. Explanations based on social factors see the choice of a career predominantly based on these social values rather than conscious individual decision making.

Other explanation approaches include viewing career discovery as a development process, where individuals undergo different phases based on their development from the young age, through puberty and adulthood or as a learning process, where the improvement of certain skills

or knowledge strengthens the confidence to work with these skills and therefore leads to a career choice. These are then compared to what the individual finds possible to realize.

Other factors such as the relevance of prior knowledge about a career is also discussed, although there is a lack of empirical evidence on the impact of this on the selection of a career. However, there is a conclusion that the media, especially television, play an important role in providing, often dramatized and inaccurate, information about roles such as doctors or models.

Summarizing, (Matthes, 2019) (P.58...59) provides five central influencing factors for the tendency towards a job.

- 1) **The Occupational fit, which means the fit between the own occupational interests and the assumed activities of a job**
- 2) **The Conditional fit, which means the fit between the own occupational and personal goals and the assumed conditions of a job**
- 3) **The Social fit, meaning the fit between the perceived and desired own social position and the assumed social position of a specific job**
- 4) **The expected feasibility, meaning the perceived entry chances (in the institutional sense and the sense of suitability) to a certain job.**
- 5) **The certainty of judgement, which means the subjective assessment of the knowledge of a job and with that the associated security to assess the job correctly.²**

Based on this hypothesis, (Matthes, 2019) studies these factors through analysing jobs in the care sector. The study concludes with a discussion on the original theses. One of the main conclusions is that while jobs may have certain attraction factors such as the social environment and desirable activities, there seem to be aversion factors such as a bad social standing or compensation, which have a much higher weight than the attraction factors. The two greatest aversion factors listed in the work are the conditional fit (such as compensation, working times, etc.) and social fit. These trump other factors, such as the occupational fit, even when the personal interests and the occupational interests largely align with one another. In practice, this means that in order to avoid the dismissal of a certain career, the social acceptance of a person's environment of a certain job choice must be addressed. It is suggested, that this can be done, by improving the general conditions of a job in terms of compensation during training and after training completion, working times and advancement opportunities of persons. This then could change the overall image of a career and therefore increase the social acceptance of the field. This however takes time and due to tariff bound agreements, may not be in the hands of individual

² To avoid the loss through translation, the original translations from German are: Tätigkeitspassung, Rahmenbedingungspassung, soziale Passung, erwartete Realisierbarkeit, Urteilssicherheit

companies. The work also revealed that the image of the company itself plays an important role, which is most affected by the company climate, the possibility of hiring after training completion and if the company offers job security.

With regards to information opportunities, it is suggested to improve the inclusion of parents or guardians into the decision-making process and offer the opportunity of reflection processes, meaning, to offer opportunities for an individual to reflect on experiences about their surroundings and society as a whole, in order to combat stereotypes about male or female dominated jobs but also to question why certain careers would be dismissed outright from the beginning.

The overall process should include the possibility to inform on careers, have the possibility to gain practical experience and to discover strengths and weaknesses of the individual, which on the one hand would improve the discovery of the occupational fit for individuals, but also combat a lack of certainty of judgement about a career. Here, it may also be good to specifically talk to individuals, within the frame of orientation events, about careers that they have excluded for themselves already. The goal of this should not be to lead them towards a certain career, but take the reasons for exclusion seriously and talk about them with an open-ended reflection process.

3.3 Job attractiveness and Image of the Railway sector

How does this compare to the job offers in the railway sector? There are some studies which indicate that the level of satisfaction within the railway sector, such as a 2016 study carried out for the transport sector (Deloitte; coffey; Panteia, 2017). The study essentially compared the current desires in a job of young people to what the transport sector currently offers and assesses the attractiveness of the transport sector as a whole on the basis of literature research and questionnaires. The report revealed that young people first and foremost look for fair pay, work-life balance, decent working conditions and interesting work (Deloitte; coffey; Panteia, 2017) (P.12). With that, it confirms what (Matthes, 2019) describes as the occupational fit and the conditional fit. In addition, it is recommended for companies to provide opportunities to explain what is involved in the range of jobs available, assisting in understanding the occupational fit and the expected feasibility and give people the opportunities of meeting employees. This touches on a second point of the conclusions of the work of (Matthes, 2019), namely to inform on careers and to make sure that there is a certainty of judgement about what the job entails in reality. Furthermore, the work demonstrates that stereotypes of the transport sector are still prevalent, relating especially to working conditions and knowledge limited to specific roles in the sector. Often, young people seem unaware of the range of job opportunities within the sector. The sector also does not have the best perception among people as the image is

formed predominantly by media coverage of strikes and delays impacting railway services, which directly affect passengers, creating a negative reaction. The study suggests to improve the general working conditions of the transport sector (P.53), as they are a key aspect of a labour market's attractiveness, but also to challenge the perception of the transport sector through the use of ambassadors (P. 60), which was also listed as a best practice example.

The "Employment in Rail Report" (ICF Consulting Limited, 2016) focused more closely on the railway sector as a whole and has laid significant groundwork for understanding the problems of the sector as a whole. For example, the report showed that the public perception of the rail sector as a whole is one of the most important factors with regards to its attractiveness. In turn, this image is largely based on the performance of rail companies as service providers. This again reflects the importance of social fit as described in (Matthes, 2019).

The report lists, that the rail sector is especially attractive when it offers better perspectives compared to other employment and better working conditions, i.e., when it offers secure employment, good remuneration, good career development opportunities, good working conditions and a positive corporate climate.

It is not considered attractive when there is a lack of investment in infrastructure and rolling stock, a lack of improvement in working conditions, a lack of vision of the future of the company and the sector, frequent management changes, significant restructuring leading to redundancies and recruitment freezes, insufficient career development opportunities and difficult working conditions.

The image of the rail sector within a country large depends on how well the main service provider is being seen within that specific country. Very often, the image of the railway sector is being shaped by the largest operator and with that the public perception becomes a cornerstone in the image of the railway sector as a whole and the attractiveness to work within this sector. The factors themselves that are important to this regard are the level of investment and quality, reliability and punctuality of the service as well as the quality of customer service and the user-friendliness of facilities, as well as the regulatory environment and the impact of industrial actions and the level of understanding of the public of the reasons behind such actions. This highlights both a necessary action and a limitation of an attractiveness strategy. On the one hand it shows, that the railway sector as a whole is viewed mainly as the largest operator and less the suppliers that are associated with it. On the other hand, it also shows that the actions which will have the most impact on attractiveness may be limited to the largest service provider, rather than other stakeholders.

Furthermore, there is a limited view on the number of possible career opportunities within the rail sector itself, which may be skewed towards jobs in operation. This implies, that current topics such as the need for and the creation of more automation, software engineering and cyber security may not be primarily associated with the railway sector. This shows, that there is a need show that these fields do play an important role for the rail sector and that careers exist which provide solutions for these challenges on the railway suppliers' side. These careers could include the development of digital solutions and systems for more automation, improved software solutions for vehicles and infrastructure, or careers related to project planning and steering, which aim to manage projects economically, benefitting society as a whole. Highlighting these careers and underlining their importance for the realisation of sustainable transport solutions, may raise their visibility and a career option for younger generations.

The employment in rail report found that there are significant differences between how the rail sector is viewed from the outside and the inside. One of the key conclusions from the employment in rail report was to address the negative media coverage of the rail sector and to overcome the “insider-outsider phenomenon”. This phenomenon showed, that the rail sector is viewed very differently from the inside compared to the public perception. When asked about the public image and their own image, almost half (47%) of the rail sector responded that the public view of the sector either “negative” or “very negative” and only 16% responded with “positive” or “very positive. When asked about the overall image of employment in the sector, 28% replied with “positive” or “very positive” whereas 38% replied with “negative” or “very negative”. Here it is also necessary to differentiate between the different occupations. For example, those who rate the attractiveness quite negative are typically on-board operational staff, such as drivers and on-board crew, especially for drivers. The most positive views in turn are offered by those employees who do not directly deliver services, such as administrators, managers or supervisors, traffic managers, IT or telecommunication support as well as traffic maintenance (ICF Consulting Limited, 2016). From this, it can be concluded, that a strategy that aims to show the attractiveness of the rail sector as whole will have to take into account the different experiences of the different types of staff. One form of attractiveness may not correspond with the reality of several job profiles who may have different work experiences.

In the employment in rail report, participants were asked about what makes working in the rail sector attractive. Here it depends largely on the occupation, country and region. For example, salaries in Germany for some occupations in the rail sector are higher in other sectors, so the same occupations may be more attractive from a financial perspective. This however is at least partially compensated by collective agreements, which offer higher levels job security. In Italy, the situation is similar. While salaries are typically competitive, in some cases, such as engineers,

could be compensated better in other sectors. However, the stability of the sector plays an important role and is able to compensate for these. In the Netherlands, engineers are typically compensated better in the aerospace or automotive sector which are in turn seen as much more attractive and have a much better image.

Figure 3 demonstrates these effects clearly. It can be seen that job security is the most important factor when working in this sector, followed by good working conditions and overall pay and benefits. It shows, that job security can be used as a key component for prospective employees, candidates and current employees within an attractiveness strategy. The same can be said for the good working conditions in a company. It ties into the attractiveness or unattractiveness, namely a company that fosters a positive working environment with a clear plan and consistent management choices.

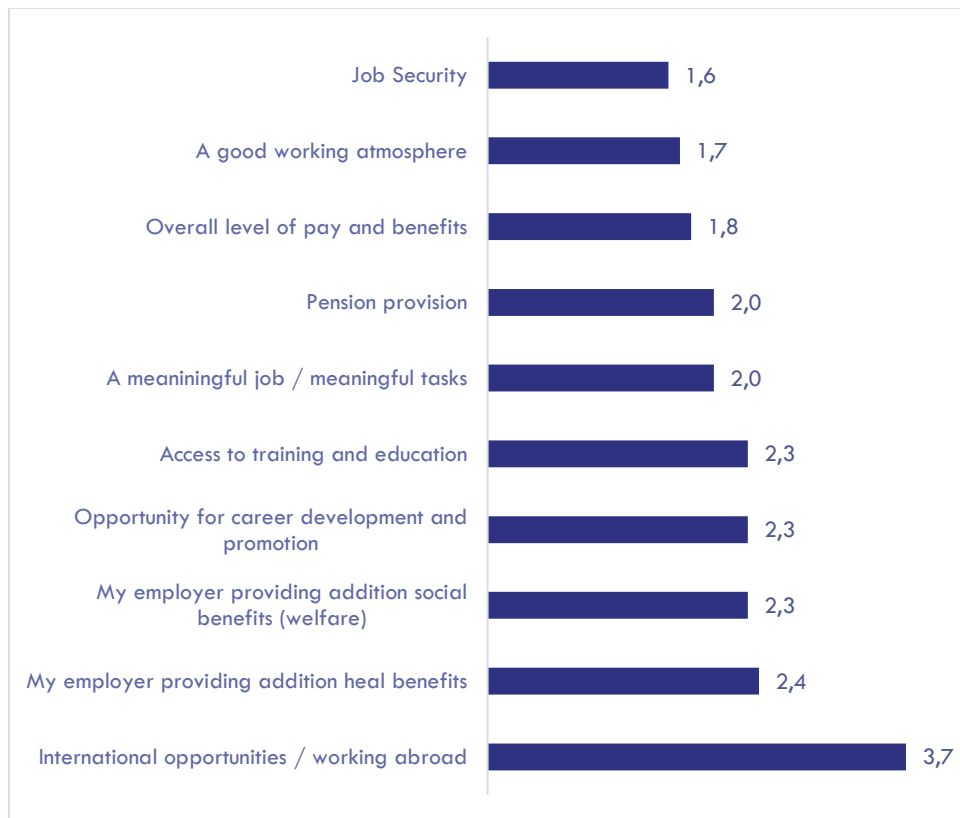


FIGURE 3: IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT FACTORS TO A CAREER IN THE RAIL SECTOR (1= MOST IMPORTANT, 5= LEAST IMPORTANT) (ICF CONSULTING LIMITED, 2016)

When asked about what can be done to improve the attractiveness, a share of 77% of respondents suggested to improve salaries and 48% to improve benefits. Providing a better work life balance was suggested by 42% and improving career opportunities and working hours was suggested by 40%.

Especially in those roles with shift work, such as train drivers and maintenance call for improvements in pay (91% and 89% respectively). These job profiles are also those that are more likely to ask for better benefits, better work-life balance and working hours. Maintenance workers additionally suggest to improve the physical working conditions.

These factors pose significant challenges when creating a strategy to promote the attractiveness, especially in these fields as they reduce the chance of a social, occupational and conditional fits which jobs need for a higher attractiveness. In addition, this also shows the limitations that such a strategy has, when promoting especially for these career paths.

An interesting effect however can be observed from the responses of apprentices in the sector. While better pay is still the most desired improvement (65% of responses), external communication was in the second spot, with 53% of the responses.

It is also necessary to consider that there are varying perceptions of the attractiveness of working in the rail sector among employees with different years of experience. For example, employees with less than five years of experiences have a more positive view of the sector compared to those employees with the most years of service (15 to 20 years). The latter may have such a negative view due to the significant changes over the decades including factors like the changing regulatory environment, changing terms and conditions in the employment.

The employment in rail report further analyses the possible improvements that could be made across the sector to enhance its attractiveness, which are already offered by different operators and suppliers in Europe. These include mobility benefits for free or reduced-price travel, ongoing training and lifelong learning, measures which benefits to support work life balance, flexible working time models and measures to limit overtime and experimentation with different salary models, particularly in those areas with skills shortages to compete with other sectors requiring similar skills.

Regarding other factors, such as improving company cultures, the majority of respondents say that the commitment to the company is high, the company is committed to communicating a positive image of the rail sector and that the company cares about employee welfare. However, there are mixed feelings about creating a stronger sense of community and sharing and discussing ideas and new approaches in the company. Relationships with colleagues are also rated positive (76% rate it as positive vs. 8% negative), which however is also dependent on the position within the company. Railway drivers and on-board staff will typically have a lower rated relationships with colleagues than other positions.

Overall, it can be concluded that the rail sector is no different than other sectors when it comes to the factors which make a job or career attractive. Most employees value a secure job and fair remuneration and benefits within a company. Employees and companies tend to perform best, when the company offers competitive wages compared to other sectors and can offer employees safe employment without restructuring. The image of the rail sector is seen more positive by its employees than the outside and is largely determined by the largest or well-known service provider. This already offers some insight into a possible strategy. The strategy should make sure that exactly the important points of job security and where applicable competitive wages play an important role. Furthermore, employees largely value the company culture, which should also be highlighted.

However, there are several unattractive aspects which must be highlighted or improvements that have been suggested. Most improvements focus on the level of pay, work-life balance and physical working conditions. Furthermore, employees who are most likely to suggest these improvements, are those which also rate other aspects of their job lower, namely railway drivers, on-board staff and infrastructure maintenance. These are for example also related to relations with colleagues or the overall rating of the company. This in itself poses a difficult challenge for a marketing strategy. Since these are jobs with a lot of openings, job security may already be a given, therefore a strategy focusing on this may not entirely be effective. It is proposed though, that the social fit is tackled for these employees, elevating their image within the company and for passengers and outsiders alike.

The response that deserves some more attention is the demand for improvement in external communication by the apprentices. This may be because they have not been in the sector for too long. Employees who have not been working in the sector as long, may still have an incomplete view of the sector or a more positive one, so their positive experiences may not coincide with (perceived) negative experiences throughout several years of work within the same occupation (ICF Consulting Limited, 2016). This however does not change the necessity of such a strategy and it would be necessary to see if these effects are a general experience by people over different sectors.

3.4 Job attractiveness as a matter of generation

A second point, building on this is to analyse generational trends within a population to gain a better overview of what factors are important to the available workforce as a whole. On the one hand, a trend can be observed that there are some differences between generations. Although the division between generations on the basis of year of birth may seem instinctual, it is not without its limitations and may be somewhat generalized. On the other hand, much of the

literature currently available on intergenerational trends is based on this system, so it will be used throughout this report.

To start, it is necessary to understand whether or not different generations or age groups value different factors of a job as more or less attractive than others. As Figure 4 shows, the differences between generations of workers are noticeable, but personal stability and a meaningful job occupy the first and second position and the need to help other people and personal contact in fourth and fifth position as attractiveness factors for careers over all generations with little variation. These again reflect the need for a socially accepted position within society itself and a need for a personal safety net. High income and the opportunity of advancement, while less important, still occupy a high ranking especially for younger generations who may still have a lot of uncertainties with regards to their future career. Flexible working hours do not yet have a high importance compared to other factors. This should also highlight that while certain new work forms such as working from home or flexible work to accommodate a family are important to consider when applying for a job, the most relevant factors are still job security, social acceptance and fair remuneration. This further strengthens the findings in (ICF Consulting Limited, 2016).

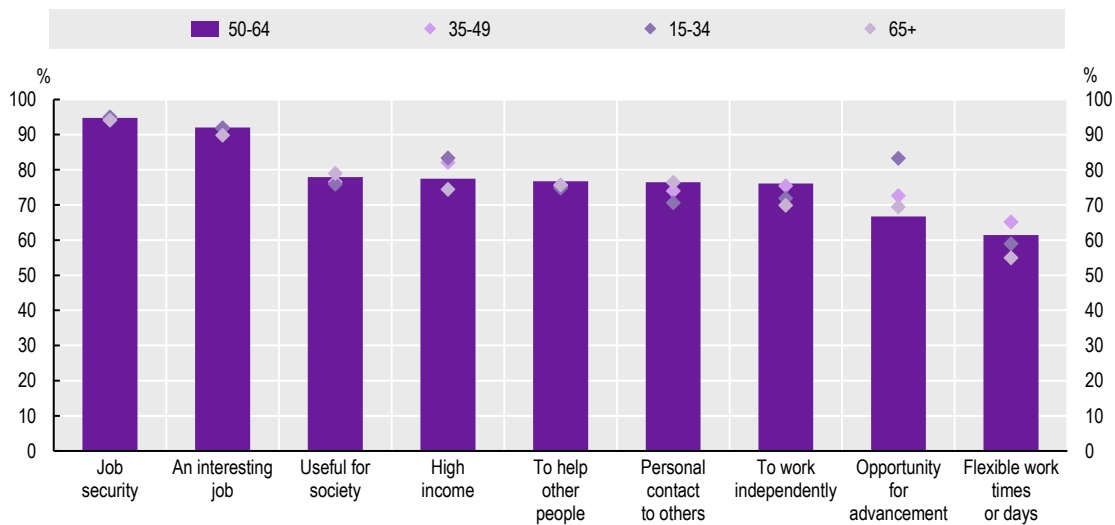


FIGURE 4 ATTRACTIVENESS OF JOB ATTRIBUTES BY AGE GROUP (OECD, 16. DECEMBER 2020)

3.5 Further Challenges

The rail sector is currently facing several challenges, which are in part related to the image of the rail sector as a whole and in part to general societal developments. These challenges should not be omitted, in order to understand the limitations of this strategy.

One of the major challenges is the current demographic changes that the European society is undergoing as a whole. With an ageing workforce, the sector will not be able to fill the opening

positions with the available number of workers from younger generations. This causes two separate challenges: one the one hand, there are not enough specialized people available, which are required to fill these positions at a company, on the other hand, potential candidates now have more negotiating power when entering the labour market. This requires new approaches to recruiting, which are well documented in literature and will be further explored throughout the report.

Challenges from the operator and supplier point of view have been addressed in STAFFER in WP2 and WP 3 respectively. For railway operators and infrastructure managers, these trends were ranked of importance and shown in Figure 5. This figure shows that the most important trend is to increase the attractiveness for customers, which in turn is as highlighted in 3.3, is a reflection of the attractiveness of the railway sector as a career choice. Several other points relevant to attractiveness, such as punctuality, door-to-door mobility solutions and increased safety and security highlight the need for an increase in attractiveness in the rail sector.

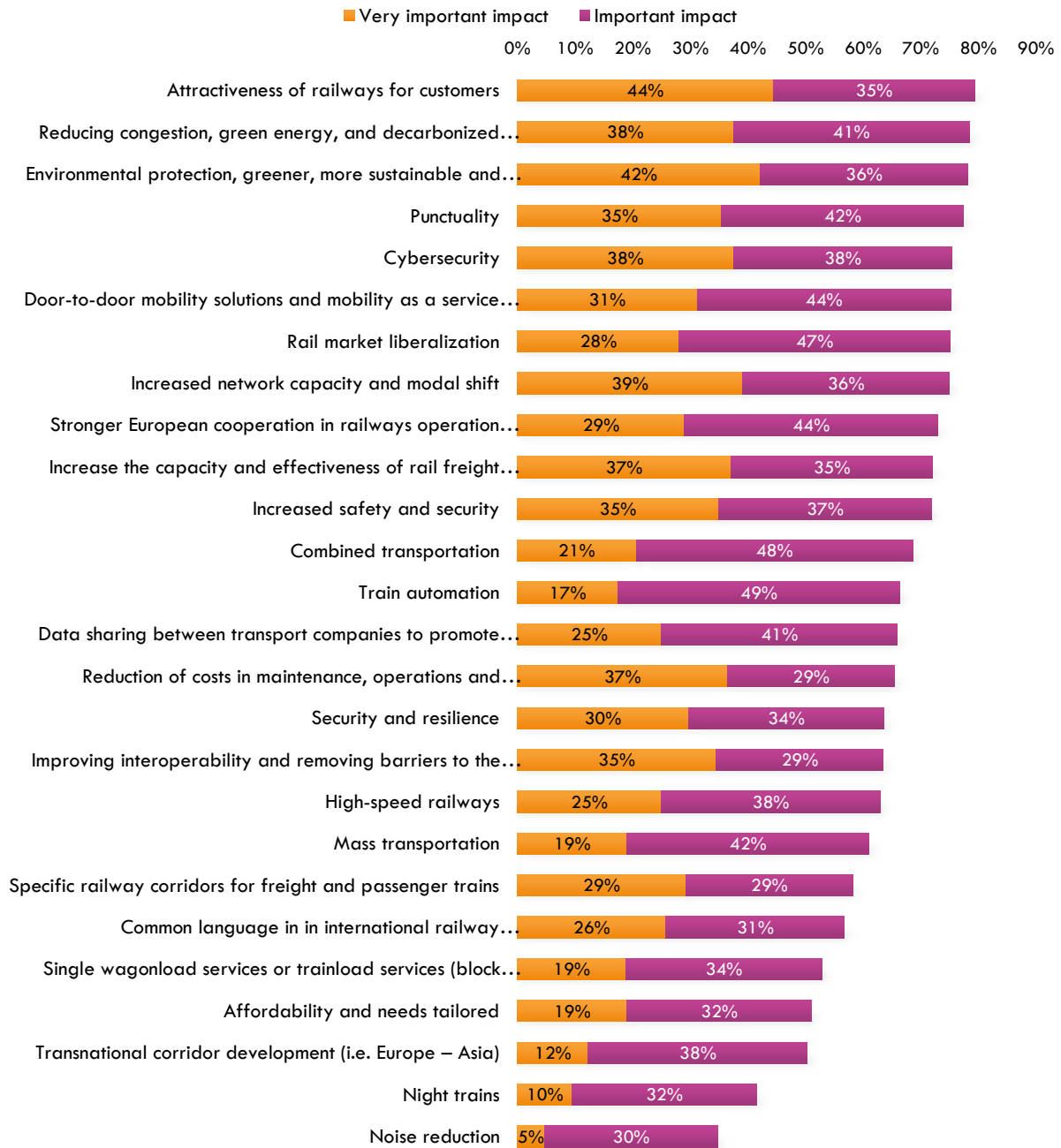


FIGURE 5: RANKING OF FUTURE TRENDS BY IMPORTANCE – TRENDS AND OPEN ISSUES REGARDED AS HAVING A VERY IMPORTANT AND IMPORTANT IMPACT ON FUTURE RAILWAYS BY 2030(N=82)

A second challenge is that the European Railway sector is very diverse in the challenges that are being faced. This was already highlighted in the Employment in Rail Report (ICF Consulting Limited, 2016). Due to the nature of the stakeholders within the sector (operators, suppliers, educational institutions etc.), the relevant target groups may differ greatly. This in turn requires different approaches with regards to the communication strategies and benefits offered to these target groups. Furthermore, the strategy also needs to take into account the different situations

in the different partner countries to take into account the individual challenges but also solutions that partners have developed.



4 BACKGROUND AND PARTNER INPUT ON MARKETING STRATEGIES

4.1 Contents of a Marketing Strategy and Marketing at Partner Institutions

4.1.1 Contents of a Marketing Strategy

The purpose of a marketing strategy is to achieve several goals (such as increasing the number of purchased products) through different marketing or advertising actions. A marketing strategy is composed of several steps:

1. **Definition of the Initial Situation**
2. **Definition of the Strategy's Goals**
3. **Determine Target Groups**
4. **Define Communication Contents and Strategy**
5. **Define the Budget**
6. **Define Instruments and Measures**

The definition of the initial situation has already been clearly described in Section 3 therefore the main focus of the strategy should be the focus on the strategy's goals, the target groups and the communication contents. Partners will also have to be asked about their budget in order to assess whether or not it is possible to carry out certain measures. Based on these instruments and measures can be defined.

The goals of a strategy will be determined through desk research and questionnaires with partners, as understanding their needs will be crucial for this. Possible goals could include very concrete or SMART goals such as a higher number of applicants to companies or study programmes, but they could also be targets such as improving the image of the sector. Defining goals is the most important step, as this determines what is meant to be achieved by a marketing strategy. However, it also poses challenges, as effects of such a strategy may not be measurable easily and may only be taking effect after several years of the strategy's implementation. Target groups will also be examined together with partners and desk research. Possible target groups for the sector range from young people, still in school and deciding on a career path, to young professionals who are starting out their career, to job changers and professionals who are seeking new employment in the railway sector, to marginalized groups such as migrants and refugees as well as underrepresented groups such as women or people with a migrant background. Communication strategies involve both the messages as well as the method of communication with the target audience. This includes messages about the branding of the individual



institutions or sector as a whole, or what kind of core messages the sector wants to communicate, the information about a study program, apprenticeship or job and the type of medium that will be used such as live events or online communication. Communication strategies will be a combination of desk research, partner questionnaires and interviews with relevant persons. An overview of possible approaches to communication strategies is shown in Sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5. The budget will be determined through questionnaires to the partners. The final instruments and measures can be determined through questionnaires, interviews and desk research.

4.1.2 Partner Input

One of the main questions to ask partners in this case was on the general situation about marketing at their institution. In the context of this report and this chapter, questions 1, 2 and 5 are most relevant.

Question 1: Do you have a department at your institution that is responsible for marketing of your program/ courses/ jobs at your institution?

Most partners have a marketing department and one that indicated no, disseminates results through a central department.

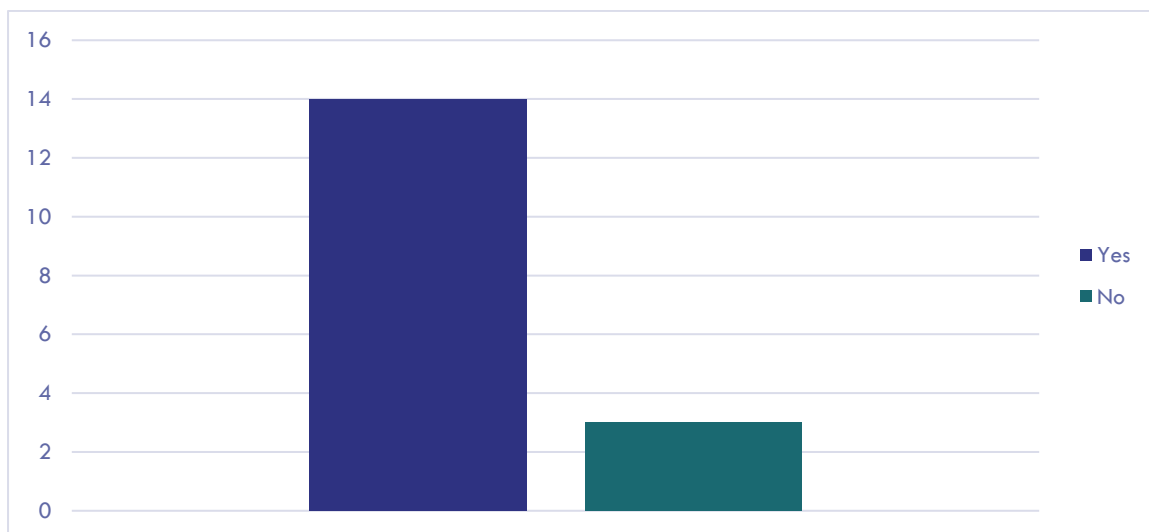


FIGURE 6: DO YOU HAVE A DEPARTMENT AT YOUR INSTITUTION THAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MARKETING OF YOUR PROGRAM/ COURSES/ JOBS AT YOUR INSTITUTION?

Question 2: How high is their budget? How many people work in this department?

From the partners that chose to answer this question, the typical range of employees is between 1 and 10, with research and education institutions typically making up the lower end of these. One partner has indicated that 30 people work in their marketing department- In Figure 7 it

can be seen that several partners could not provide an answer to the question, indicated by the number of responses with “zero” number of people working in this department. The budget of partners has been omitted from this report.

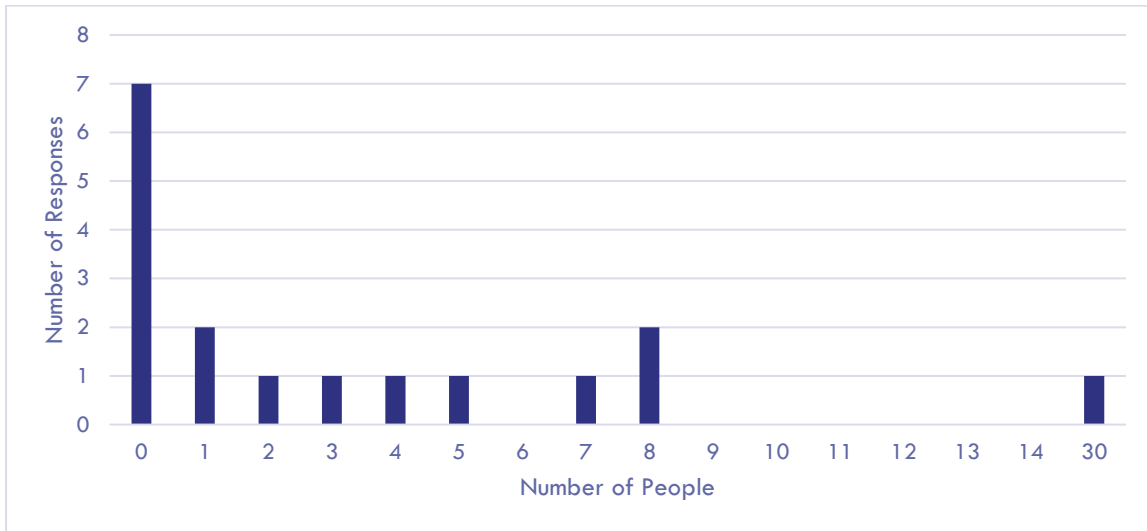


FIGURE 7: HOW HIGH IS THEIR BUDGET? HOW MANY PEOPLE WORK IN THIS DEPARTMENT?

When asked about a general marketing strategy, 14 out of 17 respondents say that there is a general marketing strategy in place, however the institutions still market themselves through individual marketing actions (see Figure 8). 15 partners responded that the main goal of these actions is to gain more applicants, 11 respond with a higher visibility of the programme and 10 with the awareness of the subject of transport and mobility. These are followed by a higher number of female applicants (8) and showing the impact of a study (7, 6 of which are universities). Other targets include the targeting of recent and new graduates, as well as monitoring areas, achieving recruitment targets in line with employment and diversity policies and lastly aligning with social events or milestones (see Figure 9). The success of these measures is being measured in a higher number of applicants, more visits to websites and number of visits to events organized by the institution. Others include a higher retention rate (7). Lastly two partners also responded with a higher number of students who decide to attend courses and an increased candidates after communication events (see Figure 10).

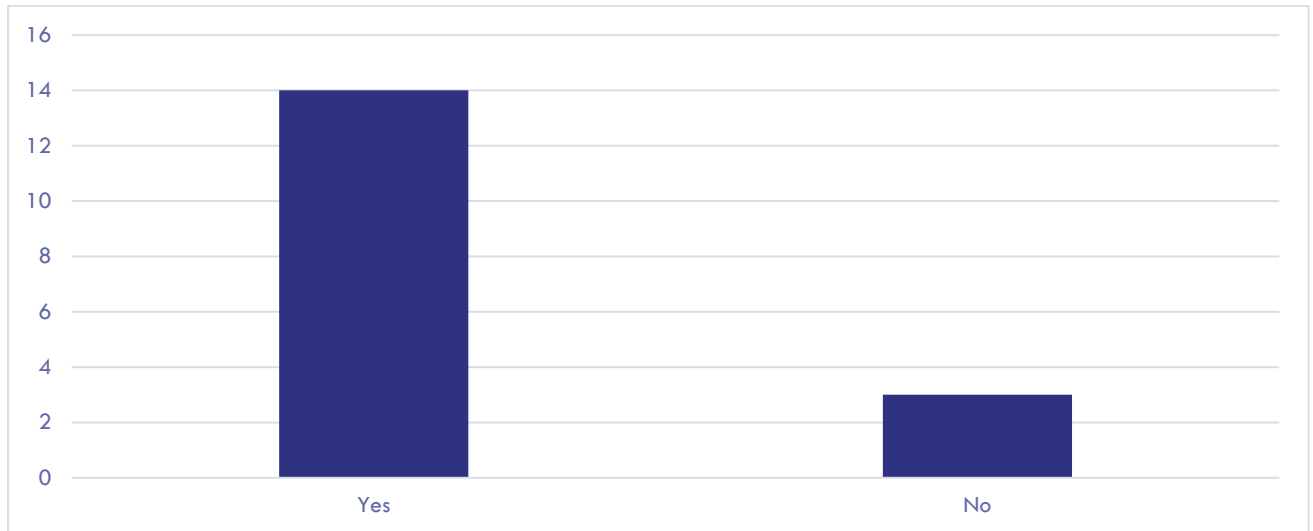


FIGURE 8: 5.1 IS THERE A STRATEGY IN PLACE TO PROMOTE YOUR COURSES / PROGRAM / EMPLOYMENT / INSTITUTION?

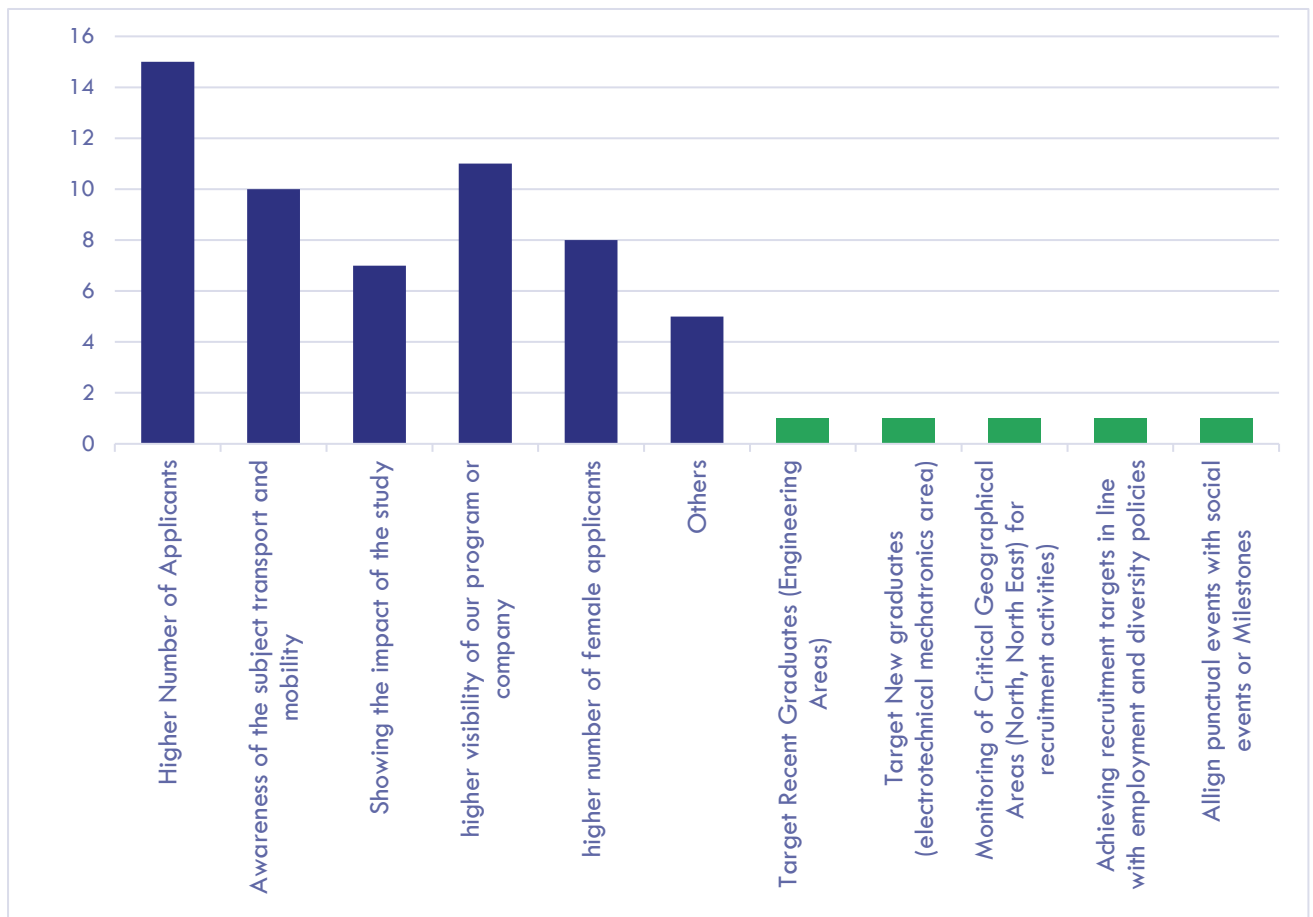


FIGURE 9: IF YES, WHAT GOALS HAVE BEEN SET IN THIS STRATEGY?

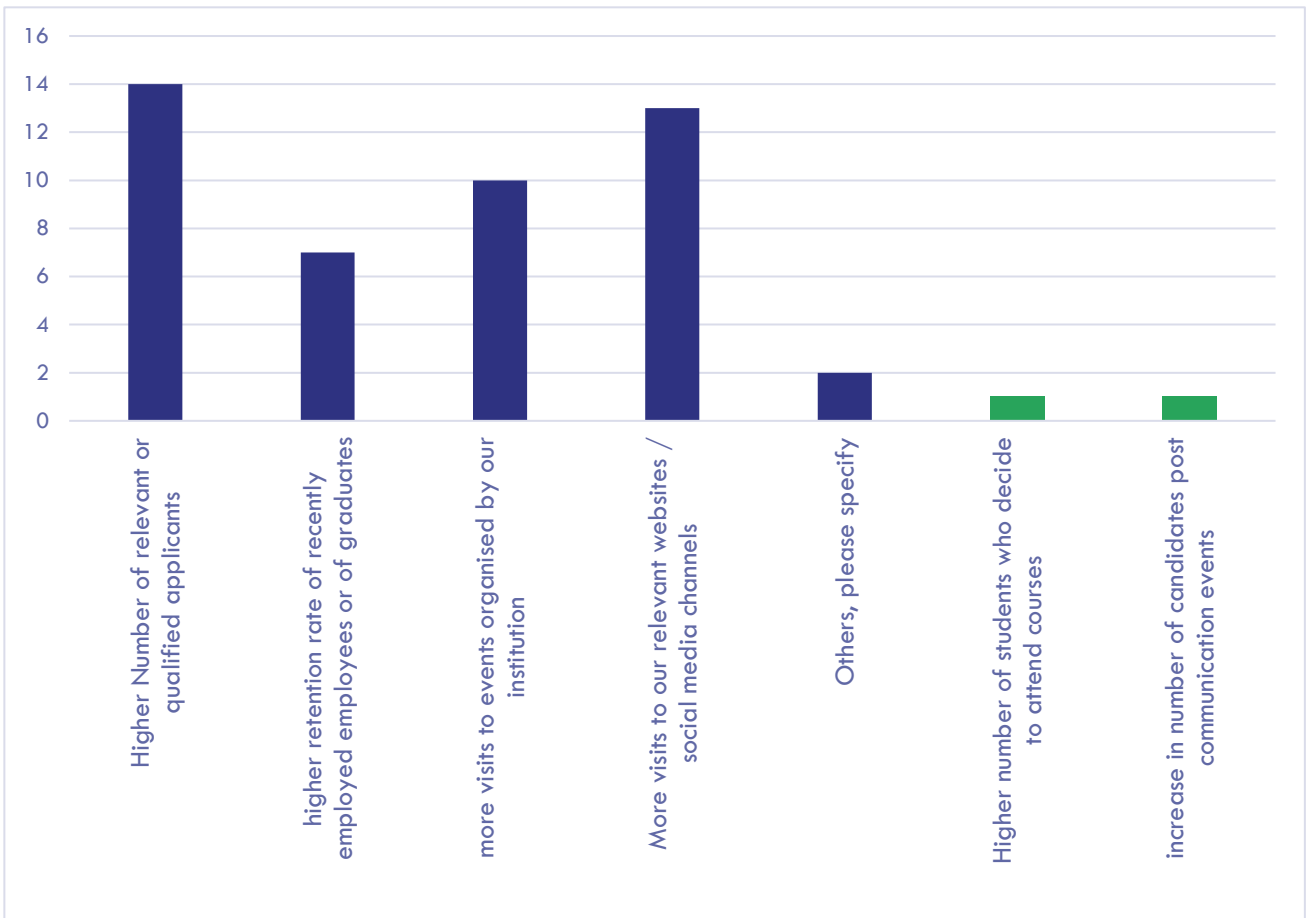


FIGURE 10: 5.3 IF YES, WHAT METRICS ARE BEING USED TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS/ PROGRESS OF THIS STRATEGY?

4.2 Target Groups

In this section, potential target groups and the appropriate methods of communication will be discussed. From previous work it can be seen that there are many different target groups for the rail sector, ranging from teenagers and secondary school students, to university graduates and professionals. Furthermore, underrepresented or marginalized groups form other special groups which may deserve extra attention. Target Groups can be categorized through several different means, however the two most important ones used in relevant research are age and the stage of their career.

Categorizing target groups according to generation has already been discussed to some extent in section 3.4. This showed that the attractiveness factors of different generations and in different countries largely align. However, there are also differences in how generations prefer to

work and what motivates different generations to work in a certain job or career. Some of these attitudes and motivations have been summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1: ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATIONS OF DIFFERENT GENERATIONS TOWARDS WORKING LIFE

Baby Boomers (1946-1965)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal Oriented • Optimistic • Workaholic • Team Oriented • Uncomfortable with conflicts • Personal growth • Personal Gratification • Value Money • Job Prestige • Loyal • Seek Flexibility
Generation X (1965-1979)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techno-literal • Positive attitude • Goal oriented • Multi-tasking • Think Globally • Self-reliance • Just a job • Flexibility • Environment • Job Prestige
Generation Y (1980-2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun work environment • Willing to learn and work • Work-Life balance • Working flexible and remote • Independent working • Goal oriented • Search for Meaning
Generation Z (1995-2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High standards for working conditions • Regular feedback and structure important • No long-term company commitments • Importance of Work-Life balance and separation • Importance of self-fulfilment • Importance of collegial work environment • Goal oriented • Desire to work internationally
Generation Alpha (2010-2025)	Not yet certain
Sources: (ICF Consulting Limited, 2016) (Nishimoto, et al., 2020) (Brower, 2022) (Rilke, 2023) (Maas, 2019)	

This is not without criticism however, as this is a simplification of generations, which may lead to wrong conclusions. Furthermore, desk research has shown that relevant articles or literature may mention different factors for the same generation or show significant overlap in factors between generations. Table 1 also shows an overlap in the timeframe for each generation as a result of varying information in literature. More importantly, it is necessary to analyse some of the mentioned aspects in more detail and also recognize that these generations will go through the same life stages as their generations before them did.

A strategy may therefore also include suggestions for monitoring mechanisms of the attitudes of different generations. Some sources, such as (Maas, 2019), are already predicting the working attitudes of Generation Alpha, which may seem premature, however, trying to understand this generation before they join the workforce, may make certain necessary transitions for both the new generation and the employers easier.

From the different sources, the following trends can be observed for the foreseeable future:

- **The importance of purpose in a job**
- **Independent and flexible and remote working**
- **The desire for more self-fulfilment**
- **Work-life balance or separation**
- **Less long-term commitments towards individual companies**

Due to the diversity of actors in the rail sector, each actor has specific target groups. Which ones are most relevant to which actor will be assessed throughout this work package. Through research, the following groups have been identified so far:

- **Teenagers (15-16 years)**
- **Secondary School Students (17-18 years)**
- **University Students and Graduates**
- **Professional Trainees or Apprentices**
- **Professional Training Program Graduates**
- **Young Professionals**
- **Job Changers**
- **Professionals**
- **Women**
- **Parents**
- **Primary School Students**

In the questionnaire, partners were asked to list their target groups. Regarding target groups, the most important target groups across all partners is young professionals (13), followed by university students and graduates and women (12), This is then followed by secondary school students (17-18 years old) with 11 responses. Job changers and professionals were mentioned with 9, as they are not a primary target group for university partners. Lastly, teenagers (15-16 years old) (6), Professional trainees (7) and Professional training program graduates (6) make up the third group, which is also understandable, since these are typically employed for a specific job profile (see Figure 11).

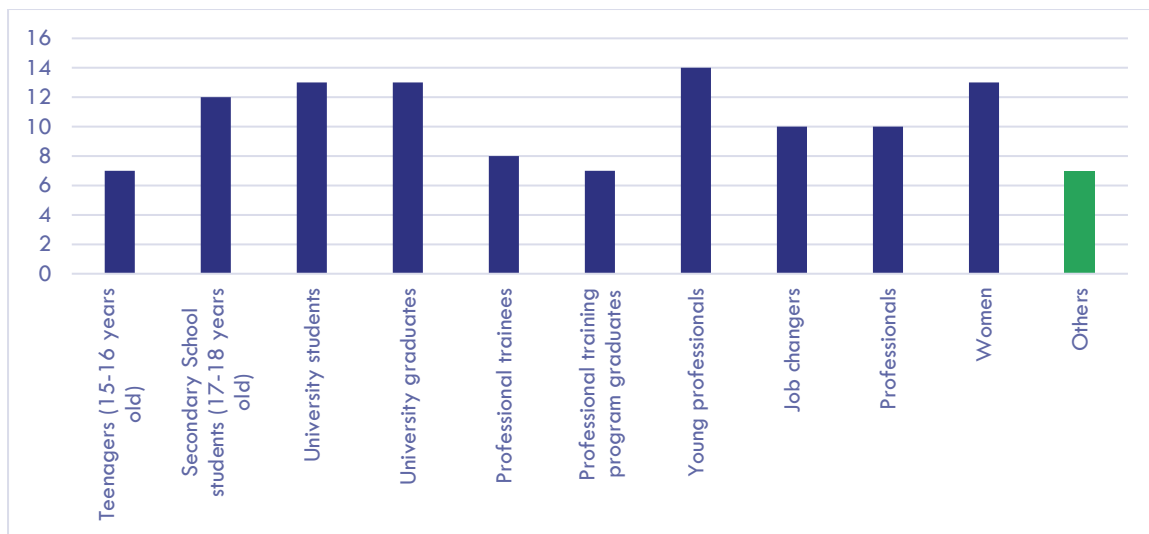


FIGURE 11: 8 WHO ARE YOUR TARGET GROUP(S), SELECT THOSE THAT ARE APPROPRIATE

Other target groups include foreigners, disabled people, people from priority neighbourhoods, seniors and students in their voluntary social or ecological³ years. The complete list can be seen below.

- **People with immigration backgrounds**
- **EU/ Non-EU Nationals**
- **People with a High School diploma who want to pursue a career in the railway field**
- **Disabled People**
- **People with socially disadvantaged backgrounds**
- **Seniors**
- **Students in social or ecological years (see footnote)**
- **Students in orientation years**
- **Parents**

³ The voluntary social or ecological year is a form of the voluntary social year in Germany where the voluntary work program is especially focuses on work with ecological aspects. (Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben, 2022)

4.3 Channels and Means of Communication

One of the most important parts of a possible strategy are the appropriate channels of communication for such a strategy. There are several channels of communication available to reach the target groups, which include real life informational and promotional events at the individual or external partner institutions, online and social media marketing and classic marketing through out-of-home advertisement or tv spots. The goal of this section is to determine the appropriate channels to target for partners by analysing which channels are currently being used, how target groups use certain channels and what channels are appropriate at which stage of a candidate’s journey. This was addressed one hand by desk research, whose aim it was to determine methods which may be used for effective communication in a marketing strategy. This included, but was not limited to, understanding how target groups inform themselves on careers and which channels may be the most effective in this regard. This also meant to reflect on the role of real-life events, such as job or university fairs, and online communication through websites and social media. As a second measure, a questionnaire was conducted amongst project partners. The questionnaire was used to determine the different channels they use to market study programmes or employment at their individual institutions. The results of the survey can be seen in Figure 12, which show what means of communication are currently being used by project partners.

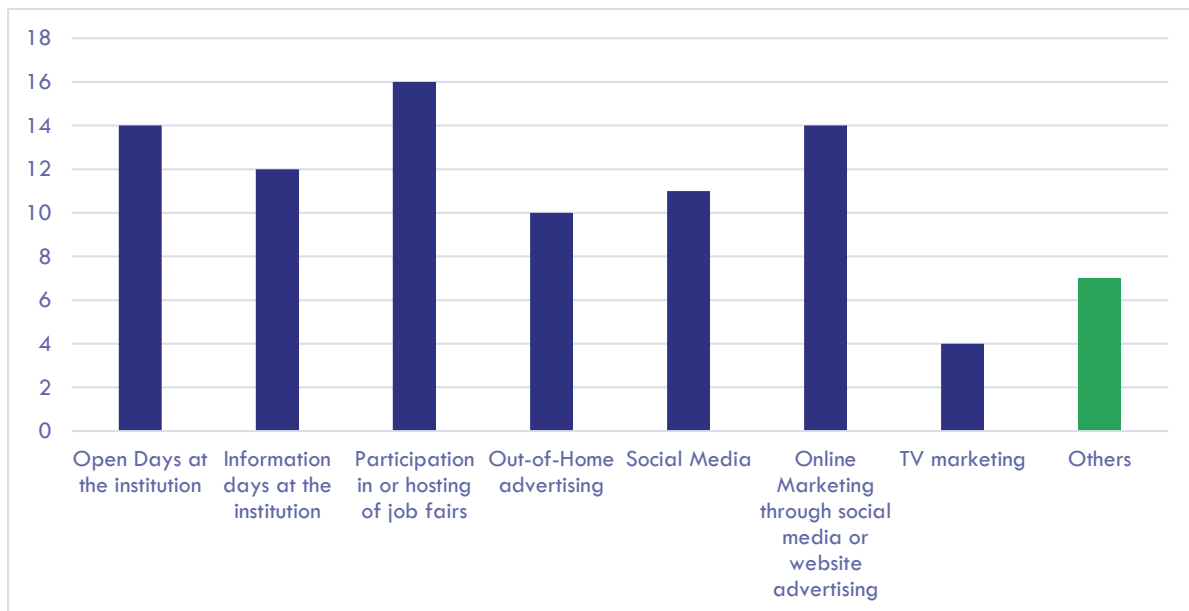


FIGURE 12: 6 WHAT MARKETING ACTIONS ARE CURRENTLY BEING DONE TO REACH THESE TARGET GROUPS? (LIST THE MOST RELEVANT ACTIONS AND EXPECTED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS)

Most Marketing actions are being done through participation of hosting or participating in job fairs (16), Open Days at the institution (14), online marketing through social media or website advertising (14), however also through information days at the institution (12) and Social Media (11), as shown in Figure 12. These reflect the expected answers from partners. The Out of home

advertising and tv marketing make up a minor role. There are however also a number of actions that go beyond the suggested items such as partnerships with universities / engineering and business schools and employment agencies, work with schools through workshops and summer schools as well as a network of job ambassadors.

Other answers of partners include:

- Partnerships with universities/engineering and business schools (to recruit executives) to present our professions, conferences, etc.
- Partnerships with employment agencies: Job Centres
- Use of Job boards to advertise vacancies
- A network of job ambassadors who answer questions on the job website
- organize after works and meetings with students such as “rendez-vous de l’orientation” where potential students are met
- Workshops or Internships with School students
- Summer schools for school students

It should be understood that these channels reflect the marketing actions of individual partners, but it should be taken into consideration, that these methods may also be applied on an association level or by different partners (such as suppliers, operators and educational partners) in the railway sector cooperating with one another. One method of organising this would be the creation or further expansion of local rail clusters on a regional or national basis. An example of this may be the local Rail Cluster “Rail.S” or “Mafex” which brings together rail suppliers, operators and research or members of the European Railway Clusters Initiative (ERCI)

The first task is understanding the use of digital methods to reach the relevant target groups. This is especially important when recognizing the development of attitudes towards how different generations inform themselves on the world around them. This is especially important when addressing how potential employees inform themselves about study programmes, apprenticeships or careers. The aim of this section is to show different methods of communication with the target groups.

Figure 13 shows an exemplary statistic for Germany in 2022.

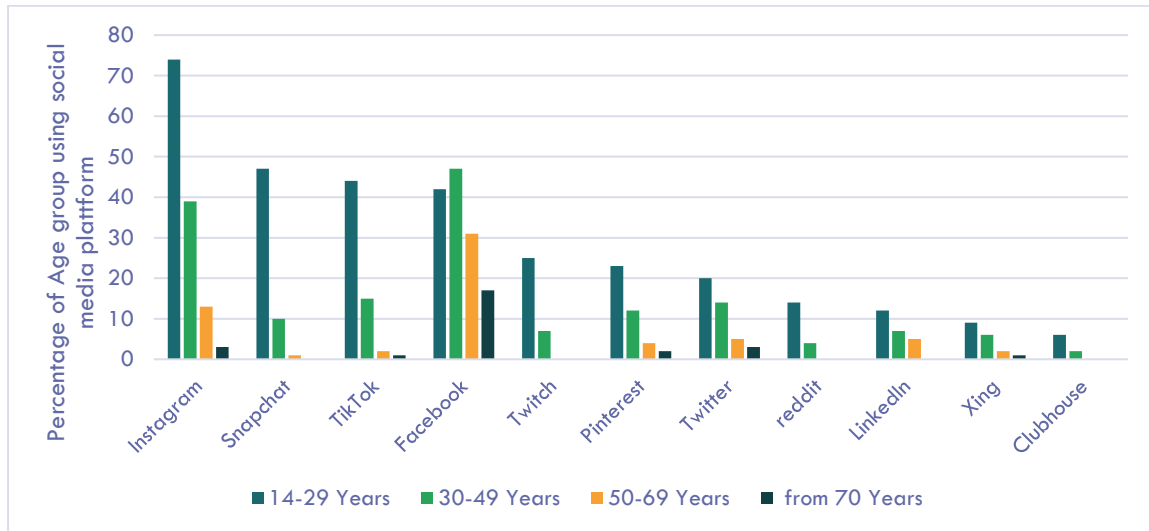


FIGURE 13: SHARE OF AGE GROUP USING A SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM IN GERMANY IN 2022 (STATISTA, 2023)

While LinkedIn’s own statistics show that 60% of its users are between 25 and 34 years old and 20% between 18 and 24, it is a network that does not have a lot of users compared to other networking sites. Here, the most important social media networks are Facebook, as it has a wide base of users in different age groups. Younger generations, are more likely however to have accounts on Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok.

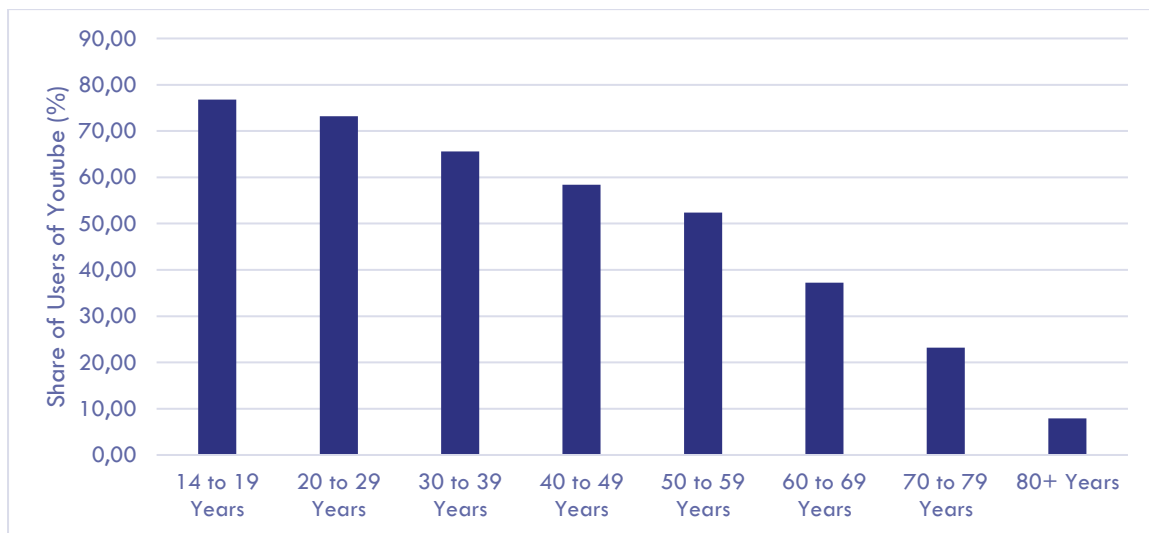


FIGURE 14: SHARE OF USERS OF YOUTUBE BY AGE GROUP IN GERMANY IN 2022 (INITIATIVE D21, 2023)

(Figure 25) Again, this is an example, as data from other countries will still have to be obtained, but still may be used as an indicator for other countries.

It should also be observed, that the number of daily users of social media platforms develops differently depending on the social media site or app and their specific user group. The social media app TikTok for example has seen a significant rise in users since its merger with musical.ly in August 2018. This platform has grown from 1% of the population using it at least monthly to 16% in 2022. This number varies significantly per age group. In 2022, over 50% of users were between the ages of 14 and 19 and only 24,5% of users being over the age of 40.

When asking partners about their use of social media, every partner responding to the survey answered that they are using social media. If they are using social media, these are most often managed by a public relations department of the company, followed by management through the own department and institute, which can be seen in Figure 15. Only in two cases, external marketing and employer branding firms are used to manage these profiles. These two answers may also be the reason why the option “separate PR department outside of our organization” may not have received any answers. The management of social media profiles through a PR department has benefits, especially, when the organisation or institution is solely focused on the railway sector, such as operators or suppliers. In the case of universities however, which may have many different thematic departments, a social media profile for individual institutes or faculties may be advantageous, in order to set themselves apart more clearly from other institutions within the university.

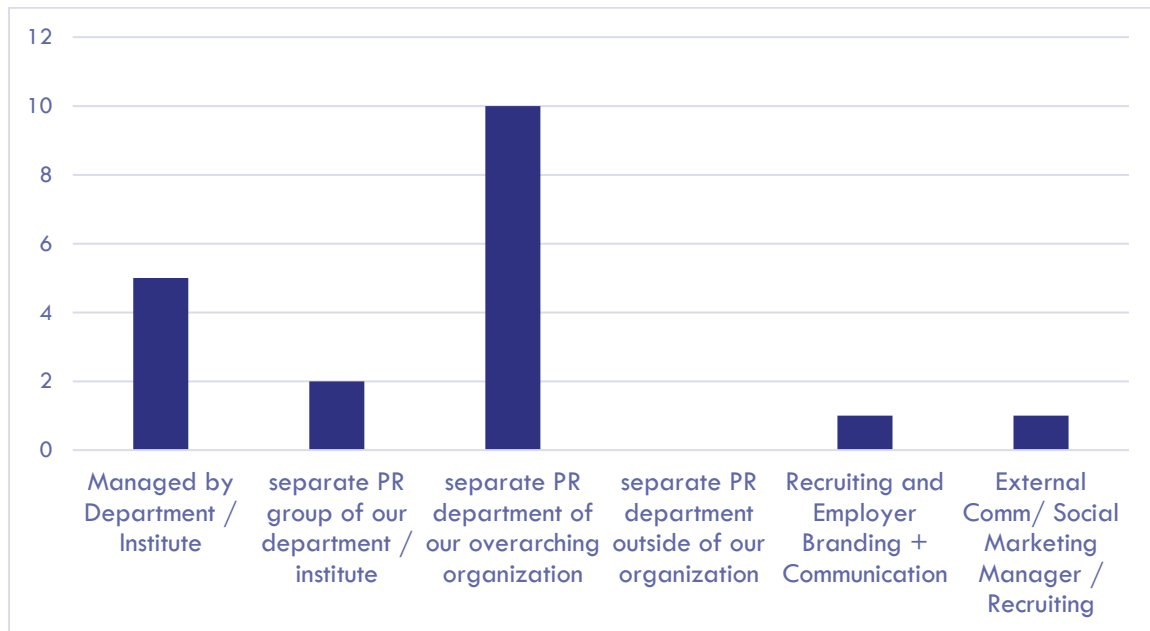


FIGURE 15: 3.2 IF YES, WHO MANAGES THIS PROFILE?

Regarding the types of social media channels used, the channel that was mentioned most often was LinkedIn, followed by Facebook and Instagram. Some partners also use X (formerly Twitter)

and YouTube as media channels. TikTok is also used by some partners. It can be seen here, that although the app has grown to a significant user base among young people, it has not been significantly adopted by project partners.

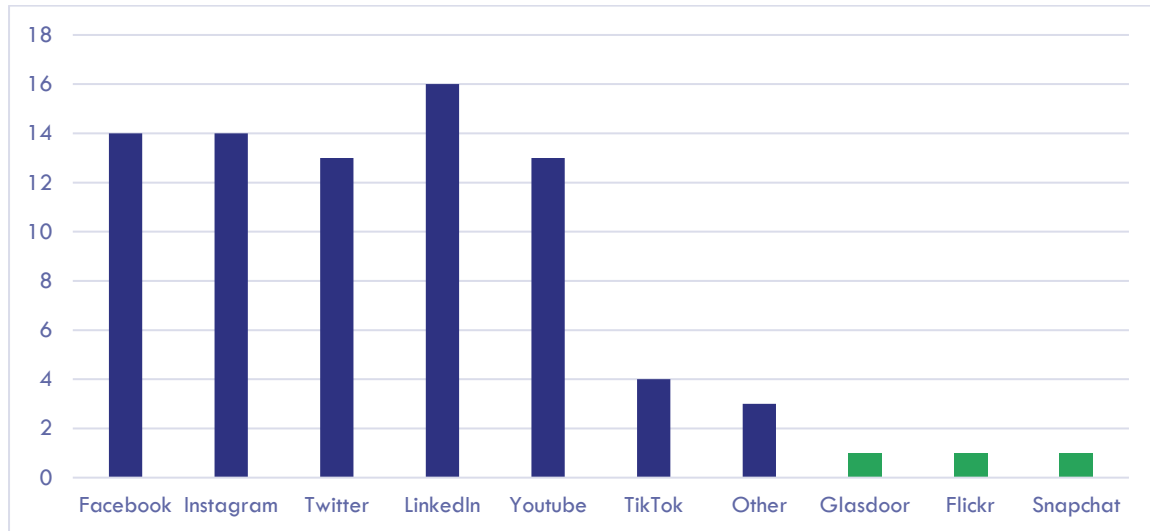


FIGURE 16: 3.3 IF YES, SELECT THOSE THAT APPLY

Most often, the channels were used for disseminating current information about the institution, followed by general information about study or training programmes or information on events. This was followed by promotional videos on study or training programmes. Some partners also mentioned that they show general information on jobs through these websites.

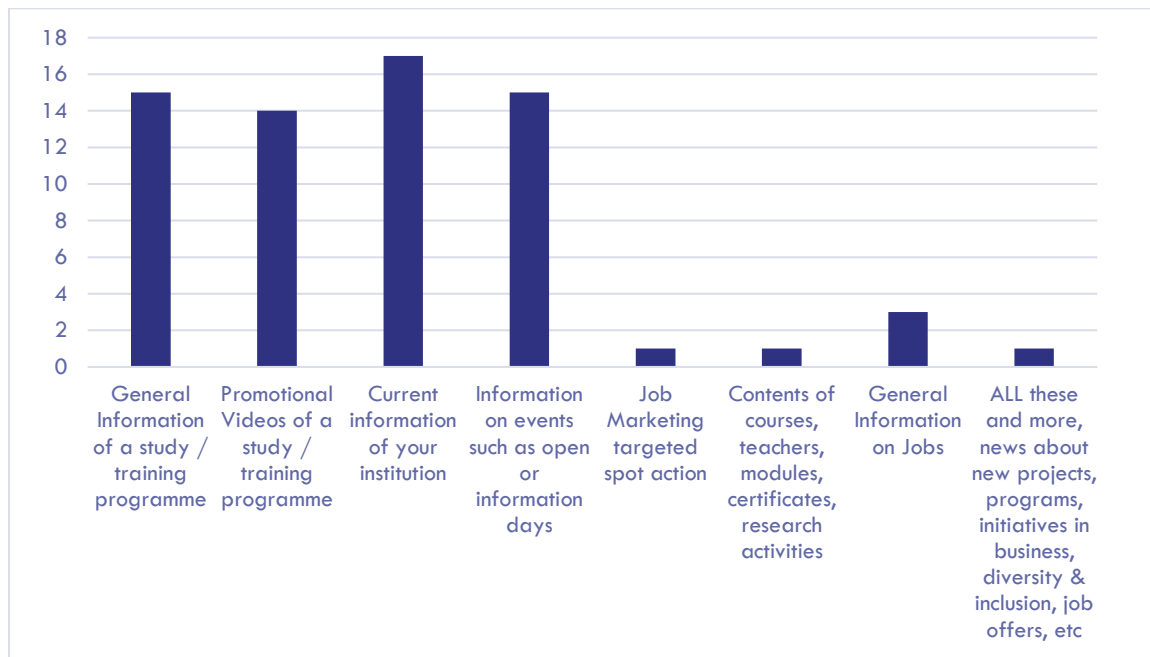


FIGURE 17: 3.4 IF YES, WHAT KIND OF CONTENT DO YOU PRESENT ON THESE PROFILES?

Another question aimed at partners was to see whether or not they promoted on specific marketing websites. 12 out of 17 partners mentioned that they actively advertise jobs or study programmes on different websites.

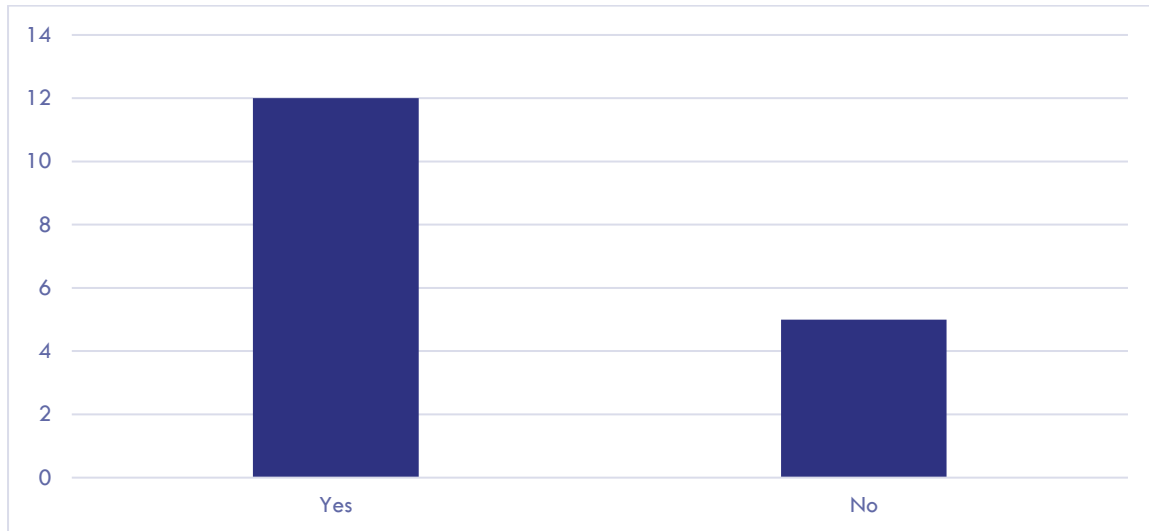


FIGURE 18: 4.1 DOES YOUR INSTITUTION ADVERTISE ON SPECIFIC STUDY PROGRAM WEBSITE (PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OR HIGHER EDUCATION) OR JOB WEBSITE?

To some degree, these websites of their own organisations. The websites furthermore are very different types, ranging from study and job portals, to academic websites, to company websites advertising studies and internships.

4.4 Relevant Channels and Means for Institutions of Higher Learning

Institutions of higher learning in the context of STAFFER are universities or universities of applied sciences, who have a focus on EQF Levels 5 to 8. The central goal of these educational institutions is to increase the number of students which participate in the relevant study programmes related to railway sciences.

Educational institutions in many cases are the link between secondary school students and railway operators and suppliers. Therefore, they do not market employment at their own institutions, but the chance of future employment after the study. Studies have also found, that the most important factors for choosing a certain program are related to the possibility of future employment (Zick, 2020).

Next to general information about the general process of a study, differences between universities and universities of applied sciences and what financial support systems are in place, future employment opportunities are of utmost importance. This implies that one of the most powerful factors that a study can offer is a direct link to the possibilities of future employment.

The most important channel of information about future studies is the website of the educational institutions. A significant portion of students also still inform themselves through open and information days at an institution. Furthermore, students also orient themselves through recommendations from parents and friends. Only a small amount uses social media as their first source of information. Based on this, conclusions can already be drawn about the way students inform themselves about a program and therefore ways to engage them once they have decided to look into the study itself. It also means that an additional target group for measures, parents, will have to be included in a strategy.

Another main question to answer however is how to interest students into a certain subject in the first place. Here again, the importance of the central attractiveness factors from (Matthes, 2019) in 3.2 become apparent. Students have to be able to start a reflection process on whether or not a potential study is something that fits with their personality, interests, capabilities and, most importantly, their social environment. Several different proposals have already been made in literature or are available at institutions in the Project. Some measures could include presenting certain study programmes at schools, thereby giving the opportunity to reflect on the image that students have about a certain program. Literature mentions using ambassadors for this job, who could be students who have recently started studying or young alumni of the study who can talk about what the study itself entails and how finding the right career works. The benefit of this is that students obtain a contact person for a program and are able to reflect on personal experiences from other people. The challenge however is that ambassadors must be available during visits, which may require the recruitment of a network of people. Furthermore, visiting schools requires a significant number of working hours, which may be expensive and too time consuming if the adequate resources are not available. A passive form of this type of marketing for educational institutions may be to distribute advertising materials at schools.

Since students inform themselves mostly through the educational institution's website about a certain program, optimizing the design and information content on the website of an educational institution should be a priority. First and foremost, this relates to the effective communication of study contents. The student should be able to easily explore what kind of study would suit them. It has been recommended to use tests similar to voting advice applications, in order to see to what a degree a certain study would suit a student.

Another key component a study website should communicate is the prospects of the student after graduating. This relates to the types of jobs that a student can do after graduating, who future employers are and how quickly a job can be found. Similarly, to using job ambassadors for live events, ambassadors can also be used for testimonials about the study program.

4.5 Relevant Channels and Means Employer Marketing

4.5.1 Role of Digital Channels and Communication

Current trends show, that the information on career choices is largely done via online searches and well-known career networks and job portals are the primary choices when searching for a job, as shown in Figure 19. Therefore, online presence and presentation on these portals is key to developing a strategy to promote attractiveness.

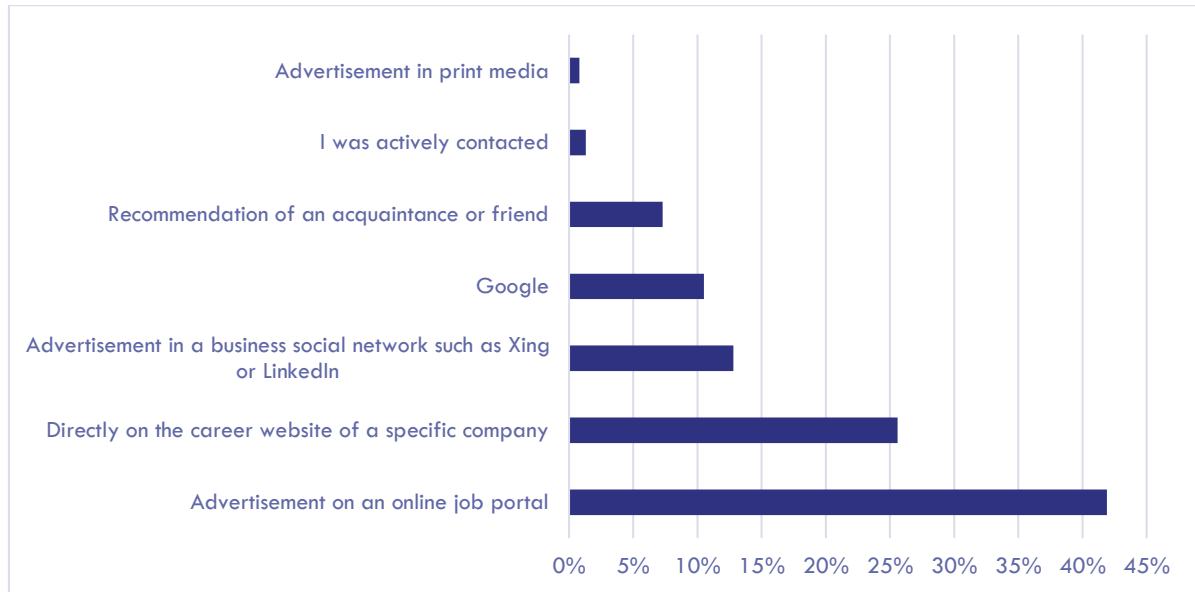


FIGURE 19: WHERE APPLICANTS START THEIR JOB SEARCH,: (SOFTGARDEN, 2020)

4.5.2 Role of Live Events for Employer Marketing

According to partners, live marketing actions such as participation or hosting of job fairs, open days at the institutions as well as information days at the institution remain an important part in informing potential students, trainees or employees about the work at their institution. Based on (Maas, 2019), Generation Z prefers to see their possible employers at career specific events or on career specific portals, which can be seen in Table 2. This implies that live events, in the continuing increasing use of social media, are still of importance when promoting individual institutions and career choices.

TABLE 2: QUESTION: “HOW WOULD YOU FIND IT, IF YOUR POSSIBLE EMPLOYER PRESENTED THEMSELVES ON THE FOLLOWING PLATFORM?” (IN PERCENT) SOURCE: (MAAS, 2019)

	Very op-posed	op-posed	Somewhat opposed	somewhat in favor	in fa-vor	very in favor
Fair	2,9	2,3	3,0	23,6	41,9	26,2
Job Portal	3,9	2,1	3,6	21,3	37,2	31,8
Company Website	1,6	1,2	1,0	9,5	27,7	59,0
Job advertisements in newspaper	3,3	4,6	7,6	35,1	35,2	14,1
Snapchat	38,0	22,6	18,4	6,7	7,1%	7,1
Instagram	21,6	19,4	21,0	12,3	14,4	10,4
Facebook	23,3	9,3	13,1	18,7	23,9	11,7

At these events it can be beneficial to employ brand ambassadors. Partners have listed that using people as ambassadors for their institutions in different forms can be used as a best practice. Ambassadors at live events can provide a certain amount of authenticity and trust, as they themselves have gone through or are still in a study or training program, or are currently employed at a company. At live events, the possibility exists to provide detailed information and address certain stereotypes that might exist for careers in the rail sector as a whole. Creating live events at schools, universities and professional training institutions has been listed as a good practice in (Deloitte; coffey; Panteia, 2017). Here, it is also highlighted that this might be a more efficient method compared to job fairs, where competing for attention may hinder success. Furthermore, the study also highlights the importance to provide opportunities to experience the job and showcasing real people as role models, which can provide concrete examples for these students. In the remainder of the working package, live events should be further highlighted with the help of partners.

4.6 Messages

Messages form the second part of the communication contents and strategy. The goal is to establish core messages that the rail sector can use in order to market itself as an attractive career choice. These core messages should form an unmistakable identity of the sector as a whole and clearly distinguish itself from other sectors. This form of employer branding may have the potential to have potential candidates associate these messages and their portrayed values with the sector itself. These could be factors such as sustainable transport, work in a high technology sector or work which aims at modernization or betterment of society.

Secondly, messages should contain attractiveness factors of jobs which have been identified through literature research, questionnaires and interviews. Here, the motivation is to convey messages that the rail sector has intrinsic factors which contribute to a career. These could for example be factors such as job security and fair compensation through collective bargaining agreements, the possibility of remote working or personal development opportunities or the multitude of different career choices.

Thirdly, due to the different nature of partners, messages have to be tailored to some degree to the type of partner. An educational institution for example will need to use different types of messages for its programmes compared to an operator or rail suppliers. Educational partners may be able to portray messages about the chances that their program offers, the possibilities of working for high profile employers or the availability of open job positions after the completion of the program. Employers on the other hand may choose to highlight the company culture, the benefits that are offered by the job, the possibility to work remotely or the international dimension of a possible career path and the remuneration and status that come with the job. Employers could furthermore differentiate their messages, depending on if they are an operator or supplier. Suppliers could focus on their role in the creation of technical solutions as well as role in research, in order to demonstrate their role in a high-tech sector and as a supplier of sustainable transportation technologies. Operators on the other hand could demonstrate the application of these technologies and their role in providing this form of transport as well as the challenge of maintaining a network of different infrastructures (such as rail, catenary, stations and digital networks), requiring talents and experts to carry out these tasks.

When asked about the core messages of their institutions' promotion in the questionnaire sent out to them many partners listed that the core messages include messages through social values (13), which were defined as values such as work or study in a sustainable or purposeful industry, a and employment conditions, which were suggested to be for example good wages, job security or job diversity, (11) as shown in Figure 20. The second group is made up of promotion through the status of the institution, where suggestions were being "a global leader" or being "the highest rated", (8) and promotion of international work (8).

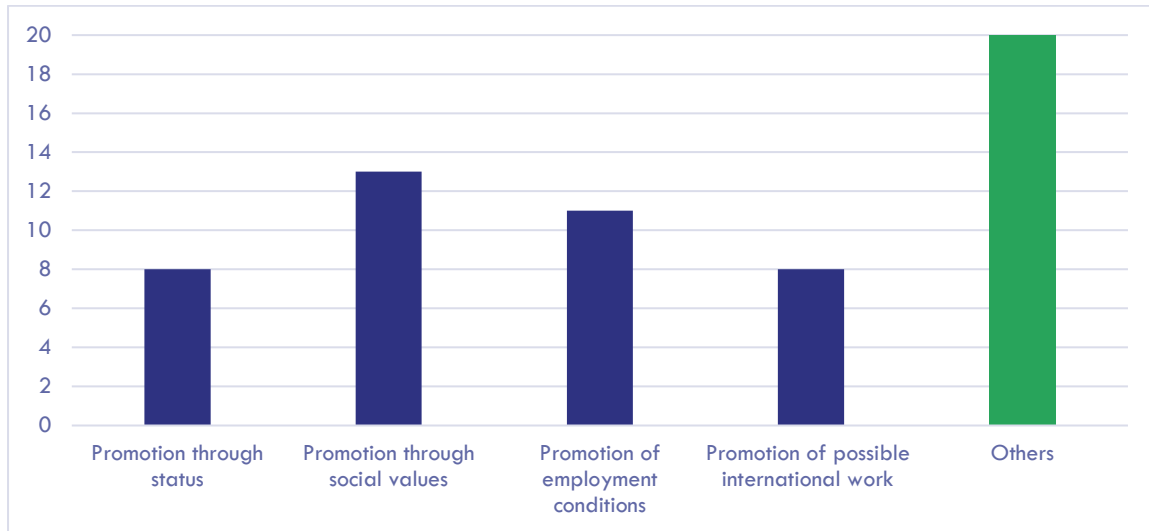


FIGURE 20: 10 WHAT ARE YOUR CORE MESSAGES TO PROMOTE YOUR PROGRAM / EMPLOYMENT / INSTITUTION?

Most answers in the “Others” category are submitted by training institutions and institutions of higher learning. 16 out of 20 answers are from these partners. Among the overlapping goals are messages along the theme of lifelong learning (from 2 partners), high systemic know-how and state of the art training (2 partners), focus on sustainability (2 partners) and an interdisciplinary field (2 partners). Promotion through employee diversity or the promotion of career paths were also mentioned. The full list of the category “Others” can be seen below.

- Promotion through employee diversity
- Lifelong learning
- Teaching everyone, everywhere
- Green and eco-friendly training
- Multidisciplinary course in transport engineering
- International environment
- Highest possible systemic know-how
- Train engineers to work at a higher level
- Possibility of employment within one year of the end of the courses
- Highly specialized teachers
- State of the art training with the latest standards in the railway sector
- Promotion of career paths
- Promotion of initial training and career long training
- Recognition of the sustainability aspect of railways
- Create Opportunities, Learn a job, Create your future
- 360 degree view on Transport and mobility
- Interdisciplinary
- practice oriented
- Familiar atmosphere
- active student council

In a second question, partners were asked about how they promoted the attractiveness of the program or employment they offered at their institution. Some suggestions were given to partners, with only one choosing the “Other” option. The two responses which stand out, are the variety of employment opportunities and the good development opportunities, listed with 15 and 14 responses respectively, which can be seen in Figure 21. What follows is the diversity of the sector with 13 responses, meaningful and sustainable activities and modern jobs with each 12. Good employment conditions and a good working climate were mentioned with 9 and 8 respectively, followed by job security (7) and good wages (6). Only 3 partners listed benefits offered to employees as a means of attraction, 2 of which are operators and 1 also listed the ability to get a job soon.

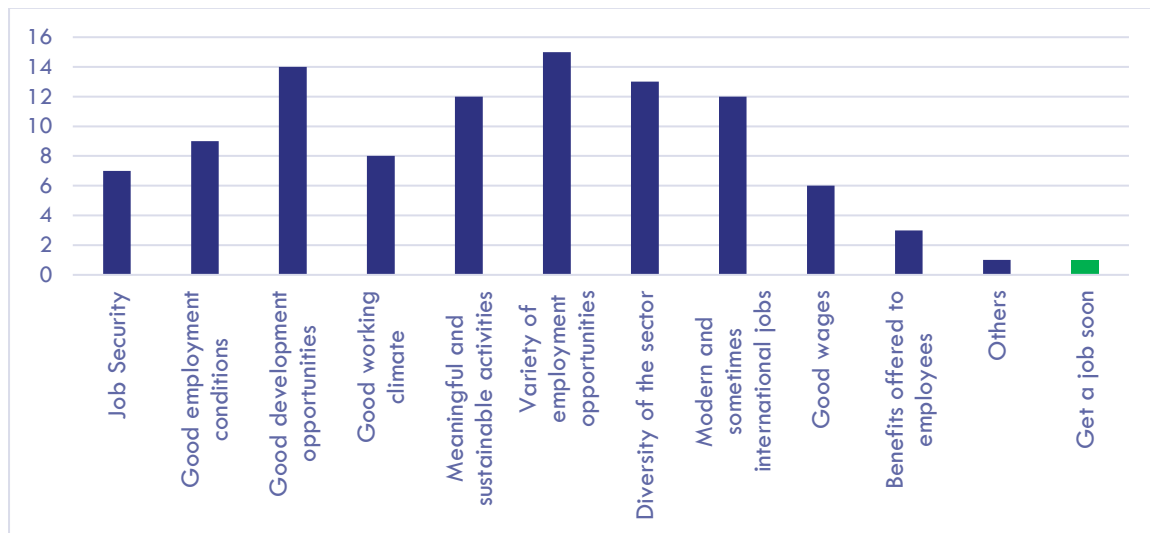


FIGURE 21: WHAT MESSAGES ARE BEING USED TO PROMOTE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM / EMPLOYMENT / INSTITUTION

The responses of these two questions show, that the identifying of core messages or values may be very dependent on the individual institution and however, yet most partners would choose social factors as the most important core values that the railway sector has to offer, as well as the employment conditions offered later on. It also shows, that the attractiveness factors of programmes and employment are the variety of different programmes and the development opportunities. This may be a strength for the railway sector going forward, as the current trends point to the importance of development opportunities and less commitment to individual employers.

4.7 Example 1: Strategy of Association of German Public Transport Operators (VDV)

In order to more closely determine the nature of a marketing strategy for a specialised career sector, research was carried out into strategies of transport associations, which aim to create marketing strategies for the partners that they represent. One of the strategies that has been implemented by the Association of German Public Transport Operators (VDV⁴) is the Employer Initiative (Arbeitgeberinitiative) (Deutschland mobil 2030 GmbH, 2023). The VDV is the representative association of public transport operators and rail freight operators in Germany. The VDV has started multiple marketing campaigns focused on raising the image of the public transport sector which also includes increased cooperation with the German chamber of industry and commerce (DIHK). The Employer Initiative consists of different marketing and training measures such as networking and information initiatives, webinars, digital products individual consulting, Dialogue on AI use and general news and trends for HR. The idea behind this is that the campaign functions more as a “revolving door”, that can be used to be sent to the right direction. In order to better understand this strategy, an interview was conducted with Lisa Gadomski, who is one of the responsible persons in this campaign.

The initiative has multiple goals, identified together with the members of the association, one of these being the image improvement of the sector. One of the issues identified was that the public transport sector does not have a real image at all, which means that many of the possible careers are automatically being excluded from choices, because it is difficult for potential candidates to evaluate, whether or not a career is even a choice for them (Gadomski, 2023). Furthermore, the quality of employment is often directly linked to the quality of service that these companies provide, so if individual companies are experiencing difficulties in service, this automatically translates into a lower perceived quality of employment. Otherwise, a negative image is also caused through the treatment of jobs directly linked to the service provided, such as bus drivers. This can be seen for example in an observed increase of aggression and verbal and physical attacks on bus drivers and other personnel. For Germany, the regional rail services provider DB Regio has observed a substantial increase of violent incidents (Kuche, et al., 2023).

In order to ensure the attractiveness of employment at these companies, the VDV has instigated schemes in order provide means to companies to create their own marketing content. This is due to the fact that often these companies also don't have significant own experience with new means of advertisement and through this initiative have access to marketing material and

⁴ Verband Deutscher Verkehrsunternehmen

training, which they would otherwise have to generate themselves, such as digital recruitment solutions. Another image campaign that was started was the “Favourite Bus driver” Campaign, which was aimed at the public to share their favourite stories about bus drivers in their regions, with bus drivers receiving awards as part of the Future of Urban Transport Fair on the 5th of September in Berlin (DB Regio AG, 2023). Another central part has been the creation of a career website with a marketing character named “there is a future in you” (Deutschland mobil 2030 GmbH, 2023), which provides information on the different job opportunities in the sector and open positions at the participating partners for different types of target groups. It also offers a career blog on specific themes related to careers in the public and freight transport sector for these different target groups.

Other goals include the increase of the potential pool of candidates, a unified communication strategy on important days of the year and to show the perspectives of a career in the public or freight transport sectors (Gadomski, 2023).

These goals may be accomplished through several means of communication, such as the resources already mentioned, but also social media and live events to increase the pool of potential candidates. When asked about the role of these in the campaign, it was mentioned that the benefits of live events for example include a very low barrier offer, which can be made to interested persons, however there also needs to be an audience for these events and someone who is able to manage them. Therefore, the setting up of these events can be counted as a barrier. Furthermore, appropriate amounts of advertising are necessary in order to make the events known. Social media on the other hand has the benefit that it is very easy to set up, but they also require continuous management and updates and take time to generate a critical mass of followers. Another method of communication is the setup of networking between recruiters of different members of the VDV, that allows for a more effective search in ambassadors and stories and testimonials of particular employees.

In summary, the employer initiative shows many similarities with the aims of the strategy to be developed in WP 7.2. It shows approaches for public operators in order to more effectively gain information on important trends and subjects and aims to improve the image of the public and freight transport sector as a whole. Many of the problems faced here are similar to those experienced by the railway sector as a whole and the approaches to mitigate these through concrete actions and marketing methods. Particularly interesting for the strategy meant to be developed in this working package, are the methods to award those drivers who have been suggested by the public and the networking and collaboration efforts of this campaign. Of particular interest is also the creation of a website, which is able to portray all of the

information, which may be necessary to accurately inform candidates about the different aspects of a rail sector. One of the main hinderances with employing such a website has already been shared throughout communication with partners, that these websites may not have the necessary audience or reach compared to other job searching methods, such as career websites.

4.8 Example 2: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategies

4.8.1 Motivation of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

One of the most important aspects with regards to attractiveness, is the aspect of inclusion, equity and diversity, whose aim it is to improve the working environment within companies towards a more multifaceted workforce and to create equity for these groups. The workforce within the rail sector is currently largely male dominated, with estimates of 78-80% share of male employees. This means that the pool of possible future employees is currently still very limited, meaning that bringing more women into STEM work fields, could close future employee shortages within these fields, which also includes the railway sector. With regards to strategies related to inclusion and diversity, multiple notable examples of strategies have been implemented by partners. This section will aim to showcase some of these strategies in an effort to determine actions which can be used to highlight the attractiveness of the rail sector. All supplier partners have implemented strategies that aim to increase diversity, inclusion and equity (DI&E or DEI) within their respective companies. These strategies are targeted at different groups such as women, the differently abled and the LGBTQ+ community as well as promoting a culturally inclusive work environment, that aims to create a safe workplace for a global workforce. Of these groups, women have been especially targeted through different initiatives and actions.

4.8.2 The Women in Rail Agreement of CER and ETF

The implemented strategies show a set of different approaches to improve inclusiveness. Some of the most prominent actions have been the implementation of gender equity agreements at association level. These include such actions as the adoption of Women in Rail agreement (WIR) (Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies; European Transport Workers' Federation, 2021), signed between the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF).

The WIR covers a number of different points within eight policy areas to improve gender equality and diversity within the members of CER. These include:

- 1. An overall gender equality policy**
- 2. Targets for gender balanced representation**
- 3. Recruitment**
- 4. Reconciliation of working and private life**
- 5. Career development**
- 6. Equal pay and the gender pay gap**
- 7. Occupational health and safety and work environment**
- 8. Preventing sexual harassment and sexism**

With this agreement, multiple steps to assure gender equity are obligatory for the members of CER. The principle of this gender equality policy is the equal treatment of men and women as a fundamental value and objective. This policy should be supported by top level management and combat direct and indirect discrimination. In the first step, a policy document should be created with the company's vision for equality, how equality will be ensured, what communication strategy for this document and how monitoring and reporting will be implemented. This document should focus on the objectives, a timeline, specific measures, assignment of responsibilities and lastly monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Building on this policy, measures should be implemented in a further variety of policy areas (points 2 through 8). First and foremost, this goes on improving the representation in positions where there is a strong imbalance of genders. Here, the main barriers for this imbalance should be identified and measures put in place to improve this imbalance.

During the recruitment process, the language used should be gender sensitive and non-discriminatory. Specifically, regarding the content of this WP, the WIR agreement also calls for the promotion of activities for women at schools and universities in order to promote rail professions.

While at the company, the working conditions should be improved, to reconcile working and private life, such as parental or care leave. Employers should therefore make efforts to make flexible working arrangements possible, depending on the individual needs of the employee.

Furthermore, career development should be supported, which includes the access to all development and qualification measures.

The equality policy should also ensure to combat the gender wage gap within a company, including the monitoring and analysis of such a gap. It should also reduce the impact of parental leave as well as performance or attendance-based bonuses or other variable forms of pay.

In terms of health and safety in the work environment, health and safety on the specific needs should be taken into account such as the provision of personal protective equipment.

Lastly, a policy against sexual harassment which should be supported by the persons in managerial positions. It should show the progress and effectiveness of this policy. It should be monitored and reviewed. Reactions towards harassment should be prompt and victims should be granted privacy and protection.

4.8.3 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategies of Rail Suppliers

Similarly, UNIFE has adopted a gender equity policy (UNIFE, 2022), to encourage greater visibility and participation of women in their own activities and the sector as a whole. This policy includes external policies on public engagement and internal policies with regards to governance and collaboration, human resources, compensation and working conditions as well as transparency. Key points in the external policies include the promotion of non-male staff members to participate as speakers and the creation of a database with female rail supply experts. Furthermore, the policy includes points such as improving gender equity in terms of representation on committees and in working groups and the launch of a membership program to connect women to experts to improve skills and their network. Further points include transparent monitoring and reporting on gender equity, inclusive recruitment and hiring practices and closing the gender pay gap in their own organization. Furthermore, UNIFE participates in the women in transport platform (Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, 2017), which has formulated the 2017 declaration to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the transport sector, whose primary aim is to strengthen the effort to effectively promote women's employment and representation in transport and to commit to working to ensure gender equality in transport.

These sector overarching agreements show that concrete actions to improve gender equity have been formulated and, in some cases, become binding agreements for employers and employees in the railway sector. Highlighting these actions and their intended aim towards women can be used to show the awareness of the underlying issues that the sector faces and that actors have come up with actions to improve on these. These actions should be clearly communicated to the target groups, to highlight the benefits of working in the rail sector.

On a company level, partners from the supplier side have implemented actions highlighted in these overarching strategies to raise the gender equity in their institution. These include the formulation of and reporting on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), such as the reported gender pay gap, the share of women in the company and the share of women in managerial roles. Partners furthermore have implemented targets to improve steadily on these KPIs.

Siemens has adopted a framework with measurable ambitions, called the DEGREE framework (Siemens AG, 2022). This framework focuses on goals for decarbonization, ethics, governance,

resource efficiency, equity and employability within the corporate structure of Siemens. Some of the goals for equity include an increase in the share of women in managerial positions to 30% by 2025 and a “New Normal” working model, which is to offer workplace flexibility and mobile working, where possible. The share of women in these positions has increased in the last years from 22,7 percent in 2020 to 27,7 percent in 2022, according to the sustainability report of Siemens. These efforts are supported by different initiatives, such as the Global Leadership of Women @ Technology & Innovation (GLOW@TI), the GROW2GLOW network (Siemens AG, 2022) and the local Women in Tech@Siemens initiative launched in Austria (Siemens AG, 2023). The goal of GLOW@TI is to create a network that aims to promote careers for women in order to appoint them to group management positions. The GROW2GLOW network provides business coach as a way to help realize the full potential of female employees and consists of 130 coaches in 30 countries. The Women in Tech@Siemens initiative is a campaign includes videos on relevant social medial channels (such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, etc.) and advertisements in digital media. A central element is the website⁵ and the running time is two years. The goal of the campaign is to get more women, especially young women into tech and with the many different career options in the IT sector, new work models and advancement possibilities.

Similarly, Alstom has defined a clear Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) strategy (Alstom SA, 2022) based on four pillars:

- **Gender Balance**
- **Disability Inclusion**
- **LGBTQ+ at Work**
- **Multiple cultures**

The pillar of gender balance has the main goal of reaching a 28 percent share of women in managerial positions by 2025. Disability inclusion aims to attract and maintain employees with disability by providing them with an accessible work environment. Furthermore, the LGBTQ+ at work pillar has the goal of creating a work environment where all employees feel safe, respected and comfortably, regardless of their sexual orientation, to express themselves authentically. Lastly, global companies will encounter a global and multicultural workforce, which requires an understanding of cultures and their differences and similarities. The goal of the last pillar, multiple cultures, is to develop an awareness of employees of these similarities and differences across different cultures. The body responsible for development and implementation is the steering committee.

⁵ [siemens.at/women-in-tech](https://www.siemens.at/women-in-tech)

With regards to gender equity, Alstom has multiple partnerships across different countries. One of these is a partnership with Catalyst, an organization whose goal it is to build workplaces that work for women. The organization focuses on five key areas (2023):

1. **Advancing women: Increasing the representation of women in corporate leadership**
2. **Women and the future of work: Developing solutions for women and underrepresented groups to have full participation and equal opportunity in the workplace**
3. **Lead for equity and inclusion: Deepening the understanding of workplace inclusion**
4. **MARC (men advocating for real change): engaging men to leverage their influence to advocate for gender equity in the workplace**
5. **Frontline employees initiative: Broadening the focus to include women in frontline roles.**

In addition, Alstom partners with national organizations such as Women in Rail in the UK, “Elles bougent” in France, and Valore D in Italy. “Elles bougent” (Association Elles bougent, 2023) is a national initiative in France which aims to promote certain careers specifically for women providing a network and career events for interested women. Valore D in Italy aims to educate on the importance of Diversity and inclusion in the work place (Valore D, 2023).

In addition to these partnerships, the diversity strategy is supported through the 4Awards4inclusion program (Alstom, 2023), which rewards employee initiatives and projects which aid the DEI strategy of Alstom. One of the awards in 2023 went to the “Mind the Glass Ceiling” project, which aims to help women working in operations to more opportunities for career growth to take on roles one to two levels beyond their current positions in the next three to four years.

The challenge of DEI has also been taken up by Hitachi and their global strategy. The pillars of this strategy are

- **Gender**
- **Culture**
- **Generation**

One of the aims of the global strategy is to increase the ratio of women and non-Japanese in executive and corporate officer roles to 30% by 2030 (Hitachi Ltd., 2023). This has already led to some results, as the European division has increased from 21,5 percent to 23,6 percent between 2018 and 2022. In terms of culture, the goal is to have a team which reflects the global nature of the company. Generation also takes into account the aspect that employees should be recognized based on competence and not age. In order to progress in this strategy, Hitachi has set up a global DEI management structure, which is represented by the Global DEI council.

Locally, Hitachi participates in national initiatives such as “Elles bougent” in France and is reporting on the gender pay gap in the UK and participates in the equality index in France. It furthermore has set up training programs for top executives and created initiatives for mentoring programs.

Possible actions from these strategies

As shown, the subject of diversity, equity and inclusion has been a subject of some attention at supplier partners as well as the relevant associations. It can be seen, that in order to appeal to a wider target group, thereby increasing the talent pool, strategies are necessary to become attractive to these target groups. While especially women have been mentioned as a particular target group in the section above, it should be noted that in these companies, the subject of DEI has been going beyond this particular target group to also include the LGBTQ+ and the differently abled in these strategies. From these strategies, several concrete actions can be taken and possibly adopted in the context of STAFFER.

Most strategies, including those set forth by the Women in Rail agreement and the gender equity policy of UNIFE show the importance of representation, both in terms of speakers, but more importantly, in governance of the industry. This is shown by the targets set forth by individual supplier partners, to achieve 30% representation between 2025 and 2030 in managerial positions in these companies. In order to achieve this, mentoring programs and career coaching has been adopted in order to raise female candidates to these levels. Furthermore, representation is also important in the public forum, so gaining female speakers for events may also raise the visibility of careers for future female candidates. Making sure that these targets are binding, as done in the women in rail agreement, will help establish reporting and implementation mechanisms for these strategic targets. As a concrete action, this could mean implementing binding targets for companies through formal agreements or internal company policy

It is also important that these actions are part of the company identity, meaning that these policies must be championed by top management and lived by the employees of the companies. Initiatives and projects that raise DEI within the company should be awarded, as done by the 4awards4inclusion program at Alstom. Raising the awareness within companies is a crucial step in order to also be able to work together with different cultures. Sensitizing employees through education and reporting programs will make them more aware of similarities and differences when dealing with these issues.

Lastly, it is important to realize that the issue of the low ratio of females in STEM careers is an issue across many technical fields and many companies have committed themselves to these

targets, leading to national actions within countries which may be useful to gain a larger audience and thereby visibility of careers in the rail sector for women.

5 AN ATTRACTIVENESS STRATEGY FOR THE RAILWAY SECTOR

5.1 Overview of the Strategy

The strategy to increase the attractiveness of the sector follows the motivation mentioned by many partners in questionnaires and interviews to improve the visibility of the available careers in the rail sector and inform on the different career paths. Finally, the strategy should also aim to create a better image of the sector.

Due to the fact that there are many different target groups, it is difficult to tailor messages towards each of the specific target groups. Instead, the strategy will aim to use trends in attractiveness factors for jobs and best practices in recruitment. Using attractiveness factors should on the one hand include those which have developed more recently and those which have been shown to be attractive over a long time. On one side, these include factors such as increased development opportunities, better work-life balance and flexibility in the job and on the other hand purpose, a fitting company culture and a positive image of the railway sector.

The channels of communication have largely been elaborated on through literature research, questionnaires and interviews. Overall, there are measures in place at each of the partners to communicate effectively towards their target groups. However, there may be some practices necessary to reach a larger audience. However, there are also some channels which have to be evaluated on a best practice basis. This includes for example channels through which recruitment is being carried out, such as job advertisements, where processes must be made as easy as possible for candidates.

The main messages should be differentiated between core messages, guiding or informational messages and information that are being provided to potential employees. Core messages are on the one hand individual to each institution, but overall can be made more abstract to contain a unified message for the railway sector as a whole. Guiding messages should contain more descriptive information about the career or study, that should “sell” the program or job in question. Finally, information about the career or study program identify important information which should be used in the particular advertisement, which have proven as attractiveness factors.

A strategy should also aim to honour those people who currently have the lowest satisfaction ratings of those working in the rail sector. There are already some examples in place that show awards and beneficial schemes in place for those who stay on longer which could be used to promote the retention of workers in these positions.



Finally, the strategy should establish more cooperation between the partners at different stages of marketing for potential candidates through different methods, in order to take advantage of instruments which may otherwise be outside of the financial abilities and in order to better demonstrate the journey of a candidate from secondary school to a career in railways.



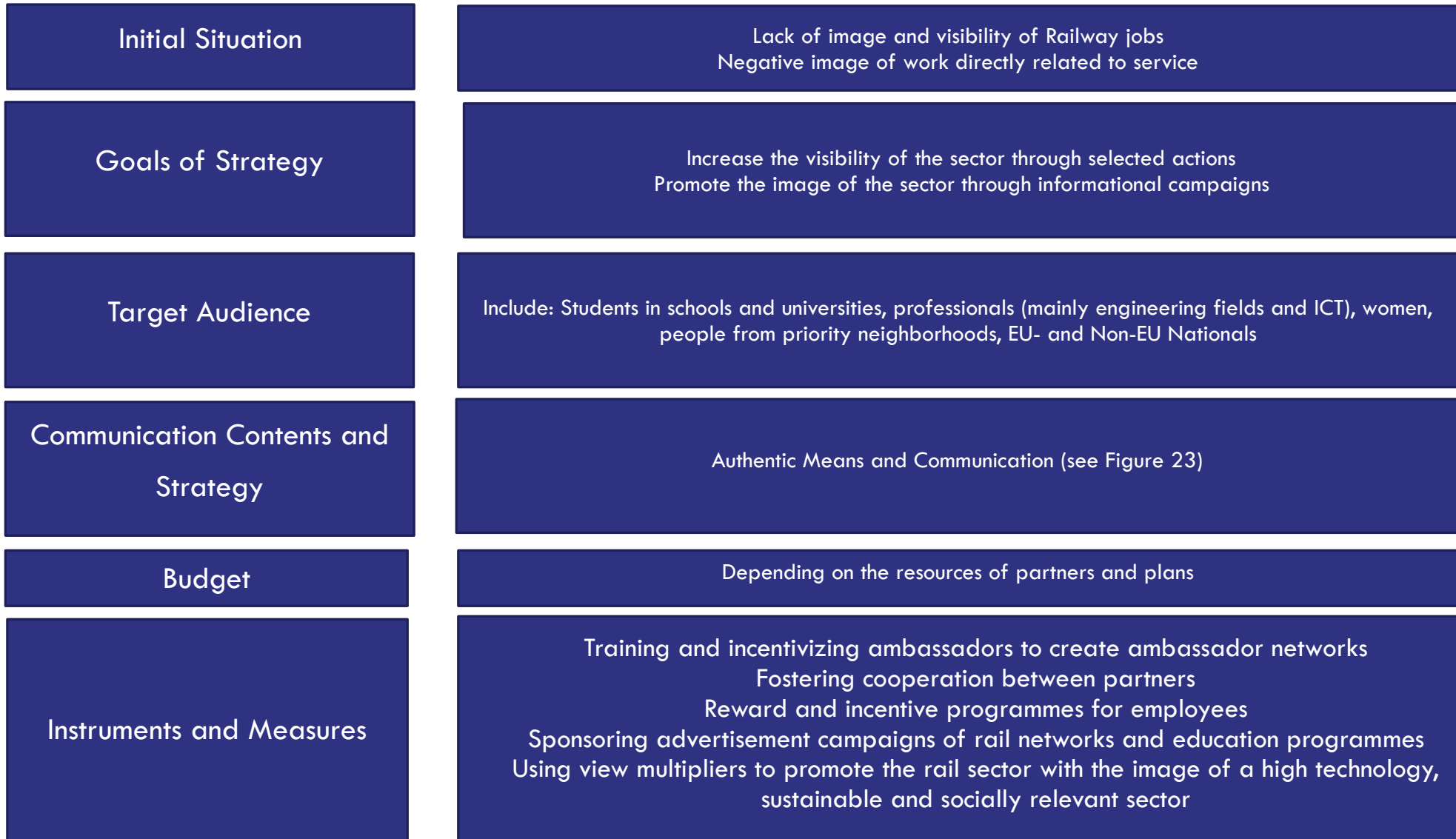


FIGURE 22: OVERVIEW OF THE ATTRACTIVENESS STRATEGY FOR THE RAIL SECTOR

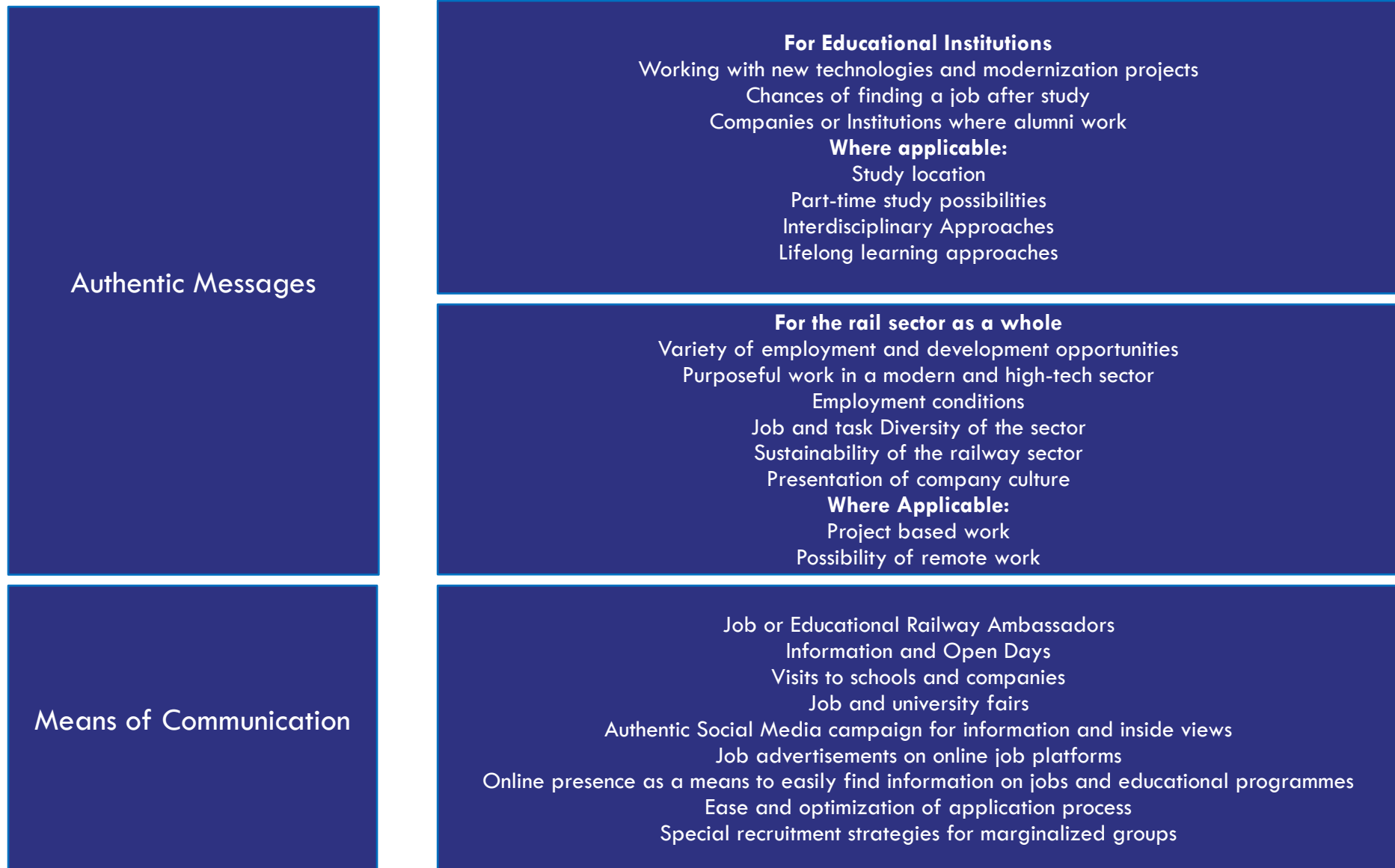


FIGURE 23: COMMUNICATION CONTENTS AND STRATEGY

5.2 Goal of the Strategy

The goal of this strategy is in line with the overarching goal of WP 7.1 which is to provide a sufficiently qualified workforce for a smart and sustainable rail sector in Europe. This means, a strategy to promote the attractiveness of the rail sector should have as its aim to secure more students and apprentices for the relevant education programmes, encourage professionals to join the rail sector from other industries and increase the number of possible candidates by appealing to a larger pool of the population.

As previous research has indicated, there are several issues that need to be addressed to promote the attractiveness of the sector:

- **Create more visibility for jobs in the rail sector**
- **Create a better image of careers in the rail sector**

Creating more visibility in the rail sector aims to target several weaknesses of the rail sector as a career possibility. For one, literature research and interviews with partners have confirmed that the rail sector as a career opportunity does not have the required visibility, meaning that many people may not be aware of job opportunities beyond the largest railway operator or companies which also manufacture items, other than railway vehicles. The goal would be to show the wide range of companies involved within the railway sector.

Creating a better image aims to combat the fact that the rail sector as a whole still has to deal with a stereotypes from the public.

5.3 Target groups

Based on the desk research, questionnaires and interviews, the following target groups were determined for different partners.

- **Students (16-18)**
- **University Students**
- **University Graduates**
- **Young professionals**
- **Professional Trainees**
- **Professional Training Program Graduates**
- **Professionals**
- **Job Changers**

Special Target Groups

- **Women:** The reason for this is that we currently only have about 20% of women in the rail sector as a whole
- **EU and Non-EU Nationals:** we are currently experiencing issues regarding recruitment of a new generation of railway engineers. This means we need to look beyond borders and attract talented people from outside Europe.
- **People from priority neighbourhoods**
- **Parents:** Parents guide their children throughout the process of formal education and instil values throughout growing up. Presenting parents with appropriate messages and information about career options, may make them more supportive for careers in the railway sector.
- **Primary School Students:** Primary school students may present another target group, which can be shown different aspects of careers in the railway sector. Activities relating to this should be age appropriate and have a hands-on approach.

Naturally, when considering the individual candidates, there will be overlap between the characteristic target groups shown above. These characteristics should be considered in more depth when planning marketing actions for specific groups. In the simplest terms, the consideration of two aspects, age and gender, is considered in events for young women completing secondary school and choosing their next steps in education. As another characteristic, previous education could be considered as students from technical schools may be more interested in a technical career than non-specialised schools or the number of years spent in school.

For these target groups it has to be kept in mind that many target groups show significant overlap when it comes to the factors which currently hinder them in taking up a career in the railway sector, namely that the visibility of the sector is too low and that the image of the sector does not correspond with their career goals. These will be discussed in 5.7.

5.4 Live events as Channels of Communication for the Strategy

While the majority of searches for jobs and educational programmes is conducted online via appropriate channels there, live events are still an important part of information campaigns for the railway sector, which was confirmed through partner questionnaires and interviews with the interview partners. There are four measures, which could be identified as possible live events.

- **Information and Open Days**

- **Workshops for hands-on experiences**
- **Career and Professional Fairs**
- **Active sourcing (for example visiting schools or universities)**

Information and open days have multiple benefits. For example, it is possible to show selected parts of a company or institution, answer questions of possible future candidates, raise interest and show the culture of the individual institution. They can also help challenge previous images of a company itself and possibly the rail sector as a whole. A full list of possible live events will be supplied as an appendix

Workshops offer the opportunity to let participants experience different aspects of a job or a study first hand and possibly offer a way for the candidate to reflect on their image of said job or study.

Partners have already demonstrated that live events are an important factor in their marketing strategies and are already carrying out these events. It is possible however, that it is necessary to also address the fact that there seems to only be a small number of events organized for teenagers and parents, meaning that different types of events will need to be created to also take these into account with an increasing degree. These types of events would require a significant amount of working time, which will have to be provided by either ambassadors or other employees. One of the possible solutions would be the use of webinars, where travelling time is reduced to a minimum for all participants and these would also enable to be more flexible in terms of time. Webinars such as this have already been implemented at different partners. One good example of such digital events can be seen at Alstom, which has hosted regular events in the metaverse in order to conduct digital job fairs and attract a young talent group. The event aims to enable real time chats between visitors to business & HR teams from around the world in order to learn about open roles and the company. Some impressions of one of these events can be seen in Figure 24.



FIGURE 24: IMPRESSIONS FROM THE DIGITAL EVENT IN THE METAVERSE AT ALSTOM

The possibilities to engage with possible candidates through new forms of communication has increased in the last years, with the example of the metaverse at Alstom being only one example. In addition to the metaverse, gamification and serious play should be considered in a marketing strategy. On the one hand, classic gamification tries to use elements from game design to keep a player interested in the game itself, meaning that learning can be considered as a form of fun. The most well-known of these elements are competition elements with leader boards, points, badges and achievements (Geißler, 2023). Some fewer known elements are personalised avatars and storytelling elements. Serious Games or Serious play on the other hand do not have the primary goal of entertainment (Frantskevich, 2023). Rather, the intention is to achieve real, often complex, learning goals, such as using previously gained knowledge in a game to solve problems or challenges. Serious games have been a form of problem solving, creative thinking and communication for several years, with the most notable example being the Lego Serious Play model introduced in 2010.

On the other hand, implemented elements from board, virtual, video or computer games, such as models of vehicles and infrastructure in a virtual environment. One example is the popularity of railway simulator games or their integration into other types, such as city building simulators. It is however difficult to say conclusively, whether or not these games provide a strong form of advertisement in their current form and need to be adapted. One example of this is the virtual showroom or Metaverse of Alstom (MAFEX, 2023), implemented in 2022 with the Unreal Engine, typically known for high quality graphics in computer games. The development of this showroom

had multiple objectives, including a digitalised portfolio of solutions, real-time interactive simulations and creating the possibility to gain both a macro and micro perspective of different railway components. All of these were embedded into a virtual animated city environment (SoWhen, 2022). This virtual showroom can now be used in marketing, communication and even training. Another example is the railway vehicle simulator at the faculty of transport sciences at TU Dresden, which normally serves as a teaching tool for students. During open days for the public at the faculty, it is one of the most popular attractions for children and teenagers. It shows that certain tools may be adapted for multiple use in order to appeal to the right target groups.

Live events may further be used to attract people with special backgrounds such as refugees or migrants from EU or non-EU countries. One of the good examples which have been implemented is for example the highspeedrefugeetalent initiative by HITACHI, implemented in collaboration with the UNHCR in Italy. The goal of this initiative is to provide employment to talents from the refugee community through inclusive and regarding recruitment processes as well as to show internal and external stakeholders the commitment of HITACHI to refugee integration. An added benefit of this is to increase the awareness of employees for issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion. In addition to hiring new talented and skilled employees, it raises the satisfaction and loyalty of this employees.

Live events can also be used to promote the importance of internal inclusiveness programs. These programmes help raise the overall level of satisfaction of experienced employees to improve retention amongst them. They also help to foster a culture of inclusiveness with regards to working with multiple cultures, employees with disabilities, improving gender balance and LGBTQ+ in the workplace. At Alstom for example, these topics are addressed through the diversity and inclusion strategy, which awards projects which aim to promote inclusion practices at the company in the “4Awards4Inclusion” program (Alstom, 2023). One of these for example was the “Mind the glass ceiling” project, which was implemented in 2023 in order to give talented women working in operations more opportunities in career growth. Here, outstanding female employees receive an ambitious and tailored career path in order for them to take on roles, which are one or two steps beyond their current position within three to four years. Special events for these initiatives raise the importance of these efforts within the company, promoting further work in this area, thereby benefiting the company as a whole.

Another factor which should be implemented is an event search program at companies, which shows where the company will be available to for example check CVs of potential candidates, something that has been implemented at Deutsche Bahn, for example, as seen in Figure 25. This enables potential candidates to plan a visit in their area.

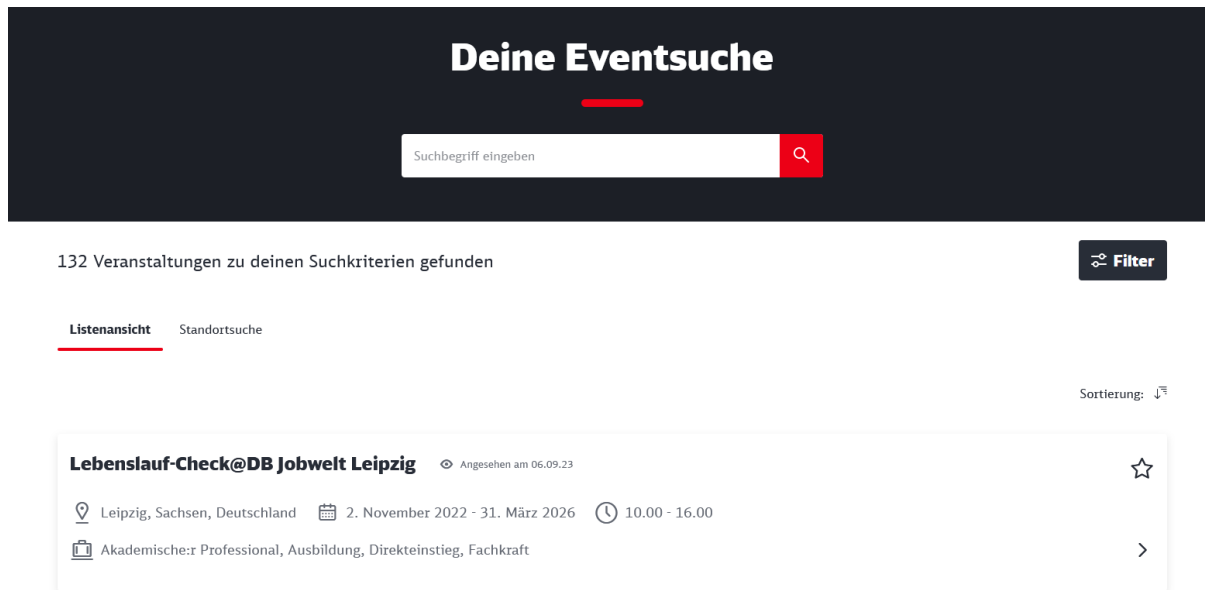


FIGURE 25: THE EVENT SEARCH FROM DEUTSCHE BAHN

5.5 Social Media as Channels of Communication for the Strategy

5.5.1 Presenting the work on own social media channels

The partners current channels have the means to present the work that is being done at their own companies. This is done to show a variety of content, from information about life at universities and the content of study programmes, to promotional material and advertisements of projects and products of different partners. Overall, it can be seen that partners have sufficient knowledge about the promotional use of social media on their own channels. As stated earlier, the goal should be to increase the audience of the different partners and go beyond the current audience. It was also shown that while partners all have social media profiles, they may be missing out on different channels, which have a much further reach than their current ones. For example, every partner has a professional LinkedIn profile and the main user groups are Generation Y (Millennials), a main target group for all partners, however, LinkedIn only has a limited reach compared to other profiles.

One of the main drawbacks of a social media profile is that it must be maintained, filled with content and actively moderated, which may not be possible for every institution. This may be overcome by finding engaged ambassadors who may be incentivized to share consistent content on their channels.

Some partners are using this to for example have their own influencers or job ambassadors talk about their jobs. The Pro Rail Alliance in Germany for example supports Social Media

personalities in the railway job world who are in turn actively sharing railway knowledge and passion on their channels. In some cases it may even be possible for company leaders to be the face of such a campaign.

Another option is to communicate actively with communities as a whole, for example through social media channels such as Reddit, where the format of “Ask me Anything” (AMA) allows Reddit users to ask any type of question they would like to a person on the other side. This format has been used by Hollywood stars and regular people alike to talk about themselves or about their careers. Siemens recently even created a user profile on Reddit to allow for such an AMA with two young employees in the software and hardware departments, which it also promoted through Reddit’s promotional means. The announcement of this event was done through an advertisement on Reddit with the Post shown in Figure 26 several weeks prior to the AMA itself. With over 100 comments in this particular discussion in a time frame of just a couple of hours, this had moderate success but showed that there are people who are willing to engage with companies through their employees.

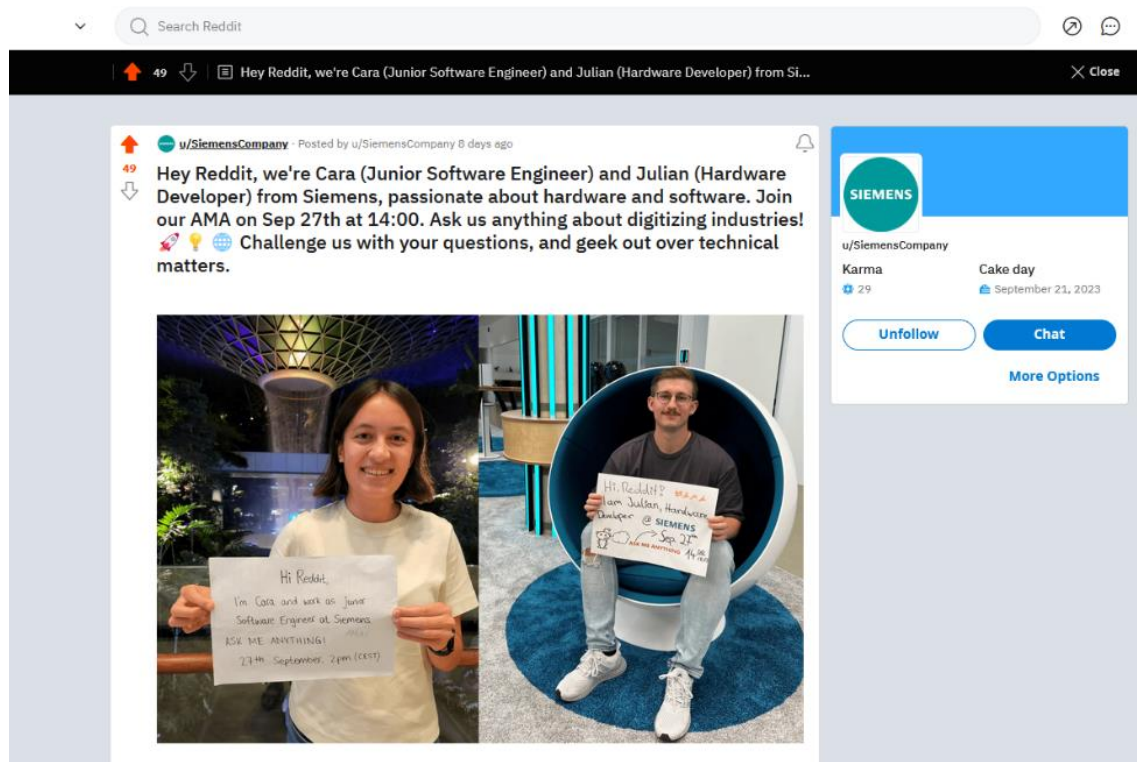


FIGURE 26: AMA FORMAT ORGANISED BY SIEMENS

It should also be noted that communities on these forums can be very engaged in their subjects, especially related to transport. Meeting them here and showing the possibilities of the work done in the industry, may be a way to improve the image of the rail sector as a whole. While

concerns about managing these social media profiles are valid, it may be an opportunity to use company ambassadors for this specific role.

5.5.2 Using view multipliers such as social media personalities and relevant channels

One of the issues with their own channels is that not every partner has a significant enough audience to reach out to. One of the ways this could be improved is by looking for social media personalities, relevant channels or view multipliers to reach out to a larger audience.

One of these examples is the YouTube Channel “Lohnt sich das?” (Is it worth it?) for the German public broadcaster BR. The purpose of this channel is to present the tasks and duties of the employee on the job, create a short personal profile of the employee and show the income of individual jobs and how this relates to living expenses. This kind of advertisement has the benefit that it shows some of the most relevant core elements of a job, namely the duties of the job and if it is possible to live of the payment received. The channel manages view counts from 200 thousand to 2,5 million viewers per video and has over 100 million total views since starting in February 2020.

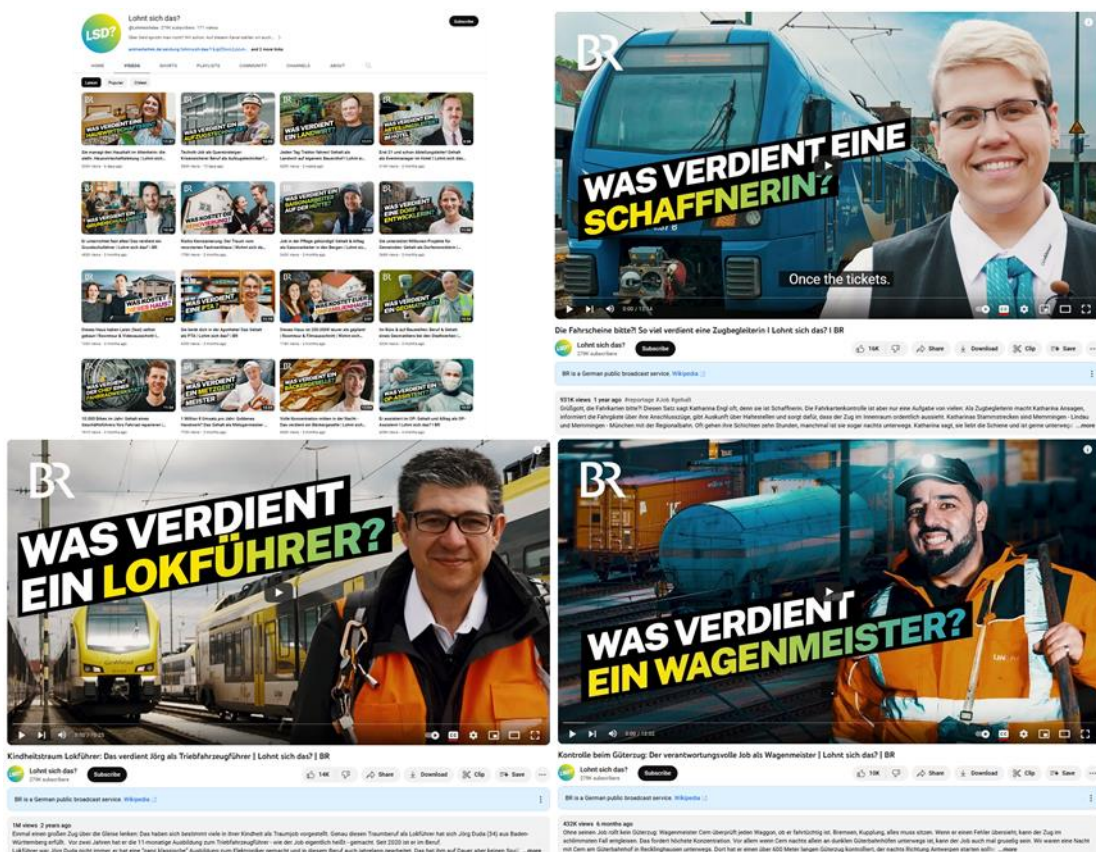


FIGURE 27: EXAMPLES OF PROMOTED RAIL RELATED JOBS ON YOUTUBE CHANNEL “LOHNT SICH DAS?” OF GERMAN PUBLIC BROADCASTER BR. TOP LEFT: OVERVIEW OF MAIN PAGE, TOP RIGHT: “HOW MUCH DOES A CONDUCTOR EARN?”, BOTTOM LEFT “HOW MUCH DOES A TRAIN DRIVER EARN?”, BOTTOM RIGHT: “HOW MUCH DOES A WHELTAPPER EARN?”

The best practice here, that should be noted, is that while the overarching theme is the job being carried out, the focus is clearly on the tasks, the person carrying out the job and the different forms of compensation of the job. This enables the viewer to reflect on whether or not the tasks and duties of the job and the character of the person match their own self-image and whether or not the pay corresponds with their own wishes for their future career. Furthermore, they see if this compensation enables them to lead the kind of life that they want outside of the job, which enables a further reflection process on the work life balance when carrying out the job. In essence, these videos may be able to passively carry out what Matthes wrote in (Matthes, 2019) when mentioning the need for reflection processes which enable students or trainees on whether a career is worth it for them.

5.6 Online Events as Channels of Communication

The main starting point for candidates searching for a career or an educational programme is through the available channels on the internet. Therefore, it is vital for industrial and educational partners to optimize their presentation online. Desk research and interviews revealed different important channels through which potential employees inform themselves and how these can be optimized in order to receive more attention and increase the likelihood of application. One of the most important aspects to consider in this field is the term of recruitment marketing, which essentially brings together the fields of employer branding, marketing and recruitment. Recruitment marketing is essentially a strategy that aims to supplement recruitment strategies by increasing the image and visibility of an institution. It aims to make an institution more desirable to work at and thereby raise the number of applications at a company. This includes employer branding and marketing strategies, but also aims to improve processes in the recruitment processes itself, such as the speed of the recruitment process itself, the ease with which a candidate can apply, reflection processes during the recruitment process to assess where the qualities of a candidate can be used within the company.

5.6.1 Recruitment portals and career pages

Very often, a search through a search engine will lead to recruitment portals or a company career portal. These form the primary point of interaction with a candidate and desk research has shown that these portals are one of the most important factors in determining whether or not an application will be submitted to a potential employer.

In order to receive attention, one way is to optimize search terms in order to receive a larger number of views. However, research was not able to determine definitely, which of these search terms would be suited most for rail. A second important factor is the advertisement or job

description itself. The description itself should use the core messages of the potential employer in order to effectively communicate its own brand and the required skills for the career. However, one of the most important factors that was listed during research was the remuneration for the job and whether or not the job had the possibility of remote work. Where attractiveness factors are not necessarily possible, such as for drivers, on-board staff or other staff directly linked to service, other attractiveness factors should be listed, such as possible benefits programmes or incentives for joining the company, such as moving bonuses, or stay-on bonuses. These practices have already been used by partners in STAFFER and are seen as best practice.

Another factor which was listed as important was the ease with which candidates could apply for a job. This does not only include the ease, with which the candidate can submit documents and complete the application process, but also if a company's career website is optimized for use by mobile devices. Another factor is the speed with which applicants receive replies from their applications. A speedy reply on an application can help raise the impression of the company as a whole.

The company website should furthermore show different ways of entry into the company such as internships for students, the possibility of writing a thesis for the company or even company sponsored PhD programmes or positions. This practice has already been implemented by the supplier and operator partners of STAFFER and can be seen as common and best practice. This is also applicable for people from countries outside the EU, such as refugees or migrants, which may require additional information about starting their work in the EU. Especially operators should focus on providing information directly for these groups and a point of contact at the company. This has been implemented for example by Deutsche Bahn for Ukrainian refugees, as seen in Figure 28, but of course may also be applicable elsewhere.

Willkommen in Deutschland!

Sie sind aus der Ukraine geflüchtet und nun mit den Fragen konfrontiert, wie Sie sich auf dem deutschen Arbeitsmarkt zurechtfinden können und welche beruflichen Perspektiven in Deutschland möglich sind? Wir bieten Ihnen in kostenlosen Beratungsgesprächen konkrete Einstiegs Optionen bei der Deutschen Bahn sowie Informationen zum deutschen Arbeitsmarkt und weiteren Themen an. Zur Zeit können die telefonischen Gespräche nach Wahl auf Deutsch, Englisch oder Russisch geführt werden.

Sie erreichen uns Dienstag-Donnerstag von 8:30-10:30 Uhr.

Hotline: [+49 30 29734949](tel:+493029734949)

In unserer kostenfreien Hotline beraten Sie unsere Mitarbeitenden zu allgemeinen Anliegen und Fragen zur Einstellung bei der Deutschen Bahn.

Telefonisches Beratungsgespräch

Sie möchten sich bereits über konkrete Einstiegsmöglichkeiten innerhalb der DB informieren oder haben Fragen zu den notwendigen Einstiegs Voraussetzungen für eine Stelle? Dann registrieren Sie sich hier für unsere individuellen Beratungsgespräche! Die Gespräche werden auf Deutsch, Englisch und Russisch angeboten, bitte wählen Sie die passende Sprache für sich aus.

Hinweis: Derzeit kann es aufgrund eines hohen Gesprächsaufkommens zu zeitlichen Verzögerungen in der Bearbeitung Ihrer Anfrage kommen. Wir bitten dafür um Ihr Verständnis und werden uns zeitnah bei Ihnen melden.

[Beratungsgespräch vereinbaren](#)



FIGURE 28: DIRECT CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REFUGEES FROM THE UKRAINE

Furthermore, it has become increasingly important that a company is also in line with the values of the candidate itself. This is for one reflected by an increasing demand for self-improvement opportunities for the candidate themselves, but has also been increased due to the labour shortage for many highly specialized jobs in the industry. This means that it is important that the website also shows off the company culture as well as the people working within it. Showing the company culture and the underlying values is a best practice, which has already been implemented by the STAFFER partners.

Within the field of company culture may be a section or page on the website, which displays initiatives that are targeted at marginalized groups or refugees. One of the tasks identified during interviews was the unused potential of refugees, which may be recruited for employment in the rail sector. This may be a primary connection point for candidates from these target groups to check their options for working at a company. As a prerequisite to this, a strategy to integrate these groups must exist, which some STAFFER partners have implemented strategies already. This page could for example be an information page explaining the different possibilities of application.

Another way that a company or recruiting page could be useful in engagement of potential candidates are channels of communication with the company itself. This may be to a way for candidates to ask questions about a specific job opening or advertisement, but can also be a

forum where candidates can ask questions to a team of company ambassadors or moderators. This practice has been for example implemented by SNCF.

COMMENT POUVONS-NOUS VOUS AIDER ?



Votre métier idéal

Répondez à 4 questions et découvrez une sélection de métiers qui vous correspondent

[Commencez le quiz >](#)



60 ambassadeurs répondent à vos questions

Des professionnels du secteur partagent leur expérience SNCF avec vous

[Échangez avec un ambassadeur >](#)



Notre guide des métiers

Retrouvez notre guide des métiers pour découvrir comment devenir conducteur.ice de train, commercial.e à bord, ...

[Consulter le guide des métiers >](#)

FIGURE 29: EXAMPLE OF CONTACT POSSIBILITIES AT SNCF (SNCF, 2023)

As forms of communication with the public and potential candidates, websites should inform on the social responsibility they have taken for their employees. As shown in 4.8.2, DEI⁶ strategies have been cemented in the WIR agreement between CER and ETF at the individual employers. These strategies should also be made public to ensure that candidates see an employer, which takes social responsibility seriously. One of these examples is the FS careers website (FS Group). This website provides information about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy and the activities to promote women's careers in technical areas and professional sectors that have been predominantly filled by men to date. It also informs of the measures which have been taken in this DEI strategy.

In summary, company portals and recruitment pages are an important tool in gaining more attention from candidates in searching for a career. Optimizing job applications with core messages, remuneration and other benefits has already been implemented by many of the partners. The role of large career platforms has also been realized by industrial and operator partners. The most important factors on a company website should include an easy application process,

⁶ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

show different paths into the company, either through a job application, internships or as part of an educational program and should serve as a way to communicate or engage with potential candidates.

5.6.2 Educational Institution Websites and Platforms

Educational institutions may not be classic employer as such, however, in order to raise the number of people in their educational programmes, they may still employ similar strategies with employers. Similarly, to partners from suppliers and industry, potential candidates search for their educational programmes through search engines, which may direct them to possible institutions where the subject is being taught.

One similarity to the application process for industrial partners is how the programme presents itself online. Here, key messages about the contents of the programme and clear identifying core values of the institution are important factors that help in effectively communicating the value of a program. In addition to this, a potential applicant to an educational program has to be shown what future employment could be possible after completing the educational program. This could be a study program at an institution of higher learning, a vocational training programme or a continued education programme to supplement training showing the potential future benefits by completing this education. Similarly, again to applications for a specific job position, the application process should be as easy as possible and if possible, through an institution's own website. Lastly, another important aspect is the relevant information for a potential applicant to a study. For those students who are orienting themselves to choose a potential field of study, it is important that the relevant information about the study programme is presented as clearly as possible. In addition to the information mentioned above, the student should be able to learn about process of the study programme or educational training, which includes the course contents, work load, the possibility of choice during the selection of elective studies, the possibility to study abroad, the availability of online resources and about the different options of part time study. This last aspect may be one of the more important factors and has also been listed by many educational partners as a way of advertising their programmes.

