

Being responsible Corporate responsibility review

Corporate responsibility is about what you do and how you do it. It is an integral part of the way a company operates, and should not be seen as an add-on.

What National Express does is to provide essential public services. They are provided at low cost for consumers and at very low levels of carbon emission.

They are services that are key to the socio-economic well-being of communities: enabling people to get to work and to school, to the shops or to hospital. They are services that improve the quality of life for millions of people, ensuring that individuals or localities do not become isolated. This is particularly true at a time of rising unemployment.

National Express directly employs more than 38,000 people worldwide. In Spain and the UK we are major employers in the cities where we are based. In Birmingham, the home of our UK operation, we employ over 5,000 people or 1% of the city's workforce. Indirectly we support many thousands of other jobs in the supply chain. Our Intercity services are, for example, important in supporting the local tourist industry: in the UK we estimate that our national coach network supports some 3,600 jobs in the South West of England alone.

Public transport reduces congestion and environmental damage in our cities making them more attractive places to live. The CO₂ emissions per passenger kilometre in coach travel are around 80% less than those of the average new car.

So this is what we do: and the better we are at what we do, the more people use us – and the greater the benefits.

Vision and values

How we do it is linked to the core values of the Company. We have re-invigorated the business, defining a new framework of corporate values that will become central to the way National Express works.

Our vision is to earn the lifetime loyalty of our customers by consistently delivering excellent value, frequent, highly performing,

mass public transport services. Four values: people, customers, community and, most importantly, safety, underpin this vision.

Safety

More than anything else, we value the safety of our customers, employees and the public generally. Nothing we do is worth getting hurt for and we will not do anything which causes harm.

To achieve this, we are embedding a renewed safety culture within the Company. This has been initially driven from the top, with all senior managers required to demonstrate leadership on safety. During 2010 a new Group-wide safety programme was developed, called Driving Out Harm. It is being led personally by our Group Chief Executive and, during the year, all 234 senior managers in the Group attended safety leadership courses.

During 2011, all middle managers and supervisors will take part in safety training designed to embed our new global safety standards in the culture of the business worldwide. Safety must be the personal responsibility of all staff.

We have introduced new safety Key Performance Indicators to measure, consistently, how we are doing. And the rules governing bonus payments have been changed. In future, bonus payments will be even more closely aligned to both profit and safety performance.

We expect substantial improvements in 2011 based on what has been put in place, and aim for our safety record to be the best in the transport sector.

People

Our 'People' value seeks to enable all of our staff to reach their full potential and to give of their best as individuals and in teams.

We are establishing people management principles which will act as global minimum standards in HR.

In 2010 we focused on talent management: creating individual development plans for senior managers; succession plans for each business unit; establishing a high potential scheme to identify leaders of the future; and emphasised the importance of continuous learning and development.



Award-winning coach station

Our new Birmingham coach station was the first such building to achieve the BREEAM standard.

BREEAM is the definitive method for assessing a building's environmental performance, and the organisation had to write a bespoke assessment to enable them to rate the property.

The coach station's red boundary screen also won an important art award specifically for its community engagement and its contribution to regeneration and sustainable growth.

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Middle managers will be included in an extended talent management programme in 2011 as it is rolled out throughout the organisation.

And, as an international company, we are also keen to put in place an exchange scheme as a forum for learning across national boundaries.

Customers

We will place customers at the heart of our business. In short: nobody will try harder for our customers than we do.

We are establishing customer panels across each division, to ensure we hear regularly from customers.

Our services are key to the well-being of the individuals and communities we serve. In the UK and Spain around a quarter of households do not have access to a car. The lives of these people would be adversely impacted if our services did not exist.

We are committed to making our services ever more attractive, to ensure that more people use them and enjoy greater value for money. Our starting point is operational excellence: the better our services are, the stronger our business and the greater the benefits for our customers. Indeed, we believe the switch from private to public modes of transport, and to low carbon from high carbon modes such as car or air travel, benefits everyone.

We are also very interested in the role new technology, including social media, could play in improving our services.

Community

Our policies and practices will advance the social, environmental and economic conditions in the communities in which we operate.

Over the next 12 months we will proactively promote the social, economic and environmental benefits of what we do in the communities in which we operate. Public transport is well placed to meet the climate change challenge as it is a low cost solution to reducing carbon from transport. We are investing significantly in new fleet, including hybrid buses in the UK and Spain.

Around the world our businesses support those who most clearly benefit from what we offer – in cash and kind.

In the US, we have a long standing relationship with the Special Olympics – which includes providing buses for competitors. Our Spanish business makes substantial donations to road safety organisations. UK Coach provided a branded vehicle for the Little Princesses charity, while UK Rail is a long-term supporter of The Railway Children charity which helps runaway and street kids around the world, particularly those who live near railway stations.

Our UK Bus business is developing links with Transaid to help improve bus driver training in Tanzania, through a programme that can be delivered by local teams.

We continue to encourage our employees to get involved with fundraising or volunteering in their own communities, by awarding grants through our Employee Charity Panel.

Government policy

The UK Coalition Government's key priority is deficit reduction. While this meant the reduction in some public transport subsidies, the Comprehensive Spending Review also confirmed that the UK Government see transport as critical to economic growth.

We firmly believe that public transport supports key government priorities by reducing congestion, and enabling economic growth and productivity in local communities – in a low carbon way. For example, almost 150,000 new jobs are forecast to be created in the West Midlands between now and 2030. Many of them will be in sectors, such as business services, which favour a city centre location. Our vision of excellent value, highly performing services, consistently delivered will be crucial in connecting people to these jobs in a low carbon way that minimises congestion.

In 2011 we will seek to promote the benefits of our services more clearly and we will keep the communities we serve moving.



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Award winning

National Express was named the Best Company in the Transport Sector 2010 by the Spanish business daily El Economista.

National Express coach driver Mark Dean from Transdev Yellow Buses in Bournemouth won the 2010 UK Bus Driver of the Year award.