



RFG Members Survey 2015: The Results

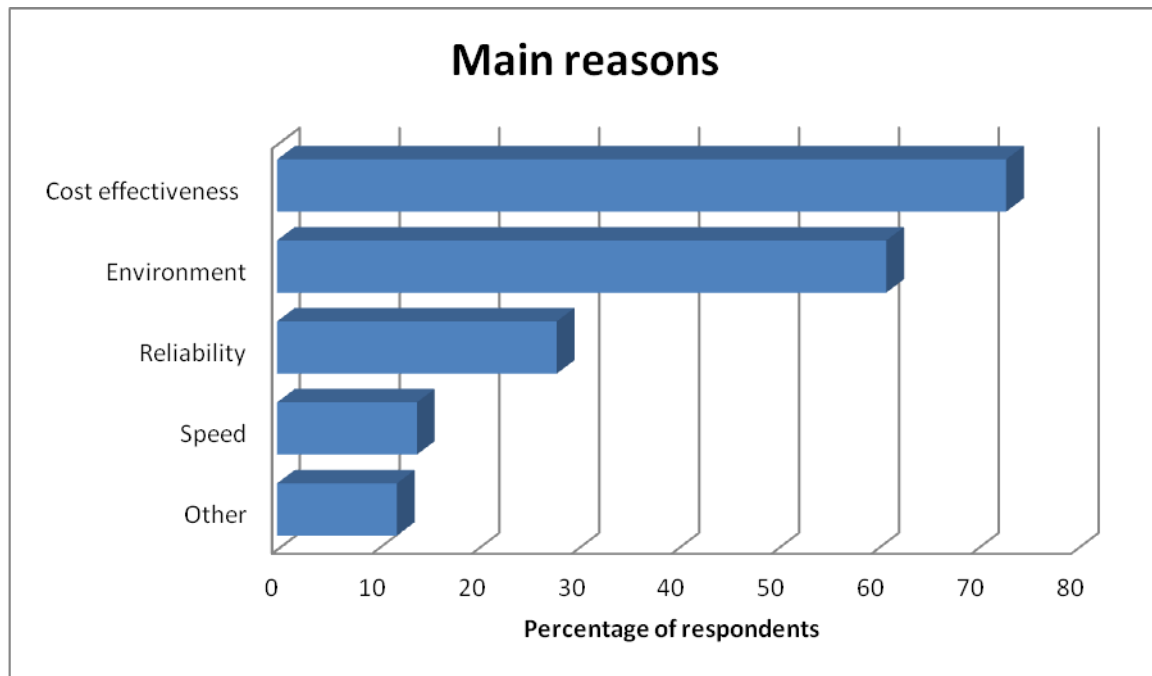
An email survey of RFG members' opinions was undertaken during October 2015.

KEY RESULTS SHOW:

- **Concern about possible regionalisation of rail infrastructure (72% of respondents believe it would not be beneficial)**
- **Strong support for equal recognition of freight and passenger services (70% named this as one of the two top requirements for success)**
- **A competitive choice of rail freight operators was the second main requirement (selected by 52% of respondents)**
- **Members believe that the main reason customers choose rail over road is cost-effectiveness (73%), with 61% citing environmental considerations**
- **Lack of suitable terminals and available train paths are cited as the biggest barriers (47% and 58% respectively)**
- **So, unsurprisingly, government investment in infrastructure (50%) and the availability of more rail-linked facilities (45%) were chosen as the top two ways to overcome these barriers.**

The full results are below.

If you were asked ‘what are the main reasons companies choose rail freight over road?’, what would you say? (select maximum of two)