One of the key aspects however, which may be more important is that educational programmes related to rail must also be found through searches. There are several ways through which this is possible. One of the ways is to optimize search engine results (Search Engine Optimisation), which may offer a way to appear higher in the results of search engine pages through the use of different key words in the description of program descriptions. Another way may be to advertise on search engine pages in order to appear at the top of the search engine results. This does not have to be throughout the year, but may be useful at the relevant application times.

One drawback of using these techniques is that they can potentially be very costly and therefore not affordable to every partner.

In addition to this, relevant studies must be found on the individual study platform websites. This may be done through directly communicating with these portals, as they offer services for educational partners, or again through using key words as scraping from university websites.

5.7 Messages and Communication Strategies

5.7.1 Core Messages

While partners have shown that the core messages vary considerably as a result of the diversity of the partners themselves, the offers of their specific programmes, their cooperation with other partners and the different careers that are either available at their institution or those that are available after completing a specific study program. The following is a list of core messages that has been compiled on the basis of the questionnaires, interviews and desk research.

One of the key core messages is that the railway sector or careers in the railway sector is a technologically advanced career sector. The trends identified in WP 2 and 3 clearly demonstrate technological and societal trends which will require a highly skilled workforce with knowledge in these fields. With regards to technology, these trends were data-driven business models, big data analytics, future work, digital provisioning and artificial intelligence. In addition to trends, innovations⁷ such as

- **ERTMS & ETCS**
- **Automated train operation (ATO)**
- **Digital rail traffic control**
- **AI language solutions**
- **Internet of things and trains**
- **New ticketing systems**
- **Biometrics**
- **Big data**
- **MaaS-platforms**
- **Smart (sensor based, remote) maintenance**
- **New power-supply systems**

⁷ From the STAFFER WP 2 survey 2021

- **Building information modelling (BIM)**
- **And digital twins**

show the need for new skills. The trends in particular create a strong need for skills adaptation, which was shown in the surveys of WP 2 and WP 3. In the rail operation and infrastructure management sector, the profiles with the highest need of adaptation were those with technical and engineering occupations, specifically rolling stock engineering drafters or designers, maintenance technicians, rolling stock electricians and rolling stock technicians. An in depth look into railway drivers, traffic control profiles and technical and engineering staff in maintenance all revealed that knowledge and skills in ICT was the most important future skill. For suppliers, the results showed that bridging traditional and digital approaches and a holistic understanding and system thinking were some of the most important skill needs.

The increase in digitalization and the opportunities it brings should be a clear identity of the railway sector. Suppliers in this case could focus on the creation of solutions for railway vehicles and their infrastructure, digital solutions for automation, digital twins and cyber security, the implementation of these solutions through manufacturing and installation and finally research related to these technologies, which would aim to show dedication towards further advanced technologies in this field. Operators may focus on the implementation of these solutions, but go further to show the introduction of intermodal solutions and technologies to improve customer experience or employee training. They may also however show that they are a practical partner for research, demonstrating the need for employees with academic backgrounds. This is relevant for every stakeholder and should be communicated effectively.

Another factor that should be highlighted is that the railway sector is a job field with a social impact and there for everyone. While trends show that meaning and purpose is a very important aspect of a job for younger generations, it should be said that purpose, interesting work and a job that is helpful to society is an attractiveness factor, which every generation deems important for their work. A strategy that aims to promote the railway sector should always use the message of societal impact.

Another core message that is currently showing some effect is the fact that the railway sector is largely seen as a sustainable sector that promotes a key mobility option for both passengers and freight.

The promotion of diverse career paths should be another core message of the sector. The promotion should include an emphasis on the many different possibilities of careers within the rail sector itself, career development paths for different careers and the diversity of tasks within certain career profiles. This should show potential candidates that with the right skills there is a

job within the rail sector and development opportunities for them and that these careers offer diversity in their daily working profiles.

Another core message should be secure working conditions within the sector, as this is a key factor for all employees throughout all life stages. Especially jobs related to operations cannot be easily relocated and therefore offer another degree of job security within for potential candidates. This would be in line with the goal of strengthening rail transport in Europe as a means to supply a more sustainable transport.

Lastly, where applicable, a final core message should be the relative compensation for jobs in the rail sector and the efforts to guarantee fair pay for all employees. Candidates should see that the different career paths and secure working conditions also lead to a fair relative compensation, especially in fields which suffer due to unattractive working conditions.

One of the main factors that contributes to positive messages is the fact that it is authentic or can be interpreted as such, which has been mentioned both in literature and in talks with partners.

This also translates into the recruitment process for potential employees. The offered job and benefits, which also include the possibility for future training, has to match with the expectations of the candidates.

5.7.2 Information for candidates

Depending on the stakeholder (educational institution, supplier or companies involved in railway operation) different information is necessary to attract the candidates to jobs and educational opportunities.

For educational partners

- **Information about the study**
- **Information about the career paths**
- **Information on the institution and living in at the study location**

For industry and operators

- **Information on the benefits (such as salary, benefits and working conditions)**
- **Information on company culture**
- **Information on possibilities for career advancement and lifelong learning**

Furthermore, there are many factors which are attractive over a large range of age groups, which may be used to attract many different age groups to the sector. These include factors

such as job security, company culture, purpose and competitive compensation for work and should be used where appropriate.

Factors, which have become more important across all generations should also be considered for all target groups, which include a stronger focus on work-life balance, more flexibility and development opportunities for employees.

5.8 Events that can be targeted

To obtain a better understanding of which events are being targeted now, partners were asked to supply a list of events in their countries, which they either participate in, organize themselves or could be targeted for further marketing initiatives. Partners have sent in a total of 68 potential events in Europe at the writing of this report⁸, which were submitted largely by educational partners of the project. The respondents included 7 educational partners, 1 infrastructure manager, 1 operator.

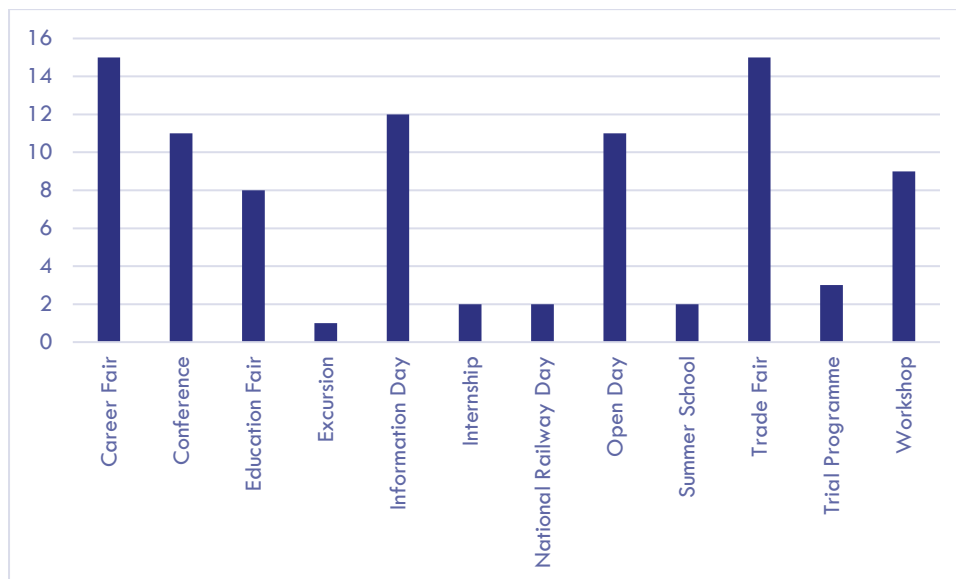


FIGURE 30: TOTAL NUMBER OF SPECIFIC EVENTS SUGGESTED AS ADVERTISEMENT EVENTS

We can see in Figure 30, the events that were mentioned most, were career fairs, trade fairs and information days. Open Days and Conferences were mentioned as well as an event type, where advertisements could be made. Excursions, internships, summer schools or national railway days were almost not reported as marketing methods. These are somewhat understandable,

⁸ A full list of events can be found in the Annex.

as educational institutions will focus mostly on their specific programmes. However, it may be possible to further exploit these events by focusing on types which have not yet been targeted, such as the railway day, where these institutions could be present at railway company events or providing internships or trial programmes at their facilities.

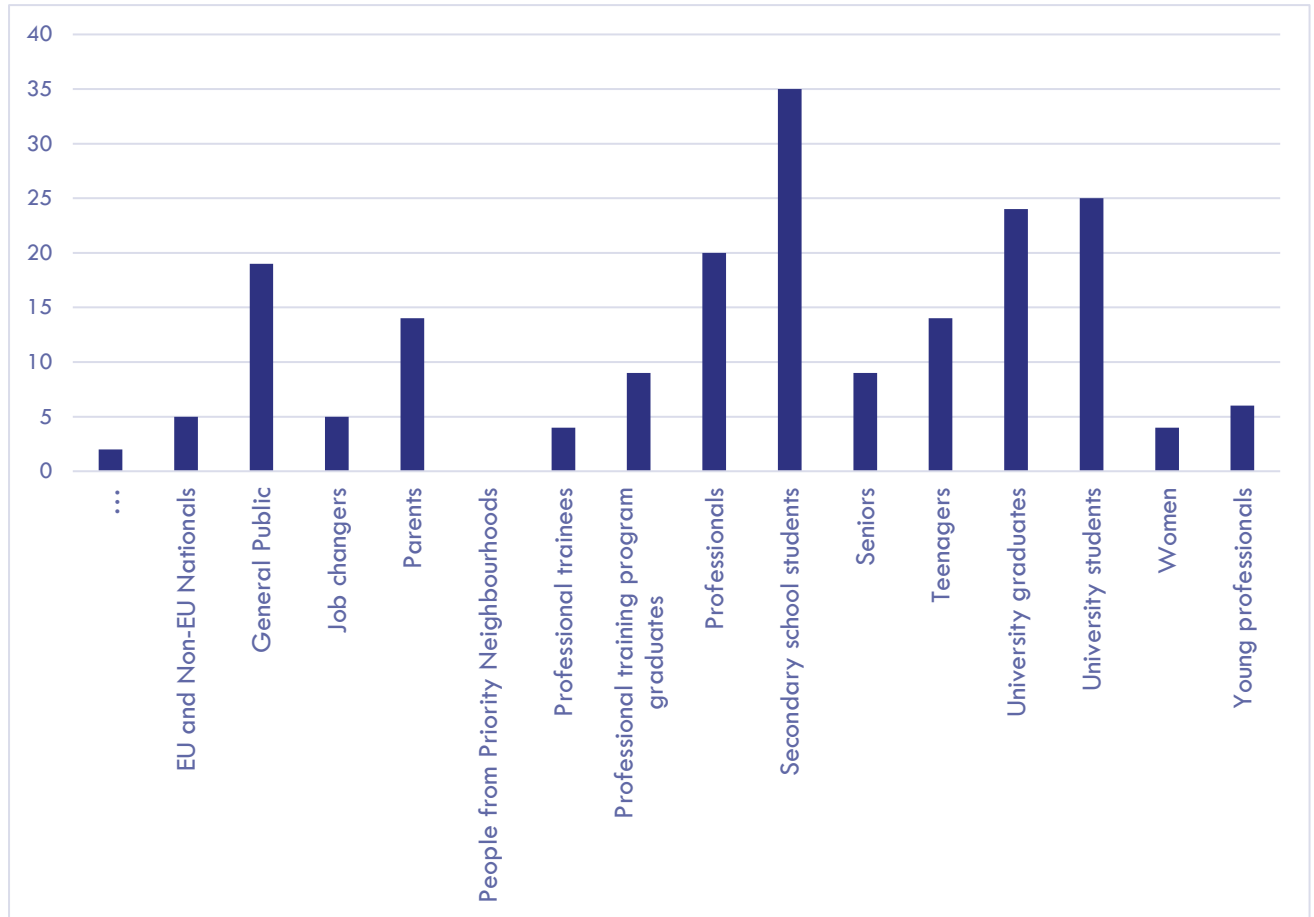


FIGURE 31: TOTAL NUMBER OF EVENTS FOR SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS SUBMITTED BY PARTNERS

Figure 31 shows the target groups of the events of partners. It shows, that secondary school students are the main target group. University students and graduates follow. These show the typical target groups of universities. However, it may be useful to also further explore events suited for teenagers and parents. Here it may be worth exploring if certain events with suitable activities can be created for these groups. These may be for example more hands-on trials and workshops specifically aimed at this group. Two answers reveal, that no specific target group was targeted during the event or not supplied by the respondent.

5.9 Recommendations

5.9.1 Summary of relevant Actions

Based on the questionnaire, interviews and desk research, many of the common and best practices which are part of a successful marketing or attractiveness strategy have already been implemented on partner level. Yet, there are recommendations for actions, which could be implemented as an attractiveness strategy for the railway sector, which can be summarized below

- **Training and incentivizing ambassadors to create ambassador networks**
- **Fostering cooperation between partners**
- **Reward and incentive programmes for employees**
- **Sponsoring advertisement campaigns of rail networks and education programmes**
- **Using view multipliers to promote the rail sector with the image of a high technology, sustainable and socially relevant sector**

5.9.2 Training and incentivizing ambassadors to create ambassador networks

One of the most important aspect about the search for a job is the people that work at a company. Working in a company with a welcoming culture may be an aspect, with which companies and educational institutions display this culture. Furthermore, ambassadors can show first hand experience about a job, a career or their experience of studying in a certain educational program. This action has the primary intent of improving the image of the railway sector, with the goal in mind to help candidates, potential employees or students to reflect on their image of the railway sector. Ambassadors can be present at most public events of a company, including both live and online, as shown in this report. Ambassadors can visit schools, job fairs or simply present their work to an interested group of students. Ambassador work may be an opportunity to make people interested, already at a young age, about a career in railway engineering. However, the work done by ambassadors may require a lot of working hours, as visiting schools or live events may be very time consuming. This is why it is both important to grow an ambassador network and incentivize them through compensation. With the help of training in communication techniques, this can be a very effective tool in an attractive strategy. Furthermore, ambassadors can be chosen according to the target group, making them more relatable to the group of people they are addressing.

Many partners have already implemented these networks in many different forms. For example SNCF has implemented a programme that allows potential candidates to ask questions through a forum on the Website of SNCF. In one instance for Siemens, an AMA was held on Reddit, exemplifying the possibility of using ambassadors through social media in order to provide

information over social media. In addition to this, “trainfluencers” have been part of marketing campaigns for DB. At institutions of higher learning, students are regularly part of the communication team to new students through associations and young alumni may return to talk about their education and careers to younger students.

Ambassadors are for example used as influencers on social media, as communicators on company recruitment or public relations pages, as presenters of educational programmes or as personalities in public television. One of the most important aspects to consider is that every employee is a potential ambassador, from management to the vehicle driver.

5.9.3 Fostering cooperation between partners

Another action to consider is the cooperation between the different partners. Many different partners have already listed that they are fostering cooperation between the educational institutions and industrial (supplier and operator) partners. This may take the form of providing internships for students or vocational trainees but also feedback from industrial partners about the educational contents of the educational programmes to make sure relevant topics are being taught to students. In some cases, educational institutions already advertise with the companies that their students work after completion of their studies, which creates an indicator for the types of jobs that are available to them. It may however also be useful to use these companies as form of attractiveness factor for more educational partners through showing graduates of the program and their employment after graduation. This ties into the ambassador programmes that companies and educational institutions are already using, but focuses more on the cooperation between partners to allow employees and alumni to partake in these events. This might also aid in the creation of larger ambassador networks, which may benefit all partners.

Another aspect to consider is to create clusters of railway educational institutions. One of the factors that is hindering partners is that resources are not high enough for an appropriate advertisement campaign. If it is possible, then collaboration between these institutions should be explored, combining resources to reach a bigger pool of potential candidates. This may also help with improving the rate at which educational programmes are found.

These actions could help raise both the visibility and the image of the sector and use means, which are already available at most of the institutions. This would be targeted at all those searching for educational programmes.

5.9.4 Reward and incentive programmes for employees

One of the issues which had already been highlighted in the employment in rail report, is the fact that many employees directly related to the service of railways have a much more negative

image of the sector compared to the rest of the industry. It is also these workers for whom an increase in pay is the way to make the sector more attractive. This recommendation is based on part of the strategy by the VDV, which implemented an awareness campaign for the best bus driver. Many of the older employees may have experienced the uncertainty through restructuring processes first hand. It is important to show that they are valued employees, which means that certain reward and incentive programmes should be in place for employees. Many partners, again, already implement these measures for their employees, either through awards and public recognition or through incentive payments which are offered to those staying on for a longer period of time. It may be necessary to make these award schemes more prominent and install them in the public's mind.

The most important goal of this recommendation is to increase the visibility and the image of the sector. The aim is to increase the social value of a job, to make sure that the employees feel valued at their current employer. This counts especially for those jobs, which are particularly unattractive due to different factors such as shift work or physically demanding jobs.

5.9.5 Sponsoring advertisement campaigns

One of the aspects which the VDV campaign revealed, is that marketing work is something which requires cooperation between partners and rail associations or networks. The aim of the VDV was to empower local public transport operators with the necessary tools and information to start marketing campaigns themselves or to offer marketing material which they could use on their websites. Furthermore, they offered an information exchange platform, which also smaller operators may use to gain information on current topics. This was enabled through contributions of members of the VDV who coordinated this employer initiative. It is clear, that especially for the smaller members who are struggling first and the most when finding new employees, this may be helpful when trying to attract new talent.

The goal of this action would be to increase the visibility of the sector as a whole, to empower smaller suppliers or operators to attract talent.

5.9.6 Using view multipliers to promote the rail sector with the image of a high technology, sustainable and socially relevant sector

One of the key issues that the railway sector is experiencing is low visibility of careers. This is one of the main reasons, why one of the recommendations is to find view multipliers which could be used to increase the audience for different careers in railways. This means to expand outside of the rail sector to potentially other branches, which are still part of the railway sector, such as mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and ICT technologies. One of the ways to

approach this is to seek out influencers, who may already have a large network of followers and view counts, which may aid in combating stereotypes about the sector as a whole. Furthermore, public television programmes could be sought out, to promote certain careers in the sector, thereby raising both the image and visibility about careers. The most important aspect of this would be to show an authentic view of the specific career or working field in question, but to ensure that the messages to be sent about the sector are also communicated effectively. Furthermore, it is important to show the people in the jobs in order to start a reflection process for potential candidates.

This aspect would have the goal of increasing both the visibility and the image of the sector. In order to accomplish this, relevant channels and/ or relevant personalities would have to be found which have a large enough audience. Depending on the channel used, for example social media or public television, different types of target groups such as secondary school students, university students and vocational trainees could be reached.

6 OUTLOOK FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

As part of the larger WP 7, the next steps include developing an action plan, for implementing the skills strategy in WP 7.4. This means, that the recommendations above are further developed into concrete actions in this working package.

The motivation of these actions should be to target the five factors that help promote a career choice in order to fulfil the overarching goals of raising the visibility of the sector as a career path and the image of the rail sector, as well as increasing the number of employees, apprentices and students in this sector.

These actions should on the one hand follow the best practices that partners already employ and aim to build on these practices to expand on formats, which partners currently employ. These include the strengthening of ambassador networks, cooperation between different partners in marketing actions and the use of view multipliers. While marketing methods over social media, on career portals and company websites have become the excellent standard, it may also be necessary to develop new methods with which interest in the rail sector may be raised. This could, for example, include developing special teaching material designed to provide educational value, raise interest in the rail sector and use elements of gamification and serious play. The most relevant target groups for this may be secondary school students and their parents and possibly university students. An overarching campaign as well as smaller initiatives could be formulated in WP 7.4

Looking beyond STAFFER, initiatives to raise the attractiveness must be put into practice by partners. This also includes the relevant structures of governance, which still have to be developed in some case, as cooperation between different partners will require partners taking on different responsibilities for these initiatives. Since cooperation between partners is one of the most relevant recommendations, different forms of organisation are required and therefore also new forms of governments.

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APPENDIX A: EVENTS

→ A full events list will be submitted via a separate Excel File.

