



BUS INDUSTRY FACT SHEET

Introduction

The bus industry includes scheduled intercity, urban and suburban, non-scheduled and chartered services. The operation of bus terminal or depot facilities is also involved, as is the maintenance of passenger carrying vehicles. There are over 200,000 employees in the UK bus and coach industries (separate data for just the bus industry is not available) and the industry offers a broad range of careers, including driving, engineering and administration.

The industry faces many challenges – responding to environmental issues, delivering services that customers demand that are reliable and comfortable, and developing technologies that suit both the industry and its customers, such as travel cards and the use of gps systems for route and timetable updates. The services it provides are crucial – they can reach many areas not serviced by other passenger transport services, such as trains, and are seen as a cheaper mode of public transport than rail and taxis.

Employers

The main employers in the bus industry are the companies who provide scheduled services in local and regional areas.

There are the 'big five' companies; Arriva, Stagecoach, National Express, GoAhead and First, which operate franchises across the UK. Alongside these are many other independent operators such as Lothian Buses. The best way to find out about local operators is to contact the public transport department of your local council.

Employment

Within the bus industry there are many roles available.

- Bus driver
- Operations (inc timetabling and route management)
- HR/Sales/Finance/Marketing
- Administration
- Vehicle maintenance
- Driver training
- Customer support

Most bus companies will advertise vacancies using the local press, or even by placing adverts on their vehicles. Some also work with local job centres to promote opportunities there as well.

Skills

Throughout the bus industry key skills are customer service and communication. Employers will look for potential recruits who are confident in dealing with many different people, sometimes under pressure, and who understand the importance of providing a satisfactory journey to the customer.

Frontline (customer-facing) staff often need to demonstrate conflict management or diffusing skills, as customers can become agitated or aggressive, especially on late night journeys, or if there have been significant problems with the bus service.

Staff in the bus industry also need to be flexible and willing to work shift patterns, which can include late nights and early mornings and well as work at the weekends and during bank holidays.

Key Facts

The big five bus companies currently represent about 80% of employment in the bus and coach industry in the UK

The industry has an aging workforce; in 2005 nearly a quarter of workers were aged 55+.

There are some difficulties recruiting young people into the industry because of legislation (eg driving licence age requirements) and high insurance premiums (health and safety). However there is an apprenticeship available in Transport Engineering and Maintenance and there is an SVQ available in PCV (passenger carrying vehicle) Driving.