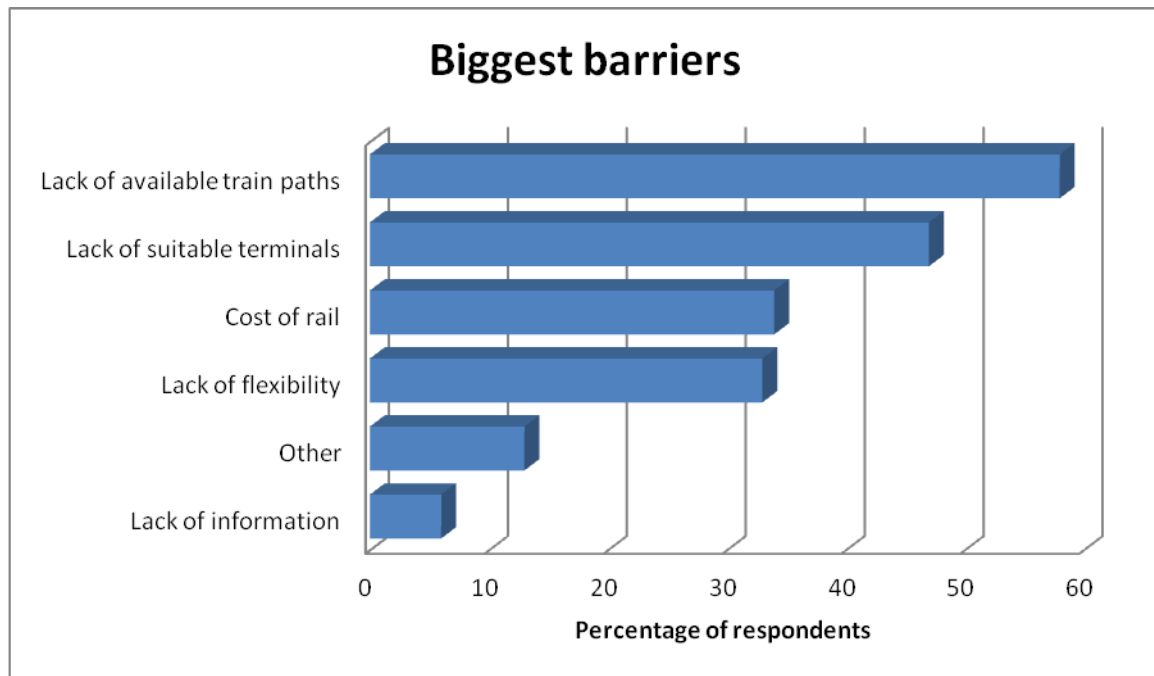


Additional comments:

Respondents pointed out that rail suited the movement of bulk loads better than road did, although one respondent saw this aspect as important for intermodal traffic as well. It has “the ability to move large parcels of cargo on a scheduled basis to support greater volumes through ports/inland terminals more reliably than relying on road transport only. Operates best in a system environment.”

Another respondent stated that many companies have an “innate sympathy for rail” and will use it because it is “the right thing to do” but added that “unless it improves its flexibility, reliability and cost efficiency, it will not attract large volumes from new customers.”

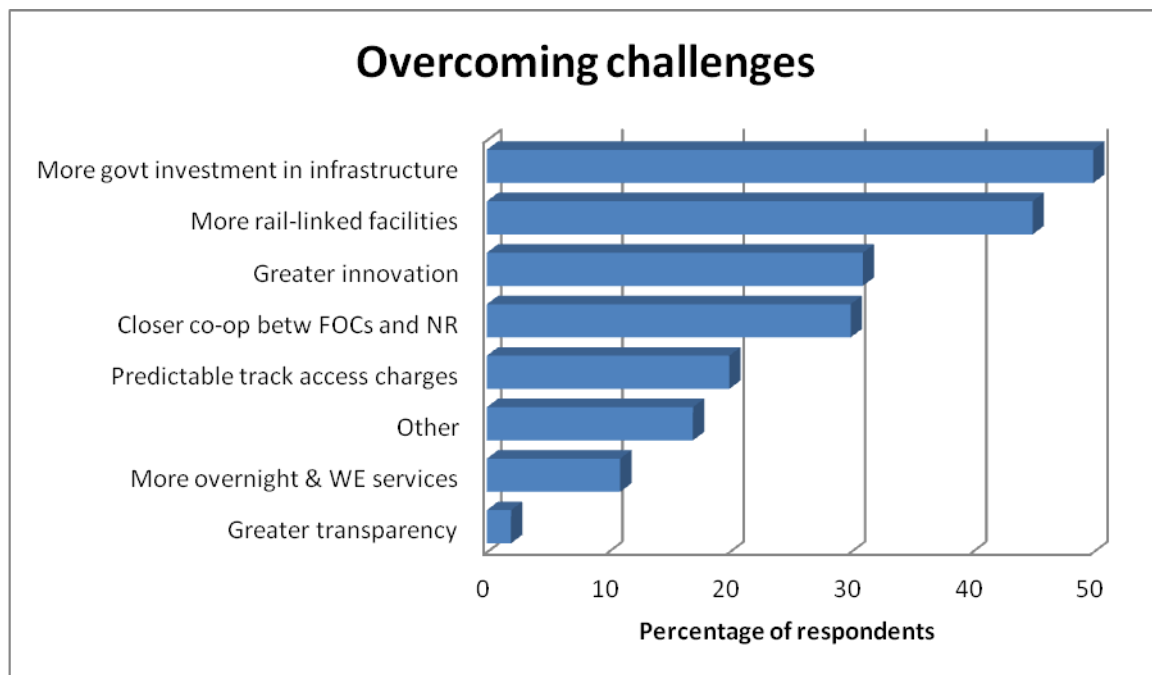
What do you see as the biggest barriers to the growth of the rail freight sector? *(select maximum of two)*



Additional comments:

Limited capacity on an already congested network is seen as a major barrier to growth. For some, this is compounded by the cost of developing new terminals/sidings or adding signalling/points to access existing sidings. Others cited the difficulty in dealing with the number of different parties needed to make a rail movement, compared with “a single point of contact as in road haulage”.

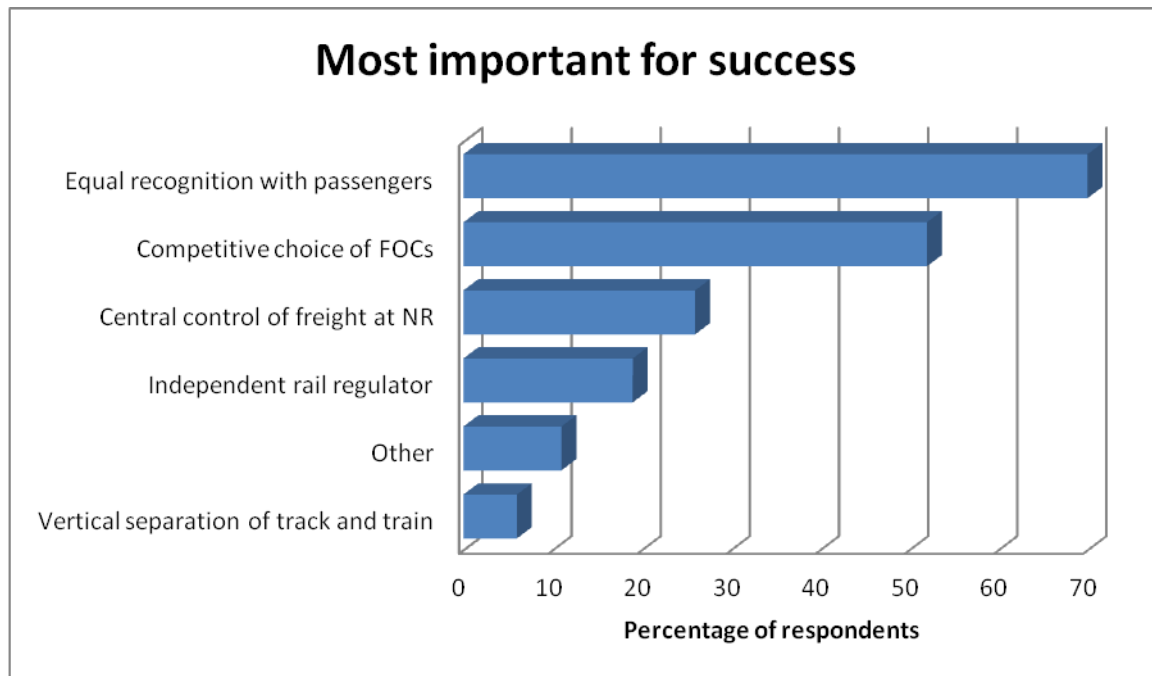
What most needs to be done to overcome these challenges? (select maximum of two)



Additional comments:

Greater government investment in infrastructure is only part of what the respondents asked from politicians. They also wanted government to have “a greater understanding of rail’s role within economic strategy”, the implementation of the digital railway asap, more long-term certainty on funding and “not so much increased investment – though that would be nice - but delivering what has been promised.” Harmonisation of regulations across the EU was also called for.

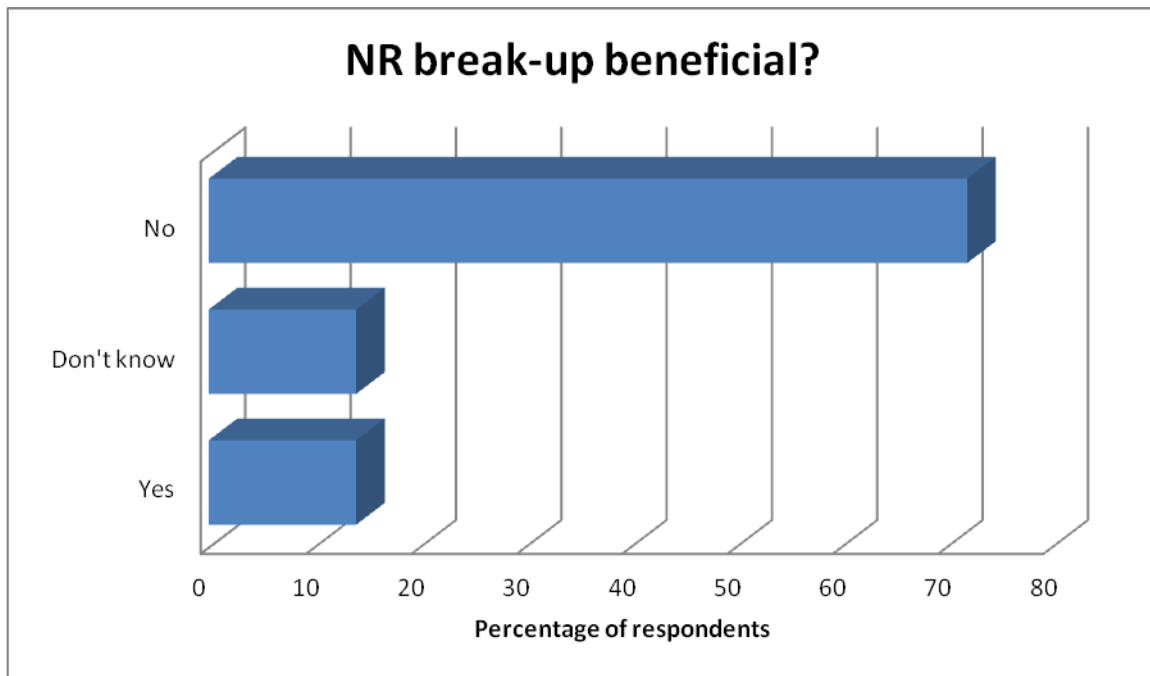
Which aspects of the rail industry structure are most important for its success? (select maximum of two)



Additional comments:

It was clear that respondents felt that freight services must be given equal priority with passenger services, especially during times of infrastructure maintenance or upgrade. A competitive choice of freight operating companies was also important which hopefully will help drive a “creative and innovative approach by rail freight operators to deliver resource-efficient, low cost solutions to customers”.

Would separating Network Rail into regional companies be beneficial for the rail freight sector?



Additional comments:

The clear majority said the establishing of regional companies would not be beneficial, with one explaining: "I see the regional structure a bit like local councils in that some will be under- and some over-funded depending on local needs and not national interest." Another said: "If a freight train is traversing different regional boundaries it could lead to problems on how that train is managed / performs under different controlling areas."

Others said there could be some benefits from a shake-up of Network Rail but all had strong caveats about the need for a strong central control to ensure cross-regional traffics are treated equally. "The central role in terms of timetabling, scheduling, pathing and managing freight operations is critical going forward in the event that the railway is separated into some form of vertically integrated regional businesses which have their own very regional priorities."

Another said: "It depends on whether those regional companies are held to the appropriate level of accountability for rail freight by a regulator or overseer. If they are and the local and regional councils demand higher attention to be paid to freight then it could be very beneficial."

RFG members responding to the survey included suppliers (30%), FOCs (11%) customers (14%), port/terminal operators (16%) and consultancies (15%).

The winner from those who entered the draw for the champagne was: Simon Hannak of Tarmac