

Cultivating driver satisfaction

Quite remarkable! Despite the industry suffering from a poor image, mobility problems, ever increasing pressure and greater responsibility, drivers are generally happy in their work. The solution to the lack of drivers could be to get the message across: 'Drivers are happy people'.

The period of good economic conditions seen in Europe in 2006-2007, allied to the strong growth of transport in Central Europe, accentuated the phenomenon of lack of drivers. According to figures revealed by the European Transport Barometer, the average lack is 3,8%, but in countries like the Netherlands, Poland and the Czech Republic, it is over 5%, and it is 4,5% in Spain and Portugal.

Happy drivers

It would appear difficult to take short term action to cure situations as profound as the image of transport, or the balance between the number of hours worked and the net salary. So are there no solutions? Of course there are, states Willem De Vries, Transport Director at Randstad. "First of all we have to concentrate on positive values. Despite all the problems which have been mentioned, drivers are happier than the average of the working population. They may not lead very healthy lives, but they fell in better shape than other workers. In general they are happy and particularly positive concerning their job. We have to get this message

"To improve the image of the profession, the positive sides of the job of driver have to be shouted out loud and clear."

across better. The main reasons for the pleasure they feel in their work are the freedom and the variety. Transport companies should therefore concentrate on these elements". Amongst other solutions for keep-



Willem De Vries, Randstad: "Drivers are happier than the overall working population."



NETHERLANDS ATTACKING THE PROBLEM

In the Netherlands, the sector is investing in training, in particular in order to lower the access threshold to the EC permit. To lower this accessibility threshold, 1000 bursaries provided by training funds will be awarded to people wishing to obtain an HGV licence. Almost 90% of training costs will thus be reimbursed by this.

ing drivers, we could point to internal career development and training. "But don't forget that what the public at large thinks of the job of truck driver is irrelevant! Drivers and would-be drivers love this job!", De Vries hammers home. On top of this positive approach, transporters and training centres are attacking new targets. The world of drivers is still a male domain, but women can do this job just as well as their male counterparts now that there is no longer a physical requirement which could favour men. Attracting immigrants also seems an obvious move. First of all, the

unemployment rate is higher than the average in this sector of society and these people often think first of traditional jobs. Practice has shown that immigrant drivers integrate more quickly because of their increased contacts and can handle the equipment just as responsibly.

